

The Heart and Vision of Jabez

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Text: 1 Chronicles 4:9-11 (NIV)

9 Jabez was more honorable than his brothers. His mother had named him Jabez, saying, "I gave birth to him in pain." 10 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.

Introduction

Something to which we can all relate is the idea of not looking forward to Monday...

"According to the Chicago Tribune, a British psychiatrist named Giles Croft, of the University of Leeds, did an experiment to find out whether people who believe in the reality of the Monday blues are more likely to feel bad on Monday.

Croft divided volunteers into three groups. He gave one group a report that said, Monday blues are for real. He gave the second group a report that denied their existence. The third group received nothing to read. What Croft found was that the first group which had received the report substantiating Monday blues, was more likely to rate Monday as the worst day in the week. From his research Croft concluded that how people expect to feel effects how they do feel.

What you believe is crucial! Beliefs effect not only what you expect and feel, but what you think and do and become. Beliefs are the grid we use to interpret life." -Craig Larson, Choice Contemporary Stories and Illustrations

Evidently, although Jabez started life with some disadvantages, his willingness to believe God became his advantage in life.

It is likely his family had a bad reputation. Since all child birth is painful, his mother's words, "I gave birth to him in pain" likely indicates her hopeless state of mind. There is no mention of his father and no mention of an inheritance. It is highly probable his family struggled in poverty and suffered other disadvantages.

There is much we do not know, but what we do know would not create a great deal of optimism for any member of that family. Nevertheless, the heart and vision of Jabez caused him to no doubt believe God and exceed everyone's expectations. Take a moment to consider a few of his impressive *characteristics*.

I. Jabez Had Distinguished Himself - "More Honorable" (V.9).

A. He had excelled above his brothers.

B. He refused to be defined by other's expectations.

II. Jabez Had Overcome His Past - "Painful" (V.9).

A. He exceeded the limitations of his beginnings.

B. He wanted more out of life than others thought possible for him.

III. Jabez Had A Vision For His Future (V.10).

A. He envisioned having a legacy and leaving an inheritance.

B. He envisioned a life free from harm and pain.

Conclusion

Illustration: Steve Jobs on Death

In 2005 Steve Jobs gave the commencement speech at Stamford University. In commencement speeches the speaker traditionally passes on some wisdom for life that will help the graduating students commence the next phase of their life. Steve Jobs spoke about three things and one of them was death.

He described going to a doctor's appointment in 2004 and being told he had pancreatic cancer and had just 3-6 months to live. It was devastating news.

Later the same evening he had further tests that revealed he had a very rare form of pancreatic cancer that could be treated with surgery. He had the surgery and lived for another seven years before the cancer returned to claim his life.

During that 2005 speech at Stamford Jobs spoke of the importance of death.

"Remembering that I'll be dead soon is the most important tool I've ever encountered to help me make the big choices in life. Because almost everything – all external expectations, all pride, all fear of embarrassment or failure – these things just fall away in the face of death, leaving only what is truly important.

Remembering that you are going to die is the best way I know to avoid the trap of thinking you have something to lose. You are already naked. There is no reason not to follow your heart."