

THE MESSENGER

Franklin United Brethren Church

7171 Central College Road

New Albany, OH 43054

WWW.FRANKLINUB.ORG

Sunday Service 10:15 AM

JANUARY 2024

“WIN – TRAIN – SEND”

SPIRITUALLY ALIVE IN '25

Ready or not, here it is, the new year, 2025! Can you believe it? I thought June was just a couple of months ago. As you look back over the past year you no doubt had ups and downs, highs and lows. Moments of rejoicing and moments of discouragement. An important question for all of us is to ask ourselves, “Am I closer to God now than I was a year ago? Have the experiences of the last year deepened my faith or shaken my faith without recovery yet?” Deep in your heart you are the only one who can answer that question. I have another question, “Would you like to become more spiritually alive in 2025?” There is a great prayer in the Bible that is directly related to that, and I have written about it before, preached about it before, and the church has given out books about it. What am I talking about? The Prayer of Jabez. It has been nearly 10 years since the congregation last took a “deep dive” into The Prayer of Jabez. When taken seriously, and laid out, The Prayer of Jabez can have a profound impact on becoming spiritually alive, thus the title of this article. May I remind you of the prayer, “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.” - I Chronicles 4:10 (NKJV)

My goal was to re-read The Prayer of Jabez book four times in December; as of this writing, December 19th, I've read it three times (it is a short, easy to read book). Why so many times? Because there is so much spiritual impact in this prayer if we make it ours and truly practice it. I first read this book in 2001 and continued to read it and study The Prayer of Jabez pretty regularly through 2008. During that time when I was earnestly seeking to enlarge my territory of spiritual impact, I noticed every time I got onto an airplane God, opened the door wide for witnessing opportunities to those seated next to me. Also, in 2005 or 2006, God used our mission trip team in the Philippines to launch the Philippines United Brethren Church (a total of 16 churches). In 2019, I took The Prayer of Jabez seriously again and on a plane trip to Thailand God put me in a seat next to a young Muslim man in the in his late 20s. He was struggling with Islam and we spent six hours (with a meal break) comparing Islam and Christianity.

What's so special about the prayer of Jabez? Nothing, really. Honest! There is no prayer in the Bible that should be used like a genie in the bottle. No prayer in and of itself is a “magic formula”. It's not what you know about a prayer, or how many times you say a prayer, or how many times you read a book about a prayer. It's do you believe the prayer to be true, and do you live out the prayer. Briefly, let me share with you how becoming spiritually alive in '25 and the prayer Jabez are connected.

“Oh, that you would bless me indeed.” We “throw” the word blessing around loosely. Too loosely but what it means when connected with God is that “to bless” means to receive supernatural favor and power from God. Notice, Jabez does not tell God what he wants, he leaves it up to God to bless in the way He chooses. Jabez's request to be blessed is not the health/wealth and prosperity doctrine of today.

“Oh, that you would enlarge my territory.” Again, this is not an ask to get rich, but an ask for more influence, responsibility, and opportunity to make a mark for the God of Israel. We should start attempting to enlarge our territory at home first. Our family must be our first spiritual priority. After our family, our friends and relatives are next. In addition, we should pray for the opportunity to share our faith even with people we don't know.

“Oh, that Your hand would be with me.” The person who asks God to enlarge their spiritual territory – to help them impact the kingdom more, better have the hand of God with them! It is only through the power of the Holy Spirit and the hand of God that one can make an impact for God.

“Oh, that you would keep me from evil.” When you start praying to have a larger impact for God, when you start to become more spiritually alive – watch out, here comes Satan. Time after time, story after story, the Bible is filled with people who were doing good works for God but became targets of Satan.

I hope and pray you want to become spiritually alive in ‘25. Maybe it will be for the first time, maybe it will be for the 25th time in your lifetime. Whether it is the 1st or the 25th, ask God to bless you indeed and enlarge your territory, put his hand upon you and keep you from evil.

In Christ’s Love,
Pastor Mike

SCRIPTURE OF THE MONTH

“I am the Lord; that is my name! I will not yield my glory to another or my praise to idols. See, the former things have taken place, and new things I declare; before they spring into being I announce them to you.”
Isaiah 42:8-9

PRAYER NEEDS

Dick Fisher (heart procedure recovery), Steve Caudill (cancer), Brenda Carpenter (aortic valve replacement), Joel McNeal (ruptured aortic aneurysm recovery), Helen Smith Family, Debbie Troyer Family, Dick Lees Family (Helen Smith, Debbie Troyer, and Dick Lees all recently passed away)

Missionary Update: Milton and Erica Pacheco have recently announced a new missionary direction God has led them to. They served more than seven years in Thailand, but due to a recent change in adoption laws in their home country of Honduras, Milton, Erica, and their adopted son must return to live in Honduras. So... the Pachecos will start a new mission work in Honduras that trains pastors on how to train church members in Evangelism. Pray for Milton, Erica, and their son in this new chapter in their life! Also, pray for Alex and Christina Nuñez, also from Honduras, as they “pick up” extra ministry the Pachecos did.

Shut-Ins: Barb Pittenger, Trish Dolejs, Faye Cooper, Betty McCombs, Clarabell Harlan, Bonnie Boone, and Mavis Baker

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sunday, January 5th – After Church: PLEASE stay to help take down Christmas decorations! Only 6-8 people set up decorations, let’s get 10 people to take down the decorations.

Also On the 5th: We are going to start the New Year in a new way – communion the first Sunday of January!

Thank You! To Sean Hooper, Sandra Cox, and Steve Derwent (music director) for bringing a beautiful music program Christmas Eve. Sandra’s solo was lovely, Sean’s special return was much appreciated – all of this under the direction of Steve. We were also blessed to have Rev. Dr. Maurice Martindale assist in the worship service.

Tuesday, January 14th at 7PM: Management Team Meeting

Friday, January 24th at 6:45AM: Men’s Prayer Breakfast at Tim Horton’s on Fodor Road