

Bill Johnson: How You Should Steward the Favor of God

One of the most unusual principles I've seen in Scripture is that we have the ability to increase the favor or grace upon another person's life. This is the process of stewarding the favor on our lives for the benefit of another. This is a fantastic example of using favor to benefit another. But the way it works is quite amazing.

"Let no unwholesome word proceed out of your mouth, but only that which is good for building up, that it may give grace to the listeners" (Eph. 4:29).

All we have to do is find words that edify according to the need of the moment because they will give grace to those who hear. Grace is undeserved favor that enables them to come into their destiny and live as Jesus did.

Grace is correctly defined as unmerited favor. But that is only the beginning. It is favor that enables. I like to put it this way: The law requires, but grace enables. It enables us to do what only Jesus could do.

I would never want to imply that we direct God's hand or in some way control Him. That would be the ultimate foolishness. Yet truth often gets close to the error we fear the most. When we live in reaction to error instead of response to the truth, we miss what God is saying and create another error in the process. In this case, God is saying that when I come to my brother and speak encouraging words to him, I am saying, "God, because of the favor you have put on my life, I ask that You impart the same favor to my brother."

We steward the favor of God when we choose to encourage, bless and minister to someone. Grace is from God, but when we take the posture of being a strength to someone else through

speaking words of encouragement, we are marking people for an increase of divine favor. Amazing! God favors the one I favor. This is a beautiful picture of co-laboring with the Lord.

It would be wrong to imply that an individual didn't have favor before I came along. Each is given a measure. But I remind you again that even Jesus needed to increase in favor with God and man. That being said, we could all use more. Everyone should welcome the increase we bring.

I like to picture it this way: my words mark someone's life with a bullseye, asking God to strike the mark with blessing and increase. This is being a steward of God's grace through a generous heart. Many are generous with money, especially if they have much, but fail miserably with a generous heart in looking to strengthen others through kindness. This is real generosity.

I would never want to imply that we can twist God's arm or in some way control or force Him to do anything. He is sovereign. You and I are not. But He has written our role into His sovereign plan and delights in our involvement in the unfolding of His plan of grace for others. To illustrate this concept, a prophet friend once told me, "If you know of a church where you think I need to go, tell me, and I'll go there." He wasn't in need of another meeting; he was highly respected all over the world. What did he mean, then? In so many words, he was saying, "Bill, you have favor in my eyes, and if somebody has favor in your eyes, I'll show them the same kindness I've shown you." I find it interesting that he modeled the Lord's heart revealed in the Ephesians 4 passage quite well. It is the way of the kingdom.

The Lord makes clear what kinds of things need to be said. "Let no unwholesome words proceed from your mouth" (Eph. 4:29). He then directs us to speak words that build up according to the need of the moment. God's assignment for us is to give encouragement to people. In a very real sense, we

open up opportunities for God to increase His blessings on that person. Because we choose them, God chooses them.

This article was excerpted from Bill Johnson's book Born for Significance: Advancement Through Honor (Charisma House 2020). Used by permission from Charisma House.

*As a fifth-generation pastor, **Bill Johnson** lives a life rich in the things of the Spirit, using heaven as a model for his life and ministry. The senior pastors of Bethel Church in Redding, California, Bill and his wife, Beni, have a heart to see the values of the kingdom of heaven filling the earth. Together they serve a growing number of churches that have partnered together to work toward global revival.*