

Series: THE BLESSING OF THE LORD

THE FAVOR OF THE LORD, Part Two

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Dr. Mary Craig, Mary Craig Ministries

Walking in the Favor of the Lord

We use this word FAVOR in a very narrow sense in our culture. "Would you do me a FAVOR?" When the Bible speaks of FAVOR, it's talking about grace, goodwill, bending or condescending or stooping in kindness to someone.

Pertaining to God, favor refers to the divine influence on the heart and its reflection in the life. As we discussed in Part One of "The Favor of the Lord," the word "favor" comes from the Greek word, "*Charis*," from which we get our word for Grace. Grace is undeserved; favor can be obtained and someone can find favor in the sight of God.

According to Pastor Jerry Vargo, at least three things apply to finding FAVOR with God:

1. Total Unconditional Surrender, meaning letting God be God without limiting Him and putting conditions on our surrender to His will with the mind of Christ and the heart of the Holy Spirit.
2. Absolute Purity, which involves acknowledging our sinful nature and the iniquity of our hearts and receiving the love of God for us.

God's love is a true love, a love without a lie, a love that does no harm, a love that covers a multitude of sin, and a love that comes from God's holy heart, which is pure and undefiled. We are to purify our hearts, but this involves humbling ourselves before a Sovereign Lord, confessing the truth of the Word of God, and without rebuttal, without debate, without rebellion, without resistance, letting the Holy Spirit sanctify us as He is a refining fire. We embrace holiness and seek to live worthy in our relationship with the Holy Spirit, who applies to us what Christ has accomplished for us and in our place.

3. Having the Mind of Christ.

This means acknowledging the Truth, aligning ourselves to the Truth, seeking to comprehend God's perspective and purposes and ways, and praying to think thoughts coming from the Lord and not the thoughts of a man. It is bringing every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.

Let's remember, when God gives us a mission, He also gives us FAVOR to accomplish the task!

Lance Wallnau defines favor like this:

"To have the peculiar signature of God's FAVOR or honor or cherishing value placed on you so that when he sees you there is a special value he has for you."

"When He likes you, there is such an influence that comes upon you that the charisma of God himself rubs off on you which makes other people like you or cooperate with you whether they like you or not!"

"FAVOR is the special affection of God toward you that releases an influence on you, so that others are inclined to like you, or to cooperate with you." Lance Wallnau

To that we might add that this favor can also bring jealousy, envy, and even hatred; for example, Cain and Abel, Joseph and his brothers, Esther and Vashti, Saul and David. Jesus said,

"If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours. But all these things they will do to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me. John 15:18-21 ESV

We examined Noah and Joseph as examples of those with FAVOR. Who else might we put on that list?

1. Ruth found FAVOR with Boaz – A type of Christ.

2. Hannah found FAVOR with the Priest Eli – Samuel the prophet was born and 1 Samuel 2:26 says...

"And the child Samuel grew on, and increased in FAVOR both with Jehovah, and also with men."

3. Nehemiah found FAVOR with the King. He accomplished the mission of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem.

4. Esther found FAVOR—so much so that the King offered her up to half his kingdom.

5. King David found FAVOR—even though he often failed. His heart was after the things of God.

God wants to bless us with FAVOR.

Let's look at some other examples.

(1) CHILDREN OF ISRAEL

Turn to Exodus 3:19-21.

¹⁹But I know that the king of Egypt will not allow you to go unless a mighty hand compels him. ²⁰So I will stretch out My hand and strike the Egyptians with all the wonders I will perform among them. And after that, he will release you. ²¹And I will grant this people such favor in the sight of the Egyptians that when you leave, you will not go away empty-handed. Exodus 3:19-21 ESV

Exodus 20 contains the Ten Commandments at the beginning of that chapter. In the remainder of Exodus **20**, and in the three chapters which follow, we find a series of laws delivered by God to Moses. Ultimately, God would give a minute and complicated elaboration of rules to meet all cases which fills the three Books of Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

¹⁸When all the people witnessed the thunder and lightning, the sounding of the ram's horn, and the mountain enveloped in smoke, they trembled and stood at a distance. ¹⁹“Speak to us yourself and we will listen,” they said to Moses. “But do not let God speak to us, or we will die.”

²⁰“Do not be afraid,” Moses replied. “For God has come to test you, so that the fear of Him may be before you, to keep you from sinning.” ²¹And the people stood at a distance as Moses approached the thick darkness where God was. ²²Then the LORD said to Moses, “This is what you are to tell the Israelites: ‘You have seen for yourselves that I have spoken to you from heaven. Exodus 20:18-22 cf. (Exodus 20:18–21; Hebrews 12:18–29) Berean

Note the following:

1. God granted FAVOR in the presence of His enemies – vs. 21. The children of Israel had seen this for themselves.
2. The children of Israel saw how the Egyptians cooperated – vs. 22
3. Their deliverance was God's FAVOR. Why? Because they had a mission to fulfill.

(2) MOSES

Turn to Exodus 33:1-17.

¹Then the LORD said to Moses, “Leave this place, you and the people you brought up out of the land of Egypt, and go to the land that I promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob when I said, ‘I will give it to your descendants.’ ²And I will send an angel before you, and I will drive out the Canaanites, Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites. ³Go up to a land flowing with milk and honey. But I will not go with you, because you are a stiff-necked people; otherwise, I might destroy you on the way.”

⁴When the people heard these bad tidings, they went into mourning, and no one put on any of his jewelry. ⁵For the LORD had said to Moses, “Tell the Israelites, ‘You are a stiff-necked people. If I should go with you for a single moment, I would destroy you. Now take off your jewelry, and I will decide what to do with you.’”

⁶So the Israelites stripped themselves of their jewelry from Mount Horeb onward.

The Tent of Meeting

⁷Now Moses used to take the tent and pitch it at a distance outside the camp. He called it the Tent of Meeting, and anyone inquiring of the LORD would go to the Tent of Meeting outside the camp. ⁸Then, whenever Moses went out to the tent, all the people would stand at the entrances to their own tents and watch Moses until he entered the

tent. ⁹As Moses entered the tent, the pillar of cloud would come down and remain at the entrance, and the LORD would speak with Moses. ¹⁰When all the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance to the tent, they would stand up and worship, each one at the entrance to his own tent.

¹¹Thus the LORD would speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. Then Moses would return to the camp, but his young assistant Joshua son of Nun would not leave the tent.

The Promise of God's Presence

¹²Then Moses said to the LORD, "Look, You have been telling me, 'Lead this people up,' but You have not let me know whom You will send with me. Yet You have said, 'I know you by name, and you have found favor in My sight.' ¹³Now if indeed I have found favor in Your sight, please let me know Your ways, that I may know You and find favor in Your sight. Remember that this nation is Your people."

¹⁴And the LORD answered, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."

¹⁵"If Your Presence does not go with us," Moses replied, "do not lead us up from here. ¹⁶For how then can it be known that Your people and I have found favor in Your sight, unless You go with us? How else will we be distinguished from all the other people on the face of the earth?"

¹⁷So the LORD said to Moses, "I will do this very thing you have asked, for you have found favor in My sight, and I know you by name." Exodus 33:1-17 Berean

Moses wants certainty that he has found favor in God's sight. He begins with an "if indeed." —let me know Your ways, that I may know You and find favor in Your sight. vs. 13

Vs. 14-16 – How was Moses to know if he had FAVOR? He wants God's Presence to go with the children of Israel as they leave Sinai. God gives His commitment in vs. 14. God's Presence will distinguish His people from all the other people on the face of the earth. God knows Moses by name. And then in the verses that follow, God responds to Moses' desire to see His Glory. God will show Moses His Glory, in particular, His goodness. He gives Moses specific goodness and why it must be a certain way. Because of who God is, Moses cannot see God's face and live. God will proclaim His Name, the LORD. (YHWH)

¹⁸Then Moses said, "Please show me Your glory." ¹⁹"I will cause all My goodness to pass before you," the LORD replied, "and I will proclaim My name—the LORD—in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." ²⁰But He added, "You cannot see My face, for no one can see Me and live." Exodus 33:18-20. Berean.

So with favor from the LORD comes an increased knowing of His ways and His Person. The Names of God reveal God's Person, His attributes, and thus His Glory.

(3) THE WARNING TO US FROM THE LIFE OF SAUL

Saul did not seek the Lord's favor.

1 Samuel 13:7-14. In the NIV...

"Saul remained at Gilgal, and all the troops with him were quaking with fear. He waited seven days, the time set by Samuel; but Samuel did not come to Gilgal, and Saul's men began to scatter. So he said, "Bring me the burnt offering and the fellowship offerings." And Saul offered up the burnt offering. Just as he finished making the offering, Samuel arrived, and Saul went out to greet him. "What have you done?" asked Samuel. Saul replied, "When I saw that the men were scattering, and that you did not come at the set time, and that the Philistines were assembling at Micmash, I thought, 'Now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal, and I have not sought the LORD's FAVOR.' So I felt compelled to offer the burnt offering." "You acted foolishly," Samuel said. "You have not kept the command the LORD your God gave you; if you had, he would have established your kingdom over Israel for all time. But now your kingdom will not endure; the LORD has sought out a man after his own heart and appointed him leader of his people, because you have not kept the LORD's command." 1 Samuel 13:7-14 NIV

Saul lost his authority and his kingdom BECAUSE he did not seek the Lord's FAVOR AND because he did not pray to know the WAYS of God and the Person of God, as had Moses. Other factors also contributed to the downfall of Saul's kingship, but for us today we must point out that there is a danger in NOT seeking the favor of the LORD.

Proverb 3:1-4

My son, do not forget my teaching, But let your heart keep my commandments; for length of days and years of life, and peace they will add to you. Do not let kindness and truth leave you; Bind them around your neck, Write them on the tablet of your heart. So you will find FAVOR and good repute (prudence, understanding, and success) in the sight of God and man.

The Living God, the Covenant-keeping LORD, calls us by name and we belong to Him. He is the God of All Grace, the Father of Mercies, and is known for His goodness. He is faithful to reveal to us His Names, which reflect the many facets of His Glory. He knows His own and desires that we know Him and Jesus Christ whom He has sent. His love is an everlasting love. The bond of the covenant of grace in Christ is a blood covenant; Jesus Christ offered Himself once for all time as a sacrifice. Jesus satisfied sufficiently the divine justice of God, paying the penalty for sin, for offending a Holy and Sovereign Creator. Jesus bore the wrath of God, mediating reconciliation with God, redeeming a people who would be marked with the brandmark of Jesus Christ. He delivered, is delivering, and will deliver His own from His enemies, including death. He destroys the works of darkness. He overcomes, and His own will have rest in His Presence.

May we be blessed with the favor of the Lord, and may even our enemies be at peace with us.

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Questions:

1. Pertaining to God, to what does “favor” refer? According to Pastor Jerry Vargo, what three things apply to finding favor with God? Comment on each as to what these might involve?

2. Summarize how Lance Wallnau defines favor in the lesson.

3. When God gives us a mission, He also gives us favor to accomplish the task. How was this “played out” in the lives of Ruth with Boaz, Hannah and the Priest Eli, Nehemiah and the king, Esther and the king, and David—even though he would sin “royally,” and the covenant God made with David in 2 Samuel 7?

4. Look up John 15:16-27. Does having God’s favor ensure that no one will hate you and/or that life will be a breeze? Identify the mission of the Apostles. Think about who hated Jesus and comment on Gill’s Exposition:

ye know that it hated me before it hated you; which words are an appeal of Christ to his apostles, for the usage he had met with from the wicked and unbelieving world of the Jews; how they had expressed their hatred, not only by words, calling him a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a sinner, a Samaritan, a madman, one that had a devil, yea, Beelzebub himself, but by deeds; taking up stones to stone him more than once, leading him to the brow of an hill, in order to cast him down headlong, consulting by various means to take away his life, as Herod did in his very infancy; which was done, before they showed so much hatred to his disciples; and perhaps reference may be had to the original enmity between the seed of the woman, and the seed of the serpent, mentioned Genesis 3:15; as well as to these instances. Moreover, the words, rendered “before you”, may be translated “the first” or “chief of you”, your Lord and head; and denotes the dignity, excellency, and superiority of Christ; wherefore it is suggested, that if he, who was so much before them in personal worth and greatness, was hated by the world, they should not think it hard, or any strange thing, that this should be their case. *Gill’s Exposition of the Entire Bible*.

4. **1 Peter 5:10, 11: In his kindness God called you to share in his eternal glory by means of Christ Jesus. So after you have suffered a little while, he will restore, support, and strengthen you, and he will place you on a firm foundation. All power to him forever! Amen. (1 Peter 5:10-11)** Having the mind of Christ includes having God’s perspective on life. What might be some of our fears relative to fulfilling the mission God has given us and handling the favor of the Lord in the midst of experiencing hatred from the world? Look up 2 Timothy 1:7. Apply the verse to what we need relative to our fears.

6. Look up Exodus 20:18-21. What was going on? Identify three things the children of Israel had seen and experienced.

7. In the lesson we considered Moses and Exodus 33:1-17. What did Moses want (v. 13)? How was Moses to know if he had favor? (v.14-16). What did Moses want God to

do specifically? What did God say to Moses in Exodus 33:17? Discuss the significance of God knowing Moses by name and what it means for those “in Christ.”

8. Exodus 33:18-20. What did God say to Moses when Moses asked God to show him His Glory? God responds while maintaining His sovereignty. What was God’s response; what will God proclaim?

9. Saul did not seek the Lord’s favor. 1 Samuel 13:7-14. What resulted?

10. Look up Proverbs 3:1-4. List five exhortations in this passage. What is promised?

Bibliography:

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