

What is the favor of the Lord, and how can I get it?

The best definition of the word **FAVOR** is “Demonstrated delight, or regard show toward another especially by a superior.”

The favor of God can be described as “**Tangible evidence that a person has the approval of the Lord.**”

When we favor someone, we want to be with him or her. We delight in them. We connect with them in a way we don't connect with everyone else.

God shows His favor to the ones who delight in – connect with -and give honor to Him.

Isa. 66:2 “These are the ones I look on with favor; those who are humble and contrite in spirit, and who tremble at My Word.”

2Chron. 16:9 “The eyes of the Lord go around looking in all the earth for people whose heart is **perfect** toward Him.”

“To be Perfect towards Him” means we seek His favor more than we seek the favor of anyone else, even ourselves.

Favor – what attracts the heart and favor of God?

Today we will look at Biblical examples in the lives of some who obtained God's favor.

1. Walk with God **intimately** – like Enoch

Gen. 5:22-24 Enoch walked with God 300 years, and had sons and daughters. So all the day of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years. And Enoch walked with God and he was not, for God took him.”

- We don't have details of what Enoch did during his life, other than he walked with God.
- Enoch must have done a lot of listening and gained intimacy because God longed for his presence so much, He “took him home” to heaven rather than leaving him to die a natural death.
- Do you want to be someone that the Lord can't wait to be with?

- We have the opportunity to have fellowship with a God who loves us, gave His Son to die so we could have life, and has sent the Holy Spirit so we can have continuous unbroken fellowship with Him.
- The move is up to us to get close to the Lord
 - James 4:8 “Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double minded.”
- You have the choice to let your relationship with God be characterized as a meaningful walk with Him, not a brisk hurried run.
- Take time to get to know Him, to recognize His voice, to hear His heart through His Word, and walk with in in the morning and evening.
- Leave a legacy to your children and grand-kids that they know You Knew The Lord and walked with Him.
- Enoch left the legacy that “he pleased God.” Heb. 11:5.

2. Be His friend – like Abraham became.

Gen. 12:1 “The Lord said to Abram: get out of your country, from your family and from your father’s house, to a land that I will show you.”

- Leave his country and everything he knew was comfortable and familiar to him.
- Abram knew very little about the Lord at that time, yet he was willing to leave everything familiar and go to a land even when he did not know where he was going.
- Heb. 11:8 “He went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country...”
- Heb. 11:6 “Without faith it is impossible to please God.”
- James 2:23 Because of Abraham’s faith, it was accounted to him for righteousness and he was called the friend of God.

The Lord may be asking you to take a step of faith even if you don’t have the numbers, the statistics or a comfortable feeling about it?

Do you recognize His voice enough to know when He is urging you to take a step of faith?

You can grow in your faith by growing in your experiential knowledge of God – not your head/factual knowledge of Him, but your experience of a relationship with Him.

Be convinced that He can be trusted. As you show tremendous faith in a tremendous God – HE will likely call you His friend too.

3. Strive to live a life of **obedience** – even in difficult circumstances – like Joseph.

Joseph experienced some difficult life experiences that would defeat people:

- Disliked and abandoned and sold off by his jealous brothers.
- Sold into human slavery.
- Falsely accused when he was doing the right things with honor.
- Spent 13 years in prison when he was innocent.

Yet – Joseph was able to see the hand of God in all his suffering and declared at the end of his life to his brothers: “You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.” Gen. 50:20

What attracted the Lord to Joseph?

- Joseph’s continued obedience and acknowledgment of God’s presence in his life touched the heart of God to continue to grant favor in every circumstance he found himself in.
- He was ultimately promoted to second in command of all of Egypt and God’s plan through him spared Egypt and all of Israel.

Are circumstances less than perfect in your life, painful and seeming hope is gone and there is no future?

Began to thank and praise and OBEY God in spite of how you are being treated, keep a humble, faithful and obedient heart and the Lord will honor you with His favor.

4. Be **meek** and **humble** – Moses

Isa. 66:2 “These are the ones I look on with favor; those who are humble and contrite in spirit, and who tremble at My Word.”

Num. 12:3 “Moses was a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth.”

- Perhaps it was his meekness and humility that caused God to meet with Moses “face to face” and show him His glory – something He didn’t do for anyone else.
- Ex. 33:17 God told Moses: “For you have found favor in My sight and I have known you by name.”

God dwells with, proved for, and shows favor toward the humble.
Not to those who want to grasp and have the same level of leadership and glory as the Almighty.

Psa. 75:6-7 “For exaltation comes neither from the east nor from the west nor from the south. But God is the Judge: He put down one, and exalts another.”

5. Desire to **do His will** – like David

David wrote songs to the Lord and had wonderful fellowship with Him.
Because of the time he spent with the Lord tending his father’s sheep [when the brothers didn’t], David cultivated faith and loyalty to God while just a teenager.

- David became Israel’s greatest king because of his heart to please the Lord.
- Even after his seasons of sin, God still gave David the mighty legacy as “a man after My heart, who will do all My will.” Acts. 13:22

How can we not fall in love with and surrender all of our heart to a God that knows all of our mistakes and weakness’s yet still loves us and includes us in His plans.

6. **Seek God’s wisdom** above anything else – like Solomon

- As a young man, possibly insecure as he took the throne of his famous father- David; Solomon was humble and dependent upon God for wisdom to rule His people with understanding and justice.
- Solomon didn’t ask for riches, fame, the death of his enemies or success; he asked for a discerning heart to govern God’s people and distinguish between right and wrong.
- Solomon’s answer to God’s millions dollar question of “what do you want ME to do for you?” pleased God so much that God gave him the wisdom he asked for, along with more riches and fame that any person on earth had ever known. 1Kings 3:5-16.

What do you need more than anything?

- To succeed in your work? To be known as a good person?
- To be a better mom/dad, son/daughter, student? To be respected by others?

When God sees your heart’s desire is the same as His desire for your life, He will be please to grant it.

Psa. 37:4 “Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart.”

7. **Be surrendered** – like Mary of Nazareth

Luke 1:28 The angel came to Mary and announced: “**Rejoice, highly favored one**, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!”

- This “good news” mean public scandal, the possibility Mary would be an outcast, killed and a fornicator.
- Despite all the legitimate concerns, she showed no reservation, only a humble, surrendered response: “Behold, the bond-slave of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word.” Luke 1:38.
- In other words – “I’m yours Lord, for whatever You have in mind.”

Can you say when the Lord unfolds a path in front of you that looks uncertain, undesirable, or maybe threatening that you surrender and welcome His will over your own comforts or plans?

What if God’s plan meant a loss of reputation for you, no wedding, a life that is misunderstood and burdensome that few will understand you?

If you develop an obedient, surrendered heart like Mary – you too may find yourself “favored by the Lord.”

8. **Love Extravagantly** – like Mary of Bethany

Luke 10: 38-42u we saw last week - her extravagant gift of love expressed to the Lord with the pouring of a year’s wages worth of fragrant perfumed oil on Jesus’ feet.

Would you be willing to be with Jesus than do a bunch of things for Him?

Can you risk the misunderstanding or judgment of others for not joining in the busy work, but sitting it out to spend more time with God?

God honors the heart that reveres and loves His Son without hesitation, reservations, and regard of the cost.

Love God’s Son extravagantly and spare no expense to show Him what He mean to you and you will gain God’s favor.

9. **Lean in close to Him** – like John the beloved disciple

John describes himself in his gospel as “the disciple whom Jesus loved.”

- Didn't Jesus love them all?
- But John was especially close to Jesus as he was the one described as leaning on Jesus' breast as they reclined at the dinner table the last night when Jesus was betrayed.
- John wasn't afraid to ask the question everyone else was afraid to ask – “Is it I who will betray You?”
- John was the only one of the 12 not martyred for his faith and lived to an old age.
- John wasn't perfect; in his youth he was noted as one of the “sons of thunder” – hot headed temper.

Yet – John stayed close to Jesus and he changed and became the disciple that wrote more about God's love.

Have you made up your mind to stick close to Jesus, no matter what HE says that you don't understand?

Can you stay near Him even when all your friends walk away?

John stayed at the foot of the cross with the woman closest to Jesus on the night he died after all the disciples scattered for fear of their lives.

Be the one who stays close to Jesus no matter what – God notices.

10. **Become like Jesus** – God's beloved Son

- God clearly showed His favor to His Son.
- God gives us eternal life when we embrace His Son –
1John 5:11-12 “This is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.”

He promises to give us whatever we ask for on behalf of His Son:

John 16:23 “In that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in MY name He will give you.”

If you want to have favor with God – be fully committed to His Beloved Son – Jesus Christ.

- Worship and honor Him

- Identify with His pain
- Gain a heart like His for the world
- Display His characteristics in your life.

Jesus has prayed that we would have the same unity with the Father that He has:

John 17:20-21 “I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father are in ME, and I in YOU; that they also may be One is US, that the world would may believe that You sent Me.”

This means that just as much as Jesus shared intimacy with God, you and I can share that intimacy with God also; as we love Him like Jesus did:

- **With ALL our hearts – mind – soul – strength!**

Mark 12:30 “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. This is the first commandment.”