

“The Meaning of God’s Favor”

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God's Favor is for a Lifetime - Psalm 30:5 - Pixabay photo - Used under license

"For His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for a lifetime; Weeping may last for the night, But a shout of joy comes in the morning." (Psalm 30:5)

Consider. Do you understand the meaning of God's favor?

This lesson explains the two meanings of God's favor in the Old Testament and the meaning of God's favor in the New Testament.

The Scripture references below are from the New American Standard Bible (NASB) ([Ref. 1](#)) unless noted otherwise.

1. God's Favor is Grace (First Meaning in the Old Testament)

The Bible often speaks about God's servants finding God's favor. "Noah found favor [Hebrew word *chen* - Ref. 2] in the eyes of the Lord" (Genesis 6:8, brackets added). Abraham, Moses, and Gideon found favor with the Lord, and the Lord granted their requests (Genesis 18:3, Exodus 33:12-17, Judges 6:17). When David and his servants fled Jerusalem because of Absalom's conspiracy, David, the king, said to Zadok, "Return the ark of God to the city. If I find favor in the sight of the Lord, then He will bring me back and show me both it and His habitation" (2 Samuel 15:25).

In the Old Testament verses above, the Hebrew word for *favor* is *chen*, which means *grace* (Ref. 2). So, in the Old Testament, the first definition of God's favor is *God's grace*. When God's servants found God's favor, they found God's grace.

2. God's Favor is Acceptance and Delight (Second Meaning in the Old Testament)

The Old Testament Hebrew has a second word, *ratson*, that the NASB and King James Version (KJV) translate as *favor*, *delight*, *acceptable*, or *acceptance* (Ref. 3). The following verses provide us additional insights into God's favor. These verses teach us that God's favor and delight are available to God's people.

- a. God's *favor* is durable, lasting a lifetime and beyond - Psalm 30:4-5
- b. God's *favor* surrounds the righteous as a shield - Psalm 5:12
- c. Those who seek wisdom find life and obtain *favor* from the Lord - Proverbs 8:35
- d. A good person will obtain *favor* from the Lord - Proverbs 12:2
- e. People who deal faithfully are God's *delight* - Proverbs 12:22
- f. The prayer of the upright is God's *delight* - Proverbs 15:8
- g. When people are obedient to God, God makes them joyful in his house of prayer, and their offerings and sacrifices are *acceptable* to God (Isaiah 56:6-7)
- h. God's Servant will proclaim the *favorable* (*acceptable* in the KJV) year of the Lord (Isaiah 61:2 NASB, Isaiah 61:2 KJV). Luke 4:14-21 describes the Sabbath day when Jesus quoted this Scripture. Jesus said, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing" (Luke 4:21).

3. God's Favor is Grace and Kindness (Meaning in the New Testament)

In the New Testament, the meaning of God's favor is *grace* and *kindness* (Ref. 4). This meaning of God's favor in the New Testament closely aligns with the "grace" definition of God's favor in the Old Testament (section 1 above).

Luke chapter 1 provides the first New Testament mention of a person finding favor with God (Luke 1:30). Luke 1:26-27 tells us that God sent the angel Gabriel to Mary. When Gabriel greeted her, he said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you" (Luke 1:28). Mary was "very perplexed at this statement, and was pondering what kind of greeting this was" (Luke 1:29). Then, the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God" (Luke 1:30).

In Luke 1:30 the Greek word for *favor* is *charis*, which means *grace and kindness* (Ref. 4). According to Thayer's Greek Lexicon, *charis* "is used of the kindness of a master toward his inferiors or servants, and so especially of God toward men" (Ref. 4).

Mary did not earn God's favor through her works. Mary was highly favored because she was receptive to God's grace (HELPS Word-studies, Ref. 5). Through her faith and trust in God, Mary believed that God would accomplish through her what God had promised (Luke 1:31-38).

Luke 2:52 also mentions God's favor. "And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man" (Luke 2:52 NIV).

God's favor (*grace, kindness*) is not something we can earn through our own efforts. As a result of Christ's sacrifice for us, we now receive God's favor (grace) through faith in Christ as God's Son. The Apostle Paul teaches, "For by grace [Greek *charis*] you have been saved through faith; and this is not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9, brackets added).

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Prayer. Thank you, God, for your favor. Thank you for accepting us and blessing us each day with your kindness not based on our own merits but on the merits of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

References

1. <https://www.biblegateway.com/>
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3. <https://biblehub.com/hebrew/7522.htm>
4. <https://biblehub.com/greek/5485.htm>
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