

How the Enemy Creates Shame-Based Thinking—And What to Do About It

Note: This is the first of a two-part article.

We long for love and acceptance. But many have only experienced pain, rejection and shame.

In Christ, we are made new. He has borne our grief, sorrow and shame, and we can appropriate through His cross freedom and wholeness to live free of the pain and shame of the past.

The writer of Hebrews states of Jesus, “Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honor” (Heb. 12:2b, NLT).

The Father, through our new life in Christ, wants us to disregard shame and receive His honor as a beloved daughter or son. We are completely accepted, loved and desired in Him!

Looking at the story of Jabez in 1 Chronicles 4:9-10 (NKJV), I want to discuss moving from shame to honor.

Now Jabez was more honorable than his brothers, and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, “Because I bore him in pain.” 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.

Chronicles was written by Ezra toward the end of the fifth century B.C., after the Babylonian captivity and return of the exiles to Jerusalem. It was to remind Israel of the promises God had given them and to give them hope again.

The first nine chapters of 1 Chronicles consists of a long list of genealogies—with no seeming relevance. Then suddenly, we read of the story of Jabez, which serve as an epitaph for Jabez, to be inserted in the list. Based on the names before and after, scholars have approximated that Jabez lived around the time of Joshua and conquest of Canaan.

Why would God make sure these two verses were in the Bible?

There must be something significant about the context and his life that God wants us to see. Despite only two short verses, there is much here.

At that time, the Hebrew people were “God’s covenant people.” Throughout their history, God repeated His promise they would be a great and prosperous nation in the land of Canaan. God first promised this to Abraham and then reaffirmed this promise through Moses to the nation as they came out of Egypt to settle in the promised land.

In Deut. 28:1-14, the Lord’s desire was to bless the Israelites and cause them to be influential, thus provoking other nations to desire to know God. Further, the Messiah, Jesus, would come from this nation, despite their rebellion and disobedience at times. God’s highest goal was to bless them so that they could be a blessing!

Paul would write of the Christian’s promised inheritance in Christ, by way of the Hebrews and specifically Abraham, “And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Gal. 3:29, NKJV).

God’s desire for His people is to live blessed, according to His promise. Jesus said he desires for us to live an abundant life. Why? Foremost, He loves us. It brings Him pleasure and glory when His children are blessed, and lastly, with right motive, we can impact others with the gospel.

But there is a caution with the message of blessing, abundance

and prosperity. We pursue Jesus, as His devoted disciples, not for selfish gain, money and riches. We cannot serve two masters, God and money (Matt. 6:4).

There is nothing wrong with working hard and having wealth, but we are to be rich toward God, using the resources He gives to reach others with the gospel. It is important for us to maintain an eternal perspective. Paul warns:

“Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs” (1 Tim. 6:9-10, NIV).

Wrong Identity Creates Shame-Based Thinking

In 1 Chronicles 4:9, we see that the name Jabez means, “He will cause pain.” His mother perhaps had the Hebrew word Ah-Tzav in mind, which means anguish, intense sorrow or pain. By transposing two letters, we arrive at his name. His name Jabez is a pun/sound.

In this verse, there is no mention of his father. So why did his mother name him “he will cause pain”? Most believe it was due to her circumstances in childbirth. Or maybe the father was absent?

Perhaps she was a single mother, or maybe the father had a bad reputation? Maybe his family was not wealthy or influential? Maybe he was not wanted? Maybe the pain she experienced was one more child to feed during tough times? We do not know for sure, but Jabez was given a name, a constant reminder that he was a source of pain.

By the way, data shows that 25% of children in America are raised by a single parent, most of them single mothers. They often have some of the highest poverty rates in the country.

For many of these children, they grow up with feelings of rejection, abandonment and shame. They need from the church the message of love and acceptance, as well as practical help to empower them to become who God says they are and make a difference in our world.

Most children are given pleasant names, perhaps Faith, Grace or Joseph. Can you imagine growing up with the name Pain?

Every time his name was mentioned, it was a reminder to him that somehow his mother and his family saw him as one who caused pain. His name was a curse to him and created shame over his life. {eoa}

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