

God's Favor Factor

When God's favor is flowing in my life, things happen that I can't do on my own.

Most charismatics understand the concept of the "anointing." Even if they can't define it, they are able to recognize the anointing that is present in a service in which God moves in power. Our cover story on the Church of God in Christ makes the point that this denomination's special anointing has impacted the wider Christian community.

Evangelicals typically shy away from using the term. But Billy Graham obviously has an anointing for evangelism, and the late Jerry Falwell had an anointing to call America back to its biblical roots.

Not long ago I received an e-mail from a respected Christian leader who believes that Gov. Mike Huckabee, the former pastor who is now running for president, had an anointing to respond to questions intended to make him look like a religious buffoon that were posed in recent political debates. His answers caused him to move ahead in the polls because they helped people to see his integrity, experience and stand on the issues.

I agree that Huckabee's debate performances have been stellar. I have personally endorsed his run for president because I'm convinced he's the one who best represents Christian values and has the most experience to govern. (For more information about Huckabee, go to)

Years ago my mentor, the late Jamie Buckingham, told someone I had an anointing to publish magazines. His declaration

encouraged me then, but today I believe he meant to say I had favor.

The concept of favor is misunderstood in the body of Christ. Yet Luke's description of Jesus gives an indication of how important it is: "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men" (Luke 2:52, NKJV).

In his new book *Face to Face With God*, pastor Bill Johnson writes: "I believe that the failure to understand and pursue the journey of stewarding the favor of God has led so many people to die in the unnecessary tragedy of never having their God-given dreams and desires fulfilled. ... The sober reality is that most dreams go unfulfilled because of the lack of favor with God and man. Where favor is increasing, we witness the power of exponential increase that comes through agreement."

Buckingham used to encourage me to dream something so big that without God it was bound to fail. Johnson puts the same idea this way: "We must dream so big that without the support that comes through favor with God and man, we could never accomplish what is in our hearts."

Why am I writing this? Because I see Christians struggling in their own power to accomplish things for God—and not succeeding. And in my own life, I'm beginning to see that when God's favor is flowing, things happen that I can't do on my own.

In his insightful book, *The Favor Factor*, Arni Jacobson uses the life of Nehemiah to show how God's favor works. He says that God "gives the vision, you step out with faith and plan for ... [success]." Jacobson calls favor "assigned

advantage”—but he says we must step out in faith and obedience to see it operate in our lives. He claims it’s all summed up in the prayer Nehemiah prayed and the principles that prayer outlines:

“O Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of this your servant and to the prayer of your servants who delight in revering your name. Give your servant success today by granting him favor” (Neh. 1:11, NIV).

Why do we need favor? It’s to accomplish God’s purposes—to build great churches that impact an entire city; to run for and win political office, as my friend Scott Plakon is doing in his race for Florida state representative in District 37; to employ creative ideas that will shift the culture through the arts or media; to bring God’s healing to this generation. These are daunting tasks, but with God’s favor, visionary believers are beginning to make a difference.

May each of us grasp what Jacobson writes: “This is the life of favor: to be all about the things of God, concerned with the lost, applying the principles of integrity, humility, obedience, prayer, and worship day in and day out, week after week, year after year.”

Stephen Strang is the founder and publisher of Charisma. Both Face to Face With God and The Favor Factor were published by Charisma House and are available through our Web site at .