

Series: THE BLESSING OF THE LORD

THE FAVOR OF THE LORD, Part One

June 10, 2022

Dr. Mary Craig

¹²For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. ¹³Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things *are* naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

¹⁴Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* profession. ¹⁵For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are*, yet without sin. ¹⁶Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace; that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. Hebrews 4:12-16 KJV

Cognate: 5485 *xáris* (another feminine noun from *xar-*, "*favor, disposed to, inclined, favorable towards, leaning towards to share benefit*") – properly, *grace*. 5485 (*xáris*) is preeminently used of the Lord's *favor* – *freely extended to give Himself away to people* (because He is "always leaning toward them").

5485 /*xáris* ("grace") answers directly to the Hebrew (OT) term 2580 /*Kaná* ("grace, extension-toward"). Both refer to God *freely extending Himself (His favor, grace), reaching (inclining) to people because He is disposed to bless (be near) them.*
<https://biblehub.com/greek/5485.htm>

Did we get that? God freely extends Himself, His favor, His grace. He is inclined to people, reaching and leaning towards people to share benefit because He is disposed to bless and be near them. God always desires to bless us. Deep down we live, we have little hearts inclined to evil, but God seeks to make crooked places straight and freely extends His favor by giving of Himself. God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself. Jesus was sent by the Father to save a people, the people given to Him by His Father.

Jesus finished the work He was sent to do. Jesus is our Great High Priest. He ever lives to make intercession for the elect, the saints, for those who belong to Him and who believe in Him.

We think of favor as doing a favor for someone. Mostly we think of favor as "I owe you one." God has no favorites and is not partial (James 2:1), and things are not "fair" and "equal," because of God's favor.

James 2:1 *My brethren, do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with an attitude of personal favoritism. NAS*

God loves but is also just. He wants the best for us, and He is holy and sovereign. He distinguishes between the righteous and the wicked. No one is righteous except those justified in Christ, the Just One.

Psalm 7:11 "God judges the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day."

Understanding the favor of God can change one's life. It's not something we are to use to manipulate God or to bend Him to our ways and desires and will. It's there because of who God is; and God is no fool.

In a message dated December 12, 2003, Pastor Jerry Vargo on Sermon Central commented in his sermon, "The Favor of the Lord,"

"Other NT meanings: The divine influence upon the heart and its reflection in the life. That which affords joy, pleasure, delight, sweetness, charm, and loveliness. Grace of speech. What is due to grace. The spiritual condition of one governed by the power of divine grace."

(THE FAVOR OF THE LORD Jerry Vargo Sermon Central, December 12, 2003.)

As we have discovered, grace and favor come from the same root word. Grace is undeserved, unmerited. Favor is something we can find. And, we can find favor with God.

FAVOR COMES UPON THOSE WHO are...

Watching, waiting, praying, keeping the commandments of Jesus, walking in kindness and in truth. Understanding and growing in the knowledge of God and His nature and ways produces favor. Finding a good wife is God's favor. Even suffering, and suffering for righteousness' sake, for doing the right thing, can lead to obtaining the Lord's favor. Brokenness stands out as a step in the process of finding favor with God, perhaps to stem the tide of pride when God's favor comes. God opposes the proud and gives grace to the humble.

If we want to come closer to having God give us the desire of OUR hearts, it's going to take coming into full alignment with the Word of God, the mind of Christ, and the heart of the Holy Spirit with the sole purpose of doing the will of God. If that sounds like it's all about Him, it is.

Interestingly, throughout the Bible, it is said that we will not find anyone who had a mission from God who did not also have God's favor. The angel Gabriel came to Mary and said to her, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" Luke 1:28. **And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God."** Luke 1:30. Mary was endowed with grace. She found favor with God; God was with her. She was highly favored.

Luke 2:52 says of Jesus: **And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.**

Favor can be thought of as the special affection of God that releases an influence, or an anointing, such that others cooperate with the plan of God for your life and for His purposes.

God's favor rests upon those who go after Him and the dreams or visions or obedience that He places in their hearts. They believe the Living God. They desire with their whole hearts to obey what God has purposed for them. They desire to do His will with the mind of Christ and empowered by the heart of the Holy Spirit.

To show what favor looks like in real life, we will consider those who found favor with God from the Word of God.

Noah: Genesis 6:5-22. ⁵The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. ⁶And the Lord regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. ⁷So the Lord said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them." ⁸But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.

Noah and the Flood

⁹These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation. Noah walked with God. ¹⁰And Noah had three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

¹¹Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with violence. ¹²And God saw the earth, and behold, it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth. ¹³And God said to Noah, "I have determined to make an end of all flesh,^c for the earth is filled with violence through them. Behold, I will destroy them with the earth. ¹⁴Make yourself an ark of gopher wood.^d Make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and out with pitch. ¹⁵This is how you are to make it: the length of the ark 300 cubits,^e its breadth 50 cubits, and its height 30 cubits. ¹⁶Make a roof^f for the ark, and finish it to a cubit above, and set the door of the ark in its side. Make it with lower, second, and third decks. ¹⁷For behold, I will bring a flood of waters upon the earth to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life under heaven. Everything that is on the earth shall die. ¹⁸But I will establish my covenant with you, and you shall come into the ark, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you. ¹⁹And of every living thing of all flesh, you shall bring two of every sort into the ark to keep them alive with you. They shall be male and female. ²⁰Of the birds according to their kinds, and of the animals according to their kinds, of every creeping thing of the ground, according to its kind, two of every sort shall come in to you to keep them alive. ²¹Also take with you every sort of food that is eaten, and store it up. It shall serve as food for you and for them." ²²Noah did this; he did all that God commanded him. Genesis 6:5-22 ESV

Noah found favor. He was given the mind of God, namely what God willed. He obeyed all that God commanded him, being in complete agreement with the will of God and despite all opposition.

Joseph: Genesis 39:1-12. ¹Now Joseph had been brought down to Egypt, and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard, an Egyptian, had bought him

from the Ishmaelites who had brought him down there. ²The Lord was with Joseph, and [so] he became a successful man, and he was in the house of his Egyptian master. ³His master saw that the Lord was with him and that the Lord caused all that he did to succeed in his hands. ⁴So Joseph found favor in his sight and attended him, and he made him overseer of his house and put him in charge of all that he had. ⁵From the time that he made him overseer in his house and over all that he had, the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; the blessing of the Lord was on all that he had, in house and field. ⁶So he left all that he had in Joseph's charge, and because of him he had no concern about anything but the food he ate.

Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance. ⁷And after a time his master's wife cast her eyes on Joseph and said, "Lie with me." ⁸But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Behold, because of me my master has no concern about anything in the house, and he has put everything that he has in my charge. ⁹He is not greater in this house than I am, nor has he kept back anything from me except you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" ¹⁰And as she spoke to Joseph day after day, he would not listen to her, to lie beside her or to be with her.

¹¹But one day, when he went into the house to do his work and none of the men of the house was there in the house, ¹²she caught him by his garment, saying, "Lie with me." But he left his garment in her hand and fled and got out of the house. Genesis 39:1-12
ESV

God was with Joseph so he became a successful man. Joseph found favor with God and also with man. Joseph remained an Israelite in Egypt. God granted him favor and Joseph found himself in Potiphar's house with oversight of Potiphar's house and all that Potiphar had.

Faced with temptation, Joseph fled, but in the sovereign providence of God, he left his garment in the hand of Potiphar's wife. This all landed him in prison. Joseph suffered for doing right, but God was with him and so Joseph finds favor with the Chief Jailer. Later on, Joseph found favor with Pharaoh. By this time, Joseph had learned humility and when asked to interpret Pharaoh's dream, Joseph responded that it was not in him to interpret the dream but God would give Pharaoh the answer. Pharaoh promoted Joseph to be second only to him, like a Prime Minister, over Egypt inasmuch as Pharaoh saw wisdom in Joseph and knew him to be faithful in managing things as a trustee.

Joseph was a man who went through the process of brokenness. He did the right thing regardless and he extended favor to others. Some warn, however, that favor can be something dangerous when a person begins to embrace everything that comes his/her way. Brokenness prepares us to be able to handle the favor of the Lord.

Also Note: Those who have favor, bless those around them. Genesis 39:5.

Favor can be thought of as the special affection of God that releases an influence, or an anointing, such that others cooperate with the plan of God for your life and for His purposes.

Listen to the following verses as we close:

Psalm 5:12 "For surely, O LORD, you bless the righteous; you surround them with your favor as with a shield." NIV

Psalm 30:5 "For His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for a lifetime; Weeping may last for the night, but a shout of joy comes in the morning." NAS

Psalm 30:6-7 "Now in my prosperity I said, "I shall never be moved. "LORD, by Your favor You have made my mountain stand strong; You hid Your face, and I was troubled." NKJV

Proverbs 18:22 He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favor from the LORD.

Proverbs 16: 1-9 ¹The preparations [plans] of the heart in man, and [but] the answer of the tongue, *is* from the LORD. ²All the ways of a man *are* clean in his own eyes; but the LORD weighs the spirits [motives]. ³Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established. ⁴The LORD hath made all *things* for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil. ⁵Every one *that is* proud in heart *is* an abomination to the LORD: *though* hand *join* in hand, he shall not be unpunished. ⁶By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the LORD *men* depart from evil. ⁷When a man's ways please the LORD, he makes even his enemies to be at peace with him. ⁸Better *is* a little with righteousness than great revenues without right [justice]. ⁹A man's heart devises his way: but the LORD directs his steps. KJV

Bibliography:

<https://biblehub.com/greek/5485.htm>

<https://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/favor-walking-in-the-favor-of-the-lord-part-1-jerry-vargo-sermon-on-discipleship-64156?page=2&wc=800>

© 2022 Mary Craig Ministries, Inc. www.marycraig.org www.mcmtoffr.org

Series: THE BLESSING OF THE LORD

THE FAVOR OF THE LORD, Part One

June 10, 2022

Dr. Mary Craig

Questions:

1. Look up Hebrews 4:12-16. What is the definition of the Hebrew OT term 2580 and the NT term 5485? <https://biblehub.com/greek/5485.htm> Comment on your findings relative to God's favor.

Question: People find favor with God. Identify ten things a person can do that might lead to obtaining the Lord's favor.

2. Why is brokenness most often a necessary step in finding favor with God? Discuss the danger of pride and selfish ambition in the pursuit of favor with God. Favor is an endowment; some think of it as an anointing. Discuss the objective of desiring to do the will of the Father with the mind of Christ and with the heart of the Holy Spirit as He empowers.

3. Throughout the Bible, it is said that we will not find anyone who had a mission from God who did not also have God's favor. Look up Luke 1:28-35. What did the angel Gabriel say to Mary? How did Gabriel address Mary? With what was she endowed? What was Mary's mission to be? What reason did Gabriel give in answer to any fear?

What was Mary's response to all this? How did she view herself? How did she demonstrate her submission to God's will?

4. How might we think of "favor"? Discuss what it means that God is with someone. What does it not mean? In the face of all opposition to the mission of God, what must be our confidence? If we really believed that the Living God is "with us," how would it affect our thoughts, our will, and our emotions?

5. Review Genesis 6:5-14. What reasons are given for the Lord's regret and grief of heart? What did He purpose to do? Noah found favor with God. Identify three aspects about Noah that brought favor to him and his family. After telling Noah the plan and giving Noah his obedience, what did God promise Noah as to what would happen? (v.17-18). Reflect on the fact that "Noah did this; he did all that God commanded him." (v. 22). What seems remarkable about this level of obedience and the apparent lack of rebuttal, resistance, anxiety, excuses, etc. on Noah's part?

6. Noah was counted righteous, blameless. He walked with God. God promised to establish His covenant with Noah. What was Noah surrounded by? What does this tell us about "resolve," "focus," etc.? Ultimately, what was Noah's mission? How does "favor" factor into the empowerment of such a level of obedience?

7. Read Genesis 39:1-12. Trace the aspect of suffering (or being punished) for doing right in this passage about Joseph's life. Discuss the significance of verse 2. What cause is given for Joseph's success (v. 3)? How did the Lord's favor, and being "with Joseph," become evident to Potiphar and then the Chief Jailer and then Pharaoh?

8. While Joseph was being honored for his faithful service as steward and trusteeship, his responsibilities also increased. As this was going on, however, how did God prepare Joseph to be in the position of prime minister? In this regard, consider Joseph's handling of temptation, remaining an Israelite in Egypt, staying faithful to God and his human overlords, dying to self.

Question: Look up Genesis 41:16.

¹⁶So Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, “*It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace.*” NKJV.

Reflect on the forging of Joseph's character from his boyhood and the time of his coat of many colors unto his time before Pharaoh. Look up Genesis 41:39-41. What did Pharaoh see in Joseph? Why do you think so many Christians say, “The way up is down.”?

9. Look up Psalm 30:5-7; Proverbs 16:1-9. What strikes you in these verses as you think about them relative to the favor of the Lord, His empowering grace, His holiness, and His sovereignty? And remember, having the favor of the Lord is a progressive process. Luke 2:52.

Answers to the Q&A from a student: www.mcmftr.org (The Master Sheets)

© 2022 Mary Craig Ministries, Inc. www.marycraig.org www.mcmftr.org