



Favor

Introduction

- **Purpose of the Sermon:** Today, I want to explore with you, *favor*—what it is, what it isn't, and how to experience it. My aim is that by the end of my talk, you'll understand how to access and increase the favor you experience in your life.
- **Main Text:** *Proverbs 8:35* – "For those who find me (wisdom) find life and obtain favor from the Lord."
- **Sub Text:** *Proverbs 3:3-4* – "Never let mercy and truth forsake you. So will you find favor and good understanding in the sight of God and man." *Luke 2:52* – "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man."

II. Defining Favor

- **What is Favor?** [Dictionary.com](https://www.dictionary.com) defines favor as "excessive kindness or unfair partiality; preferential treatment."
- **Personal Reflection:** Have you had an experience where you felt/knew it was favor? How did it make you feel? It can feel undeserved. It can be humbling. It can be exciting. Sometimes it can stir mixed emotions. Especially when it comes at the expense of someone else.
- **Common Misconceptions:** Some assume favor is automatic for God's children. How often do you greet someone, and they respond, "I'm blessed and highly favored." I propose to you that the favor we experience is not up to God alone — it depends partly on us.

III. The Biblical Perspective on Favor

- **The Bible as a Practical Guide:** The Bible is more than a religious icon; more than a lucky charm; it's a "how-to" manual for life. A former colleague once told me that his friend considered it a success manual. He read it daily to glean whatever practical wisdom he could get.
- **Personal Practice:** For many years, I have read one chapter of Proverbs daily. I read the chapter that corresponds to the day of the month (e.g., Proverbs 1 on the 1st). This habit has provided me with wisdom for decision-making. Occasionally, a familiar verse reveals new depth.
- **Revelation Through Scripture:** The Scriptures are clear on how one may experience favor. Proverbs 3:3-4 and Luke 2:52 show that favor come through wisdom, kindness, and faithfulness.

IV. Categories of Favor

There are two broad categories of favor: favor with God and favor with man. We can divide these further into three types:

A. Universal Favor

- **Definition:** God's favor extends to all creation, believer and unbeliever alike.
- **Scriptural Examples:**
 - *Matthew 5:44-45* – God makes the sun rise on the evil and the good, sending rain on the just and unjust.
 - *Acts 17:24-25* – God gives life and breath to all, regardless of their acknowledgment of Him. **He is God of all!**
 - *Psalms 24:1* – "The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein."
 - *John 3:16* – God's love for the world offers salvation to "whosoever believes."
 - *Romans 5:12-18* – God's love for the world offers salvation to "whosoever believes."
- **Implication:** God's universal favor is inclusive. It provides life and opportunity to all, even those who don't recognize Him.

B. Community Favor

- **Definition:** God's favor shown to specific groups or communities. Often, this is tied to His covenant or mercy.
- **Scriptural Examples:**
 - *Deuteronomy 7:6-8* – God chose Israel as a holy people, not for their greatness, but because of His love and covenant.
 - *Jonah* – God spared Nineveh, giving them a chance to repent despite their wickedness.
 - *Acts 9:1-5* – God's intervention protected the early church from Saul's persecution. This was an example of Him showing favor to His people.

- **Implication:** God extends favor to communities. He does this to fulfill His purpose and promises or to offer redemption.

C. Personal Favor

- **Definition:** Favor granted to individuals through specific actions or qualities.
- **Key Pathways to Individual Favor:**
 - 1. **Righteous Living:** *Proverbs 12:2* – “A good man obtains favor of the Lord.”
 - 2. **Humility:** Humility attracts God’s grace and favor. (*Proverbs 3:34*)
 - 3. **Getting Wisdom and Knowledge:** Solomon gained favor through wisdom (*1 Kings 4:30-34*).
 - 4. **Honoring Parents:** Jesus’ obedience brought favor (*Luke 2:52*).
 - 5. **Operating in Your Gift:** Joseph’s faithfulness in his gift opened doors (*Proverbs 18:16* – “A man’s gift makes room for him”).
- **Implication:** Individual favor is tied to personal responsibility and intentional actions.

V. How to Obtain and Sustain Favor

- **Wisdom as a Key:** *Proverbs 8:35* links wisdom to favor. Getting wisdom is our responsibility, not just God’s gift.
 - **Methods to Gain Wisdom:**
 - ◆ *Observation and Meditation: Proverbs 24:30-32* – Learning from what you see.
 - ◆ *Heeding Instruction: Proverbs 4:1-13* – Listening to parents and mentors.
 - ◆ *Study: 1 Kings 4:30-34; Ecclesiastes 12:12* – Solomon’s knowledge brought favor.
- **Additional Principles:**
 - *Kindness and Truth: Proverbs 3:3-4* – Bind mercy and truth to your life for favor with God and man.
 - *Diligence and Goodness: Proverbs 11:27* – Seeking good gets favor.
 - *Integrity: Proverbs 22:1* – A good name brings favor, more valuable than riches.
- **Responsibility for Favor:** God may bless us with favor to bring about his purposes. However, our choice to pursue wisdom, live righteously, and use our gifts play a significant role in experiencing favor.

VI. Conclusion

- **Summary:** Favor is not just a divine gift; it’s a partnership. Universal favor blesses all. Community favor blesses some. Personal favor is the reward of wisdom, righteousness, and faithfulness.
- **Challenge:** Reflect on your life. Are you actively seeking wisdom, living righteously, and using your gifts? These choices unlock God’s favor.
- **Encouragement:** The Bible equips us to live favored lives. Let’s take responsibility for the favor we want, trusting God to move as we align with His principles.