

Holy Ambition

"And Jabez was more honourable than his brothers, and his mother named him Jabez saying, "Because I bore him with pain." Now Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, "Oh that Thou wouldst bless me indeed, and enlarge my border, and that Thy hand might be with me, and that Thou wouldst keep me from harm, that it may not pain me!" And God granted him what he requested." 1Chron.4:9-10 NASB

Where does ambition 'fit' into the lifestyle of a fully devoted follower of Jesus Christ?

So much is said today of setting goals, aspiring to attain your dreams, and 'making it so.' But what of GOD? Does He have a plan for us or does He desire for us to make our plans and then invite Him alongside to bless them? No... Scripture reminds us that in the midst of our many and varied plans; it is only God's purposes that prevail.

Our pursuit is to know GOD and His will, for it is only then that His plan for our lives becomes evident. In this world we see the objects at which the ambitions of many are focused: building a reputation, gaining wealth and material possessions, and the wielding of power or influence. Though these things can bring short-lived glory, they ultimately will distil only eternal shame, if not sourced in GOD. True disciples of Christ live by a different standard for their ambitions are founded in and for GOD alone. Listen to the words of Jeremiah – *"Are you seeking great things for yourself? Don't do it!" Jer.45: 5 NLT*

You see, the wrong lies not in the ambition itself, but in its underlying and inspiring motive. Do all of your ambitions find their centre in Christ? If so, then you will find the words of Paul in *Col.1: 18* a reality in your life... *"He also is the Head of [His] body, the church; seeing He is the Beginning, the Firstborn from among the dead, so that He alone in everything and in every respect might occupy the chief place [stand first and be pre-eminent]. Amp*

Well, let's look at the much recently popularised life of Jabez. There is one truth that I would like to underscore before we go any further. Prayer, like all other spiritual realities in our relationship with Christ, is not a formula. God's dealings with His children may be replicated in the life of another, but they should not be viewed as a recipe, quick fix, step-by-step remedy, or secret formula by which we can get God to do for us what He did in the life of another. God's dealings with His children is not like an 'out of the box' cake mix. Rather, it is made lovingly and personally from scratch. It takes a bit more time, but then that's the stuff good relationships are made of.

Well, where were we...Jabez: yes, he is good example of one who had a holy ambition! Interesting to note, that prayer was essential in his life and so it is with us too. Let's take a look at his four holy ambitions.

GOD enrich my life – *"Oh, that Thou wouldst bless me..."* This man longed for more of GOD in his life, something outside the boundaries of his previous experience. If we can't ask God to bless what we're doing, maybe we should be doing something else.

GOD enlarge my life – *"...enlarge my border..."* He longed for an increased sphere of influence for GOD and His glory. Is this not a God approved desire? Certainly we should all be willing to stand in the space God has given us, whether large or small. For until we faithful in the little, why should we expect God to give us much?

GOD enable my life – *"...and that Thy hand might be with me..."* When our opportunities grow, so do our responsibilities.

When much is given, much is required...but what is required we don't have in and of ourselves. We need God's power – His hand alone can do the work that needs to be done!

GOD encompass my life – "...keep me from harm (evil) that it may not grieve me..." We are so vulnerable to attacks from the enemy that we must rely wholly upon the Lord's encircling presence. Remember, the brighter the light – the more bugs you attract!

Jesus prayed for us..."I do not ask Thee to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one." Jn.17: 15

Is the glory of GOD the supreme objective in your ambitions or are you more wrapped up in them than you realise? There is coming a day when that which is hidden will be revealed. May GOD find our ambitions truly holy, for the praise of His glory and grace!
