

Creating an Atmosphere to Activate Heavenly Help

What is the favor of God, and how do we obtain it? I went to a conference recently called Finding Favor. Some great thoughts were presented, but God had already been talking to me about this concept of favor.

Wisdom

At the beginning of each year I ask God for a word for the year. My word last year was wisdom. Throughout that year, I heard God whisper to me, "Favor follows wisdom."

I kept asking, "What does that mean?" The answer was simply the same. "Favor follows wisdom." And my response was "Huh? How?"

I did understand that in every decision of my life I need to ask God for wisdom and as Scripture promises if I ask I will get wisdom to go forward. That means I need to take action and take action I have to have faith, which just happens to be my word for 2017.

We read in James we are to ask for wisdom "in faith, without wavering. For he who wavers is like a wave of the sea, driven and tossed with the wind. Let not that man think that he will receive anything from the Lord" (James 1:6-7).

In the Bible, God asked many people to have faith for what they couldn't see with their natural eyes. If you read Hebrews 11 you can find all of the people God singled out as examples of great faith.

Although it would be awesome to be highlighted by God, to be known a woman of great faith means I need to also be a woman who is willing to take great risks.

Though I don't see myself in that light, I know it did feel like a risky step of faith to give up sugar when I began my weight loss journey in earnest. At each juncture, I felt I was taking a giant leap of faith trusting I would fall right into the arms of grace. And every time grace was there waiting for me. Grace didn't have to catch me. On the contrary, it gave me wings to fly over the obstacles and lose over 250 pounds.

What I've been understanding lately is what role faith and wisdom have in the progression towards favor. This is not a formula for favor. We are all God's favorites, but there are definitely some things that we learn as we walk our journeys.

Love

Everything begins and ends in love. God's love is the catalyst. "For God so greatly loved *and* dearly prized the world, that He even gave His One and only begotten Son, so that whoever believes *and* trusts in Him as Savior shall not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16, AMP).

That God loves us is a sure fact, but do we love Him? And if we do how do we show it? Do we just say so? Do we walk an aisle and shake a pastor's hand? Is that all there is to it?

We all know the confession or initial meeting with Him is just the starting point. To walk with Him in love is a lifelong journey of obedience.

Obedience

For me obedience was the next step and it had to come by listening to His voice and following Him. "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me" (John 10:27, MEV).

Jesus replied, "All who love me will do what I say. My Father will love them, and we will come and make our home with each of them" (John 14:23, NLT).

This is not a legalistic following or judgmental adherence to

laws and rules. It is wanting to follow Him out of love. It's the same thing we wish for our children that they will want to obey us out of love because we love them and want the best for them, not because we're bigger, louder and hold their allowances at bay.

So first we love God, then we obey God. But many times, we have problems obeying not for lack of love, but for lack of faith. This is where my word faith comes in.

Faith

Some Scriptures make me feel as if I have no faith at all. Take for instance the verse in Matthew about moving a mountain with a tiny bit of faith. I mean, do I really believe that?

"For truly I say to you, if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. And nothing will be impossible for you" (Matt. 17:20).

Faith is an action verb or at least it denotes action. If we don't move forward we don't have faith. It's just wishful thinking. If faith is the substance of things hoped for, then hope is a not wishful thinking. It is a firm belief that what we have faith for will come to pass. If we have that solid, unshakable hope we will step out in faith both on what He asks us to do and what He has promised us will happen.

When we begin to step out on faith, we begin to gain a greater vision for who God is and what He wants for our lives.

More Wisdom

Faith creates wisdom. We can step out and move in circumstances because we have gained experience. We've done that before. It has increased our wisdom and knowledge of what God can and will do in our lives.

We begin to see with the mind of Christ, interpreting things

through our supernaturally-inspired eyes. "But as it is written, 'Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.' But God has revealed them to us by His spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God" (1 Cor. 2:9-10, MEV).

People may call us foolish for doing certain things that we feel God is showing us to do. If they don't know God they cannot understand them because they only see things in a human, limited way. As we begin to have faith and walk in faith, we begin to step into the realm of seeing His will be done on earth as it is in heaven (see Matt. 6:10).

Because we love Him, we will naturally want to obey Him, which will inevitably lead us to step out in faith when He shows us what to do. This will result in greater wisdom which eventually leads us to favor. How? I'm glad you asked.

Favor

The Bible dictionary tell us that to find favor means "gaining approval, acceptance, or special benefits or blessings from God. ... The favor that human beings receive from God depends on his good pleasure and is often extended in response to prayer or righteous living."

Scripture tells us, "For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord will give favor and glory, for no good thing will he withhold from the one who walks uprightly" (Ps. 84:11).

Some of those who were said to have favor are Jesus, of course, but also Noah, Moses, Abraham, Isaac, Joseph, Ruth, Hannah, Mary, Samuel and others.

Everywhere you see blessed in the Bible it means spiritually aware, joyful and favored of God, according to the Amplified version. The biblical definition of "blessed" has a lot to do with understanding what favor is. To have favor means being

spiritually aware of how God is at work in us.

Throughout the Old and New Testaments, God's people went to Him and asked Him for favor. They were spiritually aware that they were His children and could ask. They knew their places because they loved Him, obeyed Him, followed Him by faith, and had begun to have the wisdom to see what He was doing.

Perfection and Favor

This is the place God longs for all of us to be. All the people God calls favored were not perfect. We do not have to be perfect to be favored by God. We just have to be willing to follow Him in faith no matter how imperfectly we do it.

We can ask for favor, or God can just decide to bestow favor, especially when giving us favor or promotion will benefit His cause and the assignment He has placed on our lives.

If we are flagrantly walking in sin, then we are certainly not blameless, and asking for favor might just mean God will show us something we need to rectify first. Favor, though, flows from God all day long in ways we are not even mindful of.

The bottom line is this: Do all that God has shown you to do in obedience. Step out in faith to do things He has shown you even though it seems scary. Ask for wisdom to understand the spiritual lessons you have learned, and then ask for and accept the favor He showers on you.

What do you need God's favor for today? {eoa}

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