

## **The Prayer of Jabez**

Bruce Wilkinson

Sisters: Multnomah, 2000, 93 pages

Reviewed by Dr. Gary M. Gulan

As a former Roman Catholic and as a current theologian of the Bible, I found this book to be a real danger to Christians and Christianity. Many of the works Bruce Wilkinson have some questionable things in them and it makes one wonder about the biblical scholarship and theological training he has.

After reading the book, one can see that it appeals to Roman Catholics, Pentecostals and Charismatics, as well as mystics and those seeking a secret formula to get what they want. In fact Wilkinson even has a web site for people to place their testimonials on how this prayer worked for them.

The “Prayer of Jabez” is taken from 1 Chronicles 4:9-10, which says, “9 Now Jabez was more honorable than his brothers, and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, ‘Because I bore him in pain.’ 10 And Jabez called on the God of Israel saying, ‘Oh, that You would bless me indeed, and enlarge my territory, that Your hand would be with me, and that You would keep me from evil, that I may not cause pain!’ So God granted him what he requested.”

The main problem with the book is that “I found a prayer that if prayed, possibly over and over, whatever you want will come true.” This misrepresents the nature of prayer as found in God’s Word.

1. No where else in the Bible do we find another person praying “Jabez’s exact prayer.”
2. In fact the Bible tells us not to pray “vain repetitions,” which is not saying we can’t pray for something more than once, but to pray the same words over and over as if the content means nothing. Mr. Wilkinson makes the “prayer of Jabez” no different than the Roman Catholic “rosary” or “prayers to Mary.”
3. Mr. Wilkinson states I want to teach you to pray a daring prayer that God always answers, (Preface page) Wilkinson goes beyond the Scriptures and “speaks for God.” What an incredible statement to make that “if you pray this prayer God always answers.” “God always answers!” God never states that He will always answer if someone prays “the prayer of Jabez.”
4. Mr. Wilkinson’s statements line up with “white magic” as if this “prayer of Jabez” is the secret formula which God “always” answers. In fact Mr. Wilkinson says I want to show you how dramatically each of Jabez’s requests can release something miraculous in your life. (Page 15)

5. Mr. Wilkinson's book promotes a "false hope." An unregenerate individual who follows his book and finds it doesn't work, will not doubt Wilkinson, but rather doubt the Bible and God.

6. He takes someone's personal prayer from an individual within Israel in the Old Testament and superimposes it on the New Testament church believer. Nowhere in the New Testament do we find "Jabez's prayer" used or do we find we are told that "Jabez's prayer" is the secret formula for God's answers.

7. How does Mr. Wilkinson know it works? "Experience!" He states he has been using this prayer for over 30 years and it always works. Mr. Wilkinson states it was his experience hundreds of times over 30 years. (Pages 11-12)

8. Mr. Wilkinson's "prayer of Jabez" incorporates the Charismatic "name it and claim it" doctrine. He makes the claim that God has unclaimed blessings waiting for you. (Page 17). The by-product of praying "the prayer of Jabez" is that your life will become marked by miracles. (page 24).

9. Mr. Wilkinson asks the question "Is it possible God wants you to be more selfish in your prayers?" (pages 19,24) Selfishness is not a part of the fruit of the Spirit and the holy sanctified life of a Christian. No prayer would work if we become more "selfish." This was not part of the prayer life of Jesus, (Matthew 26:39).

10. Mr. Wilkinson also gives the impression that we only sin because we are tempted. The "prayer of Jabez" will remove all temptations to sin. However, we sin by our will and not just when we are tempted. (page 67)

11. Mr. Wilkinson makes several pleas through the book, for you to pray the "prayer of Jabez." He asked you to have a loyal heart to it. (Page 90) Oh that the Christian would have a loyal heart to God's Word, sound doctrine, and obedience to the commands of the Word, rather than a false doctrine like the "prayer of Jabez."