

September 18, 2016—Fall Quarter 2016—Sunday Morning Bible Class

UNMERITED FAVOR

Your supernatural advantage for a successful life

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Introduction:

Luke 12:32 VOC—Jesus said to you, “**My little flock, don’t be afraid. God is your Father, and your Father’s great joy is to give you His Kingdom.**”

Psalms 35:27 AMPC—David said, ‘Let those who favor my righteous cause and have pleasure in my uprightness shout for joy and be glad and say continually, “**Let the Lord be magnified, who takes pleasure in the prosperity of His servant**”.’

This book is all about Jesus. It is about His passionate love for you and His desire for you to experience success in your life. But before we go on, let me ask you this question: **Do you believe that Jesus is interested in your success?**

Take a moment to reflect on this.

My friend, I am so glad that we have the opportunity to talk about this today because I want you to know that Jesus delights in blessing you. It is His good pleasure to see you blessed in every area of your life!¹ Now, don't put a limit on His blessings in your life. The blessings of the Lord are not (as some may erroneously believe) just seen in material things. Jesus is infinitely interested in your **total** well-being. He is interested in your family, career, fulfillment in life, marriage, ministry, and boy, does the list go on!

When it comes to your desires, hopes and dreams, there is no detail that is too minuscule, minute or insignificant for Jesus. Trust me, if it matters to you, it matters to Him! Even if you went to Him in prayer to remove that small pimple on your nose, He is not going to look at you and reply mockingly, "Hey buddy, don't you know that I've got a whole universe to run? Come to Me when you have a bigger prayer request." No way! A thousand times no! Jesus will never ridicule or deride your concerns as petty. He is never dismissive or condescending. He is not like some of your so-called "friends," who may delight in poking fun at your shortcomings. If it bothers you, it bothers Him.

Jesus is someone whom you can be completely real with. You can hang out with Him and be yourself, with no pretense and no play-acting. Jesus is ever-loving toward you and you can talk to Him about anything. He enjoys conversing with you about your dreams, aspirations and hopes. He wants to heal you of things in your past that you may be struggling with. He is interested in your present challenges. He wants to weep with you when you are down and rejoice with you in all your victories.

Jesus is love and tenderness personified. Be careful not to confuse His tenderness with the effeminate and weak images that you have seen depicted in some traditional paintings of Him. He is tenderness and

strength wrapped up in one. He is meekness and majesty, manhood and deity, velvet and steel. You see, sometimes, when we attempt to be assertive and strong, we bulldoze over people's feelings and end up hurting them with our words. When we attempt to be tender, we overdose on niceness and reduce ourselves to doormats to be taken advantage of by others.

Let's turn away from ourselves and look at Jesus. He could sternly force a pack of scheming Pharisees to back off in one instance, challenging them by saying, "He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first." (John 8:7) In the very next moment, this same Jesus could look straight into the eyes of a broken woman caught in adultery, and with compassion resonating deeply in His voice, ask her, "Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you? Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more." (John 8:10-11)

This is our God!

He embodies all the heroic qualities that humanity pines for. But instead of seeking Jesus, many in the world have settled for cheap Hollywood imitations of heroism based on artificial ideals of "manliness."

In one moment, a tired Jesus could be fast asleep in a wind-swept fisherman's boat, oblivious to the rough Galilean waters crashing against the hapless vessel. But in the very next moment, you see Him staring unflinchingly at the boisterous waves, His well-toned carpenter's arms raised to the sky. With His single declaration of absolute authority over heaven and earth, the waves submitted and calmed instantaneously into a placid mirror of stillness. (Mark 4:37-39)

Jesus is 100 percent Man and at the same time 100 percent God. As Man, He understands and identifies with all that you have gone through, are going through and will ever go through in this life. He knows, for example, what it means to be fatigued after a long day. But as a loving God, all His power, authority and resources are on your side.

Do you know that you are important to Jesus? Know with full assurance in your heart that Jesus knows you perfectly, and yet accepts and loves you perfectly. When you begin to understand that, you will realize that it is truly that unmerited favor, that favor from Jesus that you know you do not deserve, did not merit and cannot earn for yourself, that will perfect every imperfection and weakness in your life. If you are facing challenges, such as lack in any area, addictions, fears, sicknesses or broken relationships, Jesus' unmerited favor will protect, deliver, prosper, bring restoration to and provide for you. His unmerited favor will transform you into wholeness, and it is the goodness of God,

not your striving and self-efforts, that will lead you to live victoriously for His glory.

Several years ago, I shared with my church that there are essentially two ways in which you can go about your life. The first is to depend entirely on your self-efforts, and the other is to depend completely on the unmerited favor and blessings of God. As for me and my house, the choice is absolutely clear. I am leaning strong on His unmerited favor in every area of my life-my marriage, family, church and anything else that I may be involved in.

Now, *you* have a choice to make-to live your life based entirely on your own efforts, or based entirely on the unmerited favor of Jesus. There are only two ways-either you are depending on "deserved favor" through your self-efforts, or you are blessed by grace, which is **unmerited favor**, through the cross and the obedience of Jesus Christ! The first is the world's way. The second is God's way.

The world's way to success is based on meritocracy. God's way to success in the new covenant is in direct contradiction to that, and is based on His unmerited favor. You can't earn it. You can't deserve it. And you certainly can't merit it. It comes by way of God's grace and by the power of what was accomplished at Calvary. It goes against the grain of every world system you have ever learned or depended upon. God's ways are higher and they always lead to good and abiding success.

My friend, there is no middle road. You cannot mix your own efforts with God's grace. Choose His unmerited favor and all the glory redounds to Jesus. Every success, opportunity, blessing or breakthrough, be it in your health, family or career-success in every aspect of your life-comes by His unmerited favor. It is never you!

"Now Pastor Prince, shouldn't there be a part for man to perform and another part for God to fulfill? Shouldn't man do his best and let God do the rest?"

I am so glad that you asked this question!

You see, when people say that man has a part to play, what they end up doing is to come up with a list of requirements that man needs to fulfill to qualify for God's blessings. They say things like, "In order for God to answer your prayers, you have to do this and do that, and not do this and not do that." And all the while, this list of do's and don'ts to qualify one for God's blessings keeps growing.

Now, let's stop right here. Doesn't this list of requirements that you have to fulfill so that God will bless you sound awfully familiar to you? I believe that many of those who insist on these requirements are well-

meaning, sincere people. But what they are doing is pointing others back to the old covenant of the law, whether knowingly or unknowingly!

That's how the law of Moses works. Under the old covenant, God's blessings were contingent on man's fulfillment of a list of requirements. But we are no longer under the old covenant of the law.

This is not Christianity. The **new covenant** that we are under today is based completely on the removal of our sins by the blood of Jesus! "For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, **how much more shall the blood of Christ**, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from **dead works** to serve the living God?" (Hebrews 9:13-14) Depending on your own efforts to deserve favor from God is considered "dead works." It is God's desire for us to depend wholly on the unmerited favor of Jesus.

Just to make it clear, it is not Joseph Prince who is finding fault with the old covenant. God Himself said, "For if that first covenant [the covenant of law] had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second [the covenant of grace]." (Hebrews 8:7) The Christian life today is not based on what you are doing or not doing. The reality is that the Christian life is not a religion at all. It is about having a relationship based completely on receiving **WHAT GOD HIMSELF HAS DONE ON THE CROSS!** When you receive completely what Jesus has **done** for you, your "doing" will flow effortlessly.

Hear what the great apostle of grace, Paul, had to say about this: "But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace [unmerited favor] of God which was with me." (1 Corinthians 15:10) So my friend, in answer to your question, I would say don't worry about what "man's part" is. Focus, like Paul, entirely on Jesus' part--His grace and His unmerited favor upon your life--and you will end up being energized by the Lord to pray more, read the Bible more and serve both God and your community more, simply because the unmerited favor of God is not in vain in your life. You will also realize that even the outworking of all that you do is not of yourself, but it is by His grace overflowing in you.

Some people think that grace will compromise God's holiness. Absolutely not! The standards that grace sets are much higher than the standards of the law of Moses. When you are under grace, you will effortlessly fulfill and even super exceed the expectations of the law of

Moses! Come on, are you getting this? If you can understand what I am saying in this introduction, you have already been blessed!

Now, let me bring this introduction to a close. I don't know about you, but I feel the presence of Jesus as I write this to you. I have released what He has put in my heart for you. I want to give you a scripture premise for this book, because you may be asking why a book that's supposed to be about unmerited favor is turning out to be all about Jesus!

If you have the Amplified Bible, turn with me to 2 Peter 1:2. It is important that you see this in God's Word yourself:

May grace (God's favor) and peace (which is perfect well-being, all necessary good, all spiritual prosperity, and freedom from fears and agitating passions and moral conflicts) **be multiplied to you in** [the full, personal, precise, and correct] **knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.** (2 Peter 1:2 AMP)

It really is that simple. The unmerited favor of God will flow like a mighty torrential river into every parched area of your life, be it your physical body, marriage, career or finances, **when you see Jesus!** The more you increase in the knowledge of our loving Savior Jesus Christ and His finished work at the cross, the more God's unmerited favor will be multiplied in your life. And it is His unmerited favor that will cause you to enjoy success beyond your natural intelligence, qualifications and ability!

There are many quality writings by great men of God on favor, but what I want you to see in this book is that God's unmerited favor is not a topic. It is not a teaching. **GOD'S UNMERITED FAVOR IS THE GOSPEL!** God's unmerited favor is not a subject. **It is a PERSON, AND HIS NAME IS JESUS.** When you have Jesus, you have unmerited favor! Jesus and unmerited favor do not exist separately. Unmerited favor is embodied in His entire being and in His finished work at Calvary.

It is unfortunate that the word "grace" in the modern church has been made into a theological subject or classified as a doctrine. In the modern vernacular, the word "grace" has also been abused and devalued. For example, you are given "five minutes' grace" before parking charges are levied when you drive into the parking lot of many shopping malls. How that cheapens the word "grace"!

To help the modern reader understand the fullness of grace, I am going to use the words "unmerited favor" and "grace" interchangeably in this book because grace is the undeserved, unearned and unmerited favor of God. To help you see grace in a fresh and new light, whenever

I quote scriptures in this book and the word "grace" appears, I will add in parentheses, "unmerited favor." I want you to begin to understand and see grace (unmerited favor) in its fullness.

This book is about your supernatural advantage for a successful life. By the end of this book, I trust that you will indeed begin to believe that God is personally interested in your success. You are His precious child and He wants to see you succeed and reign in life. When you believe that, you will also start to depend on His unmerited favor for success in every area of your life.

It is my prayer that as you dive into the pages of this book, you will start seeing more of Jesus and start experiencing His unmerited favor in an unprecedented way. Get ready to experience God's supernatural success through His unmerited favor today!

HOMEWORK:

1. This 'Unmerited Favor' book is all about whom? _____
2. Name an item you don't put a limit in your life? _____
3. Y N NS: Is Jesus infinitely interested in your total well-being? _____
4. If it matters to you, it _____ to Jesus. If your so-called 'friends' who may delight in poking fun at your shortcomings. If it bothers you, it _____ Jesus.
5. Jesus is SOMEONE whom you can be completely REAL with. You can hang out with Jesus and be yourself, with NO PRETENSE and NO PLAY-ACTING.
 - 👉 Jesus is EVER-LOVING toward you and you can talk to Him about _____.
 - 👉 Jesus ENJOYS conversing with you about your _____, _____ and _____.
 - 👉 Jesus WANTS to heal you of things in your _____ that you may be struggling with.
 - 👉 Jesus is INTEREST in your what? _____
 - 👉 Jesus WANTS to _____ with you when you are down and to _____ with you in all your victories.
6. Remember: Jesus is _____ and _____ personified (to embody (a quality) in a real person).

☞ He also is _____ and _____ wrapped up in one.

☞ He is _____ and _____,

☞ He is _____ and _____,

☞ He is _____ and _____.

7. Jesus is _____ % MAN and at the same time _____ % GOD.

❖ As MAN, He _____ and _____ with all that you have gone through, are going through and will ever go through in this life.

❖ As a loving GOD, all His power, authority, and resources are on your what? _____

8. Y N NS: Are you important to Jesus?

9. Y N NS: Do you have full assurance in your heart that Jesus KNOWS you PERFECTLY, and yet ACCEPTS and LOVES you PERFECTLY?

10. WHEN you begin to understand that, you WILL realize that it is truly that 'Unmerited Favor', that 'favor' from _____ that you know:

✓ you do not _____,

✓ you did not _____, and

✓ you cannot _____ for yourself,

○ that (Unmerited Favor—Jesus) will _____ every imperfection and weakness in your life.

11. If you are facing challenges, such as lack in any area, addictions, fears, sicknesses or broken relationships, Jesus' Unmerited Favor will

☞ _____,

☞ _____,

☞ _____,

☞ bring _____ to you

☞ and _____ for you.

12. Jesus' Unmerited Favor will _____ you into

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13. Jesus' Unmerited Favor is _____, not your striving and self-efforts, that will lead you to live victoriously for His glory.
 14. Today, you have a choice to make:
 - to live your life based entirely on your own efforts
or
 - to live your life based on the Unmerited Favor of Jesus
 15. Today, there are only two ways: you have a choice to make either:
 - you are depending on 'deserved favor' through your self-efforts
or
 - you are blessed by grace, which is 'Unmerited Favor', through the Cross and the obedience of Jesus Christ!
 16. Today, you have a choice to make to follow either:
 - The world's way
or
 - God's way
 17. The world's way to success is based on _____.
(means 'leadership by able and talented persons')
 18. God's way to success in the New Covenant is in direct contradiction to that (the world's way), and IS BASED on His 'Unmerited Favor'. You can't earn it [Unmerited Favor]. You can't deserved it [unmerited favor]. And you certainly can't merit (to be worthy of; deserve) it [Unmerited Favor]. It [Unmerited Favor] comes by way of God's grace and by the power of what was accomplished at what? _____
 19. It [Unmerited Favor] goes against the grain of every world system you have ever learned or depended upon. God's ways are higher and they [God's ways] always lead to _____ and abiding _____.
 20. You cannot mix your own efforts with what?
 21. You wisely choose His Unmerited Favor and all the glory redounds (to reflect upon a person as to honor) to whom?

22. Every success, opportunity, blessing or breakthrough, be it in your health, family or career—success in every aspect of your life—comes by what? _____. IT IS _____ YOU!
23. With a list of requirements that man needs to fulfill to qualify for God's blessings—"do's and don'ts". But what they are doing is pointing others back to the _____ covenant of the _____, whether knowingly or unknowingly.
24. That's how the law of Moses works.
- ✘ Under the old covenant, God's blessings were contingent (dependent for existence, occurrence, character, etc., on something not yet certain) on man's _____ of a list of requirements.
 - ✘ Today, you made a choice to believe that
 - you are under the old covenant of the law
 - or
 - you are under the new covenant by the blood of Jesus
 - ✘ Depending on your own efforts to deserve 'favor' from God is considered "_____".
 - ✘ It is God's desire for you to depend _____ on the Unmerited Favor of Jesus.
25. Today, your Christian life is _____ based on what _____ are doing or not doing. The reality is that your Christian life is _____ a religion at all.
26. Your Christian life is _____ having a relationship based completely on receiving _____! When you receive completely what Jesus has _____ for you,
- ☞ your 'doing' will flow EFFORTLY or EFFORTLESSLY.
 - ☞ You FOCUS entirely on Jesus' part—His grace and His Unmerited Favor upon your life—and you will end up being energized by the Lord
 - to pray _____,
 - to read Bible _____, and

- to serve both God and your community _____,
 - simply because the Unmerited Favor of God is not in _____ in your life. You will also realize that even the outworking of all that you do is not of yourself, but it is by His grace overflowing in you.

27. T F: The standards of the law of Moses are higher than the standards of grace sets.
28. When you are under grace, you will effortlessly fulfill and even _____ (to go beyond the limits of) the expectations of the law of Moses.
29. Relate with 2 Peter 1:2: It really is that difficult or simple. The Unmerited Favor of God will flow like a mighty torrential river into every parched area of your life, be it your physical body, marriage, career, or finances, when you see what? _____
30. The more you _____ in the knowledge of our loving Savior Jesus Christ and His finished work at the Cross, the more God's unmerited favor will be _____ in your life. And it is His Unmerited Favor that will _____ you to enjoy success beyond your natural intelligence, qualifications and ability!
31. God's Unmerited Favor is:
- a) TOPIC b) TEACHING c) GOSPEL/PERSON d) SUBJECT
32. God's Unmerited Favor—His Name is what? _____
- ☞ When you have Jesus, you have what? _____
 - ☞ T F: Jesus and Merited Favor do exist separately.
 - ☞ His Unmerited Favor is embodied (to invest [unmerited favor] with a body) in what?
33. The words "Unmerited Favor" and "Grace" interchangeably (of two things capable of being put or used in the place of each other) in this "Unmerited Favor" book because grace is the _____, _____, and _____ Favor of God. It helps you to see grace in a _____ and _____ light, whenever Joseph Prince quotes Scriptures in this book and the word 'grace', he will add in parentheses,

'unmerited favor'. He wants you to begin to understand and see grace (unmerited favor) in its fullness.

34. This book is about your natural or supernatural advantage for a successful life. By the end of this book, Joseph Prince trust that you will indeed begin to _____ that God is personally interest in your success. You are His precious child and He wants to see you succeed and reign in life. When you _____ that, you will also start to _____ on His Unmerited Favor for success in every area of your life.
35. Joseph Prince's prayer for you to dive into the pages of this book, you will start seeing more of Jesus and start to experiencing His Unmerited Favor in an unprecedented (never before known or experienced; unexampled or unparalleled) way.
- ☞ Y N NS: Are you get ready to experience God's supernatural success through His Unmerited Favor today?

PRAYER:

Dear Father, thank You that Your New Covenant of Grace is all about how much You love me unconditionally and what Jesus has accomplished for me. I thank You that under grace, You accept me and qualify me for Your blessings based on what Jesus has done and secured for me, not based on my ability to keep the law. I believe that the more I see what Jesus has qualified me for, the more faith springs up within me and I will experience the breakthroughs I need in Jesus' Name. Amen.