

SPIRITUALLY ALIVE IN '25

Dear Friends:

Ready or not, here it is. Can you believe the new year is here? And although I am not "big" on them, New Years Resolutions are being made by millions of people. Among the more popular are weight loss, healthier eating, smoking cessation, drinking reduction, more family time, etc. All of these are good resolutions but none of them address the spiritual life. This is to be expected by those who are not Christians, but if you are a Christian have you considered growth in your spiritual life in 2025? Not so much as a resolution but as a goal that takes you closer to God. Think of it like this: from the ordinary Christian life to the extraordinary Christian life.

Unfortunately, most Christians don't think on the extraordinary level. I confess-I don't think on that level very often, but I want to change that in 2025. A good place to start is I Chronicles 4:10, known as The Prayer of Jabez:

"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."

How is this prayer related to the extraordinary Christian life? The first step: Jabez wants to receive God's blessing. It's not about becoming healthy or wealthy or better than anyone else. Blessing means to receive God's favor. Jabez leaves it entirely up to God to determine how God will bless him. The second step into an extraordinary Christian life is found in the phrase: "Oh that you would enlarge my territory." In other words, Jabez wants more opportunity to make a mark for the God of Israel. The third step: "Oh that your hand would be with me." This step, this "ask" is very important. Jabez realizes that if God is going to enlarge his territory, he absolutely needs the hand of God on him. What does "the hand of God mean"? The New Testament calls it "the filling of the Holy Spirit." When we are filled with the Holy Spirit God will use us for amazing things. The fourth and final step to the extraordinary Christian life is: "That you would keep me from evil so that I may not cause pain." Usually, we pray for the Lord to "Keep us through temptation, to help us to defeat the devil." Perhaps we should rethink and focus on staying away from temptation. Never "go there" in the first place. An extraordinary Christian life is always what God wants for us. An extraordinary Christian life is not a trouble-free life, but it is the life God wants for all of us. May we all be more spiritually alive in 2025.

In Christ's love,

Pastor Mike

Prayer: The families of Dick Lees, Helen Smith, and Debbie Troyer at their loss of their loved one.
Thanksgiving to God for: A New Year and a strong financial giving month in December for the church

Event: Don't forget, communion this Sunday. Also, one free book per family of "The Prayer of Jabez" is still available this Sunday. Also, after church stay to help decorations down.