

October 2, 2016—Fall Quarter 2016—Sunday Morning Bible Class

UNMERITED FAVOR

Your supernatural advantage for a successful life

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Chapter 2

Everything You Touch Is Blessed

By now, I hope you can see that God's definition of success is contrary to the world's. The world looks at what you have, while God sees who you have. The world's system is based on what you have done, while God looks at what Jesus has done on the cross for you. It sounds simple, but don't dismiss it just because it's simple. The gospel is simple, and it takes theologians to complicate it!

You can make a choice to live your life depending on yourself to merit, earn, accomplish, fight for and accumulate wealth and success according to the world's definition, or you can make a decision today to live your life depending wholly and completely on Jesus, His merit and His accomplishment on the cross for your every success. It essentially comes down to the question of dependence. Who are you depending on today—yourself or Jesus? Do you want to fight for yourself, or do you want Almighty God, the Creator of the heavens and earth, to fight for you?

You see, when you depend on yourself, you carry all the stress, burdens and anxieties that your circumstances may present you. But if your dependence is on Jesus for every success in your life, the Bible records a beautiful promise for you: "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:6-7)." When Jesus is your source of success, there is no stress and God's peace will garrison your heart and mind. The word "peace" in Hebrew is *shalom*. Its meaning includes peace, prosperity, health, completeness, soundness and safety. What a powerful fortress we have in Jesus!

In A Crisis? Jesus Can Rescue You

My friend, the circumstances around you may appear bleak. Your bank account may have dried up. You may have lost your source of income due to corporate restructuring and you may have no idea how you are going to pay next month's rent. Perhaps your home may be up for foreclosure soon. You may be mired in credit card debt, and the friends that you once trusted may have disappointed you. Maybe you have just received a devastating medical report. The whole world seems to be crashing down around you, and you feel crushed, frustrated and disappointed.

Now, what can you do? Beloved, now is the time for you to turn away from yourself and look to Jesus. In your frustration, you may be wondering, "What can Jesus do for me? Can He rescue me from the crisis that I am in?" The

answer is sure-yes, He can! That's what He did for Joseph and He can certainly do the same for you!

Joseph-The Apple of His Father's Eye

Let's continue to draw powerful truths from the life of Joseph in the Bible. His story begins in Genesis 37. His father made no secret about the fact that he loved Joseph more than all his other children, and made an exquisite tunic of many colors that was given to Joseph only. The Hebrew words for "tunic of ...colors" are *kethoneth pac*. The phrase means a coat of pieces of various colors. The coat is a long tunic with sleeves worn by young men and maidens of the better class, a dress of distinction. Thus, this tunic was distinct from the ordinary laborer's garb worn by his older brothers. Joseph's tunic was not woven out of the coarse linen used for normal clothing, but was skillfully woven from fine, high-grade linen. Why is this important? It is important because it did not only mean that Joseph had better-looking clothes compared to his brothers, but it also meant that the tunic was a sign to all that Joseph enjoyed a higher status in his father's eyes.

This fine linen tunic set Joseph apart from his brothers in terms of their responsibilities in the family. It meant that unlike his brothers, Joseph did not need to work in the fields and tend the flock. All he had to do was to attend to his father and bring his father pleasure. What an awesome job description! That is why we find that Joseph was mostly by his father's side while his brothers were laboring under the sweltering sun.

Joseph's tunic, therefore, speaks of a special position of favor and rest with his father. It is no wonder then, that every time Joseph's brothers saw him wearing this tunic, they were reminded that their father loved Joseph more than any of them. Filled with jealousy and envy, they hated Joseph and could not speak peaceably with him. Furthermore, Joseph shared with his brothers the two dreams that he had received from the Lord and these dreams only exacerbated their hatred toward him. They ridiculed his dreams angrily and mocked him saying, "Shall you indeed reign over us? Or shall you indeed have dominion over us?" (Genesis 37:8)

Joseph Betrayed By His Brothers

One day, as Joseph's brothers were out tending their father's sheep in the fields of Dothan, they saw Joseph approaching from a distance and waving innocently at them. They knew that he was sent by their father to check on them, and they burned with resentment as they recalled how this little squealer brought a bad report to Jacob the last time he had come to spy on them.

Overcome with rage and compounded jealousy toward Joseph, his brothers conspired to kill him. They said to one another, "Look, this dreamer is coming! Come therefore, let us now kill him and cast him into some pit; and we shall say,

'Some wild beast has devoured him. 'We shall see what will become of his dreams!'" (Genesis 37:19-20)

Bright-eyed and unsuspecting, Joseph headed toward his brothers, ready to embrace them. Without warning, his brothers seized him and violently stripped him of his beautiful tunic. Struggling frantically all the while, he was dragged toward a nearby pit and shoved into its cavernous depths.

Any notion that his brothers were perhaps playing a prank on him dissipated from Joseph's mind when they returned a while later, only to have his gagged and bound body into the hands of a gang of Midianite traders on their way to Egypt. The next time we see Joseph, he is trussed up in ropes and sold like a piece of meat in an Egyptian market.

It's Not The End When The Lord Is With You

Do you know of anyone who is in a worse situation than Joseph was at this point? His whole world appeared to have collapsed around him. Just a few days earlier, he was in his father's embrace but now, his own brothers had betrayed him. All that he owned had been stripped from him. He was reduced to nothing more than a slave in a foreign land.

***It is not what you have. It is who you have
that makes all the difference.***

Was this the end of Joseph? In the natural scheme of things, it sure looked like it was. But even with the odds stacked up against Joseph, the Lord was far from finished. We learned in the previous chapter that even in this dire situation, the Lord was with Joseph, and at this dark and bleak juncture in Joseph's life, the Lord called him a successful man! Remember, it is not what you have. It is who you have that makes all the difference.

"How can the Lord make a young slave with not a single cent or possession to his name succeed?"

Well, let's continue with Joseph's story. Genesis 39:3 tells us, "And his master [Potiphar] saw that the Lord was with him [Joseph] and that the Lord made all he did to prosper in his hand." This is a powerful statement and it offers a promise that you can believe Jesus for, in every area of your life. Can you imagine every project, assignment and even errand that you undertake becoming prosperous? Your hands become hands of blessing. You touch your family members and they are blessed. Your company may be struggling to manage a difficult project, but once it is placed in your hands, the project becomes blessed. You become a blessing waiting to happen to someone, waiting to happen to something, everywhere you go!

God's Presence In All That We Do

Now, how will this happen? The Lord Jesus will make it happen when you depend on Him in the same way that Joseph depended on Him. Joseph had

nothing. He could not trust in his skills or experience (he had never been a slave), nor could he trust in his natural connections (his father was out of the picture because he believed that Joseph had been killed by a wild animal). All Joseph had was the Lord's presence, and he depended on the Lord to manifest His presence, His power and His glory through him!

***When God's presence is made manifest in your life,
that's when His glory shines forth through you.***

That's what you and I need a manifest of His presence in everything that we do! You see, it is one thing to have His presence (all Christians have His presence because they have accepted Him as their personal Lord and Savior), but when His presence is made manifest in your life, that's when His glory shines forth through you!

Even Potiphar, A Heathen, Could See It

Don't forget that Joseph's master, Potiphar, was not a believer in God. He was an Egyptian who worshipped idols. Yet, when the manifested presence of the Lord shone gloriously through the work of Joseph's hands, even this unbelieving heathen could see the tangible results of the Lord's special anointing, power and blessing upon Joseph's life. Potiphar marveled and could not but acknowledge that the Lord was with Joseph, and that "the Lord made all he did to prosper in his hand."

Now, isn't it interesting that Potiphar did not merely conclude that Joseph was a good worker? Instead, Potiphar could see that it was not Joseph's skills, but rather, his God who was prospering all that Joseph set his hands to. Genesis 39:3 tells us that "the Lord made all he did to prosper in his hand." This could not have been "spiritual discernment" on Potiphar's part—he was not a believer and had no spiritual discernment when it came to the things of God. So this tells me that Potiphar must have witnessed tangible results that were really out of this world. He must have seen results that were so spectacular that he knew they were beyond that of an ordinary human being!

Perhaps Potiphar ordered Joseph to dig new wells for his household and every well that Joseph dug yielded water even in the midst of a drought. Perhaps the field that Joseph tended yielded crops that were shockingly bigger than the crops in the surrounding fields. Perhaps Potiphar saw how Joseph called upon his God when the children in the house were suffering from some epidemic in the land, and they were all healed. Whatever the case was, Potiphar knew that the prosperous results he had witnessed were not a result of Joseph's natural abilities. They had to be due to the fact that the Lord was with Joseph, and God made all he did to prosper in his hand. Isn't that beautiful?

Desire To Have The Jesus-Kind Of Results

My personal prayer and desire for my ministry is to have the same kind of results that Joseph had. In everything that I do, I want people to see Jesus and Jesus alone! When I pray for a sick child, I certainly do not want the results that my own hands can produce. If the results are what Joseph Prince alone can produce, I can guarantee you that the child will remain sick. No, I want the results that only Jesus can produce! When I preach about Jesus and His finished work, my prayer is that my church congregation and those who are watching our broadcasts around the world would hear not what I have to say, but rather, what Jesus is speaking to their hearts through me.

Desire the results that only Jesus can produce!

I am but a vessel, and my words alone have no power. But at His Word, sinners get born again and are saved for all eternity. Sick bodies are healed. Demons flee, marriages are restored and families brought together. Debts are supernaturally cancelled, fears disappear in His perfect love, hearts are encouraged, hope is restored and joy is renewed. Now, THAT is the Jesus-kind of results that I want, and by His amazing and unmerited favor, we have seen all these blessings happening in our church week after week!

Not Our Doing But God's Unmerited Favor

Sadly, the world and even some Christians do not understand what it means to depend on Jesus. For instance, some people think that Joseph Prince somehow grew New Creation Church from 150 members to more than 20,000 members today because of some clever strategy or comprehensive 10-year growth plan. A senior Christian pioneer in my country once asked me what I was doing to grow the church. I replied that it was all by grace—Jesus' Unmerited Favor. He replied, "Yes, yes, I know that it's by grace, but really, what are you doing?"

When you stop doing and start depending on God's divine favor, you will begin to experience the Jesus-kind of results.

Unfortunately, in many Christian circles, "grace" has become a cliché. You see, people are occupied with "doing." They always want to know what you are doing right to get the results that you have. The point of this book is to encourage you to not focus on what you are doing, but to focus on beholding Jesus. Stop trying to merit God's blessings and start depending on Jesus' unmerited favor for every success in your life. When you stop doing and start depending on His divine favor, trust me, you will begin to experience the Jesus-kind of results.

In the same way, I am believing for the Jesus-kind of results in *your* life as I write this book. I do not want you to read what I have to say to you. I want you to receive what I believe Jesus has put in my heart for you. I am but a pointer and I am writing this book to point you to the person of Jesus! It is

His manifested presence, His glorious power working in your heart and through your hands that will cause everything you touch to prosper with the Jesus-kind of results, such that even your harshest critic will have to conclude that the Lord is with you and is prospering the work of your hands!

Beloved, stop looking at your outward circumstances or the position you are in. Whether your employer is a believer or not, Jesus can make ALL that you do prosper when you depend on His unmerited favor in your career! And believe me, when that begins to happen, your employer will sit up and notice that there is something special about you. You will stand out in a crowd! Remember that the same Lord who was with Joseph is with you today. His name is Jesus and because Jesus is with you, you can expect good success in everything that you do!

Because Jesus is with you, expect good success in everything that you do!

For example, when you are placed over a sales project, believe that your sales team will hit record levels of sales never achieved before in your organization. When you are overseeing the finances of a company, believe that you will find legal ways to help your company save on operating expenses and increase its cash flow like never before. When you are placed in a business development role, believe that Jesus will cause doors that have always been closed to your company to be opened to you because of His unmerited favor upon your life. Perhaps your company is just a small IT start-up in the Silicon Valley, but for some reason, all the big boys in Microsoft, IBM and Oracle like you. They can't put their finger on it, but there is just something special about you that makes them compete to find ways to collaborate with you, leaving you spoiled for choice!

Depend on Jesus and Jesus alone, if you want to experience His success.

My friend, that's the unmerited favor of God in action. In the natural, you may be unqualified and inexperienced, but remember that all your disqualifications exist in the realm of the natural. You, beloved, live and operate in the supernatural realm! The Lord Jesus is with you 100 percent. You are a successful person in the Lord's eyes and as you depend on Him, He will cause everything that your hands touch to prosper.

Without Him, We Cannot. Without Us, He Will Not

Before I end this chapter, I want to teach you a powerful principle to help you understand God's heart for your success. I trust that by now, you have no doubt in your heart that Jesus is infinitely interested in your success. However, you may be wondering, "If that's the case, why isn't every Christian I know experiencing the Jesus-kind of success in their lives?"

In more than two decades of ministry, I have learned this from the Lord:

Without Him, we cannot. Without us, He will not. What this simply means is that we need to recognize the fact that if we do not depend on Jesus, there can be no real, long-lasting and abiding success—without Him, we cannot. The Bible tells us that unless the Lord builds the house, we labor in vain. (Psalms 127:1) Believers who want to experience His success need to recognize this truth and begin to depend on Jesus and Jesus alone.

There are some believers who may not articulate it, but in their hearts, they believe that without Jesus, they can still succeed. By believing and acting on this, they fall from the high place of God's grace (His unmerited favor) back into the law, back into trying to merit and deserve success by their own efforts. God's Word tells us, "For if you are trying to make yourselves right with God by keeping the law, you have been cut off from Christ! You have fallen away from God's grace [unmerited favor]." (Galatians 5:4 NLT)

These are strong words of warning. Once you start depending on your own merits and efforts to deserve God's favor, you are back under the system of the law. You are cut off from Christ and have fallen from the place of having His unmerited favor work in your life. Don't misunderstand me, Jesus is still with you (He will never leave you nor forsake you in Hebrews 13:5), but by depending on your self-efforts, you effectively cut off His unmerited favor in your life.

So what do I mean when I say, "Without us, He will not"? Well, Jesus is a gentleman. He will not force His unmerited favor and success down your throat. He needs you to allow Him to work in your life. He waits patiently for you to trust Him. He waits patiently for you to depend on His unmerited favor, the way Joseph trusted and depended wholly on the Lord's presence, until His manifested presence took over, and His glory radiated from everything that Joseph touched.

Beloved, let's learn quickly that without Jesus, we cannot succeed, and if we choose not to respond to His unmerited favor, He will not force it on us. God's unmerited favor is ever-flowing toward us and Jesus is waiting for us to come to the end of ourselves. He is waiting for you to stop struggling in your own attempts to somehow "deserve" His favor, and just depend on Him. So start resting in Jesus' unmerited favor and begin experiencing His manifested presence and glory upon everything you touch!

HOMEWORK:

1. The definition of success—see the differences between the world's system and God's way:

- ☞ The world looks at _____ you have.
- ☞ God sees _____ you are.
- ☞ The world's system is based on what _____ have done.

- ☞ God looks at what _____ has done on the cross for you.
- ☞ Who are you depending on today? Choice: Jesus or you
- ☞ Choice: You want to fight for yourself or God Almighty fight for you?

2. You see (understand), when you 'depend' on yourself:

- ✓ when _____ carry all the stress,
- ✓ when _____ carry all the burdens,
- ✓ when _____ carry all the anxieties,

that your
circumstances
may present
whom? _____

3. But _____ your dependence is on _____ for every success in life, the

Bible records a beautiful promise for you: ***“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and mind through Christ Jesus.”***

- ☞ When Jesus is the source of success,
 - there is _____ stress and
 - God’s peace will _____ your heart and mind.

☞ The word ‘peace’ in Hebrew word is _____, which it means: _____

What a powerful fortress you have in Jesus!

4. In your frustration, you may be wondering, ‘What can Jesus do for me? Can He rescue me from the crisis I am in?’

- The circumstances around you may bleak?
- Your bank account may have dried up?
- You may have lost your source of income due to corporate restructuring and you have no idea how you are going to pay next month’s rent?
- Perhaps your home may be up for foreclosure soon?
- You may be mired in credit card debt?
- The friends that you once trusted may have disappointed you?
- Maybe you have just received devastating medical report?
- The whole world seems to be crashing down around you, and you feel crushed, frustrated and disappointed?

Now it is time for you to turn away from _____ and look to _____.

Can Jesus rescue you from the crisis that you are in? The answer is _____.
Jesus **can** or **can't**

☞ That's what God did for Joseph and God _____ certainly do the same for you!

5. Joseph—the Apple of His Father's eye. Learn about the powerful truths about the life of Joseph in Genesis 37.

☞ Jacob loved Joseph more than all his other children.

☞ "Tunic of many colors" was only given to Joseph.

☞ "Tunic of many colors" in Hebrew words are '*kethoneth pac*', which means 'a coat of pieces of various colors.'

☞ The 'tunic' was a sign to all that Joseph enjoyed a higher status in his father's eyes.

☞ This fine linen tunic set Joseph apart from his brothers in terms of their responsibilities in the family. Joseph does not need to work in the fields and tend the flock. All he had to do was to attend to his father and bring his father _____. What an awesome job description! That's why we find that Joseph was _____ by his father's side while his brothers were laboring under the sweltering _____.

☞ Joseph's tunic speaks of a _____ and _____ with his father.

☞ Joseph was betrayed by whom? _____

☞ Now we can see Joseph from a special position of favor/rest to end up at an Egyptian _____. All that Joseph owned had been stripped away from him. He was reduced to _____ the Lord is with you.



6. Which important: 'it is who you have' or 'it is what you have'?



❖ Explain what does this different between 'what' and 'who' means to you?

❖ Joseph had everything or nothing

❖ All Joseph had was what? _____

❖ Joseph depended on: **his skills/experience** or **God's presence-power**

❖ Perfect one that you need what?

❖ Y N NS: Do you have Jesus' presence?

❖ How do you get Jesus' presence in your life?

❖ Do you **see** or **miss** His presence which is manifest in your life, when His glory shines forth through you?

7. Joseph's Egyptian master, Potiphar, a **believer** or **unbeliever**, saw the Lord was with Joseph.
8. Define this "Desire the results that only Jesus can produce" means to you?
9. When you stop 'doing' and start depending on God's divine favor, you will begin to experience the what?
- ☞ You see, people (Christians) are occupied with what? _____
 - ☞ They always want to know _____ you are doing right to get the results that you have.
 - ☞ Joseph Prince's book (Unmerited Favor) is to encourage you to _____ focus on what you are doing, but to focus on beholding who? _____
 - ☞ Stop _____ to merit (earn) God's blessing and start _____ on Jesus' Unmerited Favor for every success in your life.
 - ☞ Y N NS: Do you believe for the 'Jesus-kind of results' in your life?
 - ☞ This 'Unmerited Favor' book point you to whom? _____
 - ☞ T F: You depend on yourself and yourself alone, if you want to experience your success!
10. THE KEY POINT FOR YOU: "Without Jesus, you _____, without you, Jesus will _____".
- ☞ Psalms 127:1 NCV translates: *"If the Lord doesn't build the House, the builders are working for nothing. If the Lord doesn't guard the City, the guards are watching for nothing."*
 - ☞ You believer who want to experience His success NEED to _____ this truth and begin to _____ on Jesus and Jesus alone.
11. STRONG WORDS OF WARNING:
- ❖ Once you start depending on your own merits and efforts to _____ God's favor, you are back under the system of the _____. You are _____ from Christ and have fallen from the place of having His Unmerited Favor work in your life. Don't misunderstand! **JESUS IS STILL WITH YOU—HE WILL NEVER LEAVE YOU NOR FORSAKE YOU!**
 - ❖ But by depending your self-efforts, you effectively cut off His

Unmerited Favor _____ your life.

- ❖ **“Without us, He will not”**: Remember again, Jesus is a _____. He will not force His Unmerited Favor and success in your throat.
- ❖ He as a gentleman needs you to _____ Him to work in your life. He waits patiently for you to _____ Him. He waits patiently for you to depend on His Unmerited Favor.
- ❖ **“Without Jesus, we cannot succeed”**, if we _____ not to respond to His Unmerited Favor, Jesus will not force it on us.
- ❖ God’s Unmerited Favor is _____ toward us and Jesus is waiting for us to come to the _____ of ourselves.
- ❖ Jesus is waiting for you to _____ struggling in your own attempts to somehow ‘deserve’ His favor, and just depend on Him.
- ❖ So you start _____ in Jesus’ Unmerited Favor and begin experiencing His manifested presence and glory upon everything you touch!

Prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, I acknowledge that ‘without You, I cannot’ experience good and long-lasting success. I will stop striving to gain what I want through my own attempts. I am going to depend on You and receive Your Unmerited Favor. I repent and forgive me. Please increase my capacity to receive Your Unmerited Favor that is ever-flowing toward me. Today, I choose to depend on Your Unmerited Favor. I want to experience Your manifested presence and glory in everything I touch. In Your Name. Amen.