

# My Prayer of Jabez, Part 2

By Mary J. Ferrill



In the spring of 2001, my dear friend, Gwen, gave me a copy of the book, *The Prayer of Jabez: Breaking Through to the Blessed Life*, by Dr. Bruce H. Wilkinson. The book is so small that you might miss it on the shelves of Barnes and Noble. For those unfamiliar with the story, it is based on a relatively obscure Bible passage nestled within 1 Chronicles, amid the genealogy of Israel.

*1 Chronicles 4:8-10 (NIV): Jabez was more honorable than his brothers. His mother had named him Jabez, saying, "I gave birth to him in pain." Jabez cried out to the God of Israel, "Oh, that you would bless me and enlarge my territory! Let your hand be with me, and keep me from harm so that I will be free from pain." And God granted his request.*

Dr. Wilkinson explains that Jabez provides an example of how to pray in a way that leads to finding favor with God. He emphasizes that it is okay to ask God to bless us, as long as it is in line with God's will. The author further suggests that praying this prayer every day is very powerful and can ultimately bring about miracles that take us to places we might never have imagined.

Back in 2001, I shared the book with my husband, Dan, and we each started reciting our own paraphrased version of *The Prayer of Jabez*. Within a few months, we were packing up our household about to embark on a 3000-mile cross-country journey to begin the new adventure that

God had in store for us. We accepted positions at a new Christian Pharmacy School, one that actively integrated Christian faith into its teachings. It wasn't an easy transition; however, God never promised "easy" but "blessed." I have met so many wonderful people and have literally traveled around the world spreading the Gospel since I started reciting this prayer daily.

Then, somewhere along my journey, I stopped including *The Prayer of Jabez* in my daily prayers. I can't state with certainty if it was before or after I started to feel that God was not blessing my journey, and that I felt...well...lost. I felt a little like Job, with God taking away many things from my life and I couldn't understand why. I thank God that like Job, he did not take my spouse. Whereas Job's wife urged him to "curse God and die" (Job 2:9, NIV), my husband suggested that perhaps I should revisit *The Prayer of Jabez* and once again incorporate the prayer into my daily prayer life. I wish I could say I instantly took his advice. It's amazing how we quickly feel comfortable in the box of misery that we place ourselves into, and how difficult it can be to overcome our own self-created negativity.

One of the major life-altering events that I have experienced in recent years was the loss of Gwen, the friend who first introduced me to *The Prayer of Jabez*. We were very close since 1992 – she referred to me as "My Mary" and I spoke of her as My Momma Gwen. We were that close. She thought of me as the daughter she never had, and I cherished her as the Christian mother and mentor I had always wanted. I was so blessed and thankful to have her in my life, and I was deeply saddened when she passed away in

October 2017. (See accompanying photo. I'm not much for pictures, but I sure wish now that I had taken more with My Momma Gwen). After my husband suggested I re-read *The Prayer of Jabez*, I came to think of it as a fitting way to show God how thankful I was for the gift of having My Momma Gwen in my life.

I recently finished the book and started praying my version of the prayer daily to make Jabez mine. I don't recall the exact wording of the version I prayed back in 2001, but this is my new version:

*Lord, please bless me immensely beyond my earthly comprehension. Provide me with opportunities to further YOUR purposes with your guidance and trust that YOUR plans are the best for me. Please keep the devil and temptation far, far away from me and protect me with your power. And, that I would not cause pain to others or myself.*

At this point, I have no miraculous 3000-mile adventure to report, but it's still early in the prayer process and I know that God works according to his timeline, not mine. Nevertheless, I remain faithful and hopeful that God will bless me once again with a new path upon which I can fulfill His purposes for my life. I know that, like Jabez, God will grant my request. Anyway, I can't wait to see where the Lord takes me. Ephesians 3:20 (NIV) says that God "is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us." It's going to be quite an adventure...

