

A JOURNEY OF ENCOUNTER



Chapter 8:

Wild asking - please Lord, I want some more!

Based on 1 Chronicles 4:9-10; Mark 5:21-43

This month's content is written by Major Meshiel Brown, corps officer at Poplar and member of the UKI Territory Prayer Team.

INSPIRE

When Jesus is in the mix, there is always more than you expect. We live in a world where MORE is what people strive for, often not in a positive or healthy way. Jesus leads us into a healthy way of having and knowing MORE.

In Chapter Eight of our 'Into the Wild' adventure, we come across two people who ask for MORE. Both lives are changed: one in a quiet, out-of-sight, matter-of-fact way that is easy to miss; the other in the midst of rowdy chaos. But both were blessed because they asked for more.

As we move into a new year and leave 2020 behind, we have the opportunity to seek MORE. For some, the year we leave behind has been a time of loss, grief and limitations. Let's start this year of 2021 believing for MORE, and living a life that reflects the MORE we have in God.

Read alone or with a friend, reflect on the discussion questions over the phone with someone or in an online small group / Bible study, try the prayer activities and see what happens when you ask for MORE and let God guide you to that point.

If you'd like to receive regular updates throughout the 'Into the Wild' journey over the coming year, including invitations to our regular Zoom prayer gatherings, [sign up here](#).



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EXPLORE

Introduction

Asking for more can be seen in different ways. If you're Oliver Twist in Charles Dickens' classic novel, you are considered rude for asking for more, and some of us might have got a good telling-off if we'd asked for more when we were children. But for others, if you don't ask you don't get, so asking for more is a necessity.

The search for more can be dangerous, however. Some will do whatever it takes to get more success, wealth or achievement - no matter who gets hurt in the process. Others find that getting more becomes an addiction and they need therapeutic support to clear the mountains of stuff they have acquired.

More stuff often has a debilitating effect on life - the more you have, the more you want. But in the case of asking for MORE from God, it is a totally different story. The Bible is full of stories of people who encountered God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and found that there is so much more to God than they first realised. Let me introduce you to just two of them today.

Jabez

We find Jabez hidden away among a plethora of names in the first chapters of 1 Chronicles, which some may consider to be a really dull bit of the Bible. In the middle of a list of names, Jabez pops out from the crowd and adds a splash of brilliant colour to the greyness of the page. You could be forgiven for missing him altogether, as his claim to fame is recorded in only two verses. He makes it into the pages of the 'who's who' of incredible story-makers because of a prayer he prayed, not because of anything else he did.

Jabez did not have a great start in life. His mother named him 'pain' (the meaning of the Hebrew name Jabez). But however he started out in life, he must have done something right, because the writer of Chronicles says he was 'more honourable than his brothers'. Straight away we know that he is a good and godly man and he is recorded in history for the generations after him to learn from.

'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.' (1 Chronicles 4:10 NIV)

Jabez prayed for more. He asked for things only God could give, not things he could achieve for himself; and when you know the meaning of his name, the last phrase makes a lot of sense. He wanted to be the best he could be in God's hands. And God gave him what he asked for.



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When we feel threatened, it's because our minds are gathering information about the situation we're in and interpreting it in certain ways. Reframing means noticing what information our minds are gathering and re-interpreting it. When God calls us into the wild and it feels dangerous, we can learn to re-imagine it, so we see the dangers as possibilities and opportunities.

Jairus

In contrast, we find Jairus dealing with something that must have seemed very unfair. He was a synagogue leader, a respected, righteous man among the Jewish people - and yet his daughter became seriously ill.

I wonder what his process of thinking was and what he did first. Did he go to the synagogue and pray? Did he have her anointed with oil and get the elders round to do their thing? We do not know - but we do know he came to find Jesus.

Jairus could easily have been pressured by the Pharisees to have nothing to do with Jesus. However, he publicly and courageously placed himself at the feet of Jesus in respect and worship. Nothing else had worked to bring his daughter back to health. He wanted more, needed more, and Jesus was his answer to that.

At that moment of personal vulnerability on his knees before Jesus, he got sidelined while Jesus ministered to a woman who needed immediate healing. And then some men of his household turned up to tell him his daughter was dead. In that moment, pain, fear, confusion and hopelessness must have flooded into Jairus. Jesus heard, and into that crisis he spoke: 'Don't be afraid; just believe.'

Jesus then accompanied Jairus back to his home, endured the crowd's abuse and gently brought life back to his daughter. Unafraid of touching the dead or being seen as unclean, Jesus was full of compassion and gave MORE of himself to meet the MORE that Jairus had asked for. The request was simple: 'Come, touch and heal my daughter.' And Jesus did.

Deepen

Things might not start well, but they can change when we bring God into the equation. Pray an unusual prayer and wait for extraordinary things to happen. Is that greedy? I don't think so. The Bible is full of God's promises for those who dare ask. Both Jabez and Jairus were specific in their requests and both were granted their 'MORE', despite the opposition they could have faced.

Courage was key. They had to put their requests before God, clearly and honestly, in a state of vulnerability. Are there things you want from God, things that only he can give? Can you make yourself vulnerable enough to fall at the feet of Jesus and ask?



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Conclusion

Let us have the courage to pray for MORE, like Jabez. Let us have the courage to expect MORE, like Jairus. Let us believe that God has MORE for each of us and that the more we ask the more we'll get. Let us be eager to seek MORE of God and all he has to give. It's certain we are only scratching the surface of what is possible through Christ.

A truth to hold on to

What we see and have now is only a taste of what could be.

Challenge

- Pray Jabez's prayer every morning for 28 days before you put a foot on the floor, and see what God has in store for you.

WATCH

This month listen to Ruth Gray as she talks about praying for her husband Karl, who nearly lost his life to Covid-19 in the spring of 2020. She shares some of the amazing ways God responded to her prayers for MORE.

[Watch this video here](#)

DISCUSS

- Have you experienced occasions when you have asked God for MORE? How did it feel to ask? Did those feelings have anything to do with your upbringing?
- Have you ever been afraid to ask for anything in your work/school/home life? How have those feelings affected the way you ask God for more?
- Scripture tells us that we know how to give good things to our children, and that God gives even more. So, with that in mind, does that give you any courage to ask God for what you need or want?



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- There's a real difference between hoarding stuff and having more of the God stuff. Do you get carried away in attaining more stuff in life, perhaps trying to keep up with the neighbours? What could you do to change the way you think about MORE?
- When we ask for MORE of what God has, it often means we need to be active and more prepared to step out in faith into the unknown. How does that make you feel?
- When was the last time God worked through you in such a way that you knew without a doubt that God had done it? In fact, when was the last time you saw miracles happen on a regular basis in your life?

PRAY

1. Praying in God's will

When we spend time with someone we love, we get to know them intimately. As you spend time with Jesus in a quiet space, listen to what he has to say. Listen out for prompts - those little things that pop into your head, bringing people or situations to mind. Use those prompts to ask for MORE.

2. Drawing and identifying the gaps

Divide a piece of paper into six and number each rectangle from 1 to 6.

In rectangle number

1. Draw or write something that represents the issue you are wanting to bring to God.
2. Draw or write what you want the outcome to be.
3. Draw or write the obstacles.
4. Draw or write how you feel.
5. Ask God to show you what's missing on the page and allow him to speak to you as you draw/write in that space. The MORE you need may become visible here.
6. Draw or write the MORE you need from God, and to thank God for what he is going to do.



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3. Praying the Jabez Prayer

Sometimes it is good to have reminders around our homes or workplaces to give us a boost and encourage us to pray continually. Why not print or write out the Jabez prayer and have it around in different places (for example on a mirror, on the fridge, or in your wallet or purse).

4. Breaking the chains of 'I don't deserve more'

Many people grow up thinking they don't have the right to have more than their lot in life. The world pushes people into moulds and classes, places it can be hard to break out of. Remember that you are a child of God and have every right to ask God for more. As long as you pray with the same kind of humility and trust which Jabez and Jairus had, you can ask for MORE.

Take some time to read Psalm 139 and allow it to permeate your very being. Know you are important, precious and known by God. Now pray with confidence and faith that the MORE God has is yours too.

WEBSITE AND CONTACT EMAIL

For resources and sign up: www.salvationarmy.org.uk/resources/into-the-wild

Email Prayer Network: saprayernetwork@salvationarmy.org.uk



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