

The favor factor - part 1

Romans 5:1-2 Therefore now having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand...

The Word tells us that we now have access into God's Grace. What is the Grace of God? Grace = Favor, approval, good will, loving kindness, liberality, benefit. The 1906 Webster calls it friendship, free unmerited love & favor, disposition to oblige someone. In another word, once we are born again we receive God's approval and his favor. God is always disposed to oblige us, simply because His favor is upon us. This favor and approval are not earned, gained by what we do or stop doing, it is a free gift from God that we don't deserve or work for, but we simply must receive it by faith.

Most of us don't have a problem receiving our free gift of salvation, but how many of us feel like in order to please God we will have to get all our acts together. If I pray long enough God will be pleased, if I stop smoking, God will be pleased... This is what the apostle Paul calls "falling from Grace." Our greatest enemy is not sin, but rather our self righteousness, our attempts to please God by what we do or don't do. There is nothing we can or cannot do that will cause God to love us more or less... why? Because His love, His approval, His favor is already ours.

Rom. 11:6 and if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace.

If we had to perform to please God, then grace (favor) would cease to be grace, a free unmerited love. Does this mean that if we keep smoking or drinking God will still be pleased with us, If we don't pray 5 hours a day God still approves of us.... Absolutely!

You see his approval is not based on our performance but on His. Does this mean that we now have a license to sin and run wild. Of course not but our good works and our attempts to walk holy are not so we can please God, but because we already please God. He has placed us in the King's quarters, why would we want to live & act like a fool or a beggar. He has made us to soar with the eagles. Why would we want to stay with the pigs and the turkeys?

Did you notice that Paul said in Rom 5:2 that we should STAND in that grace. To stand carries the idea of standing firm, fixed, established, immovable. It also means to be of a steadfast mind. Our carnal nature has been so trained to believe that approval comes with good behavior. As a little girl if I sat right, behaved right, then my daddy was pleased with me. It is not so with God... Even though he might not approve of some of my choices and attitudes, he always approves of me and loves me no matter what.

We must learn from Jesus. His prayers were always answered because He always walked in the favor of God, and when the disciples asked him how to pray in Luke 11, He did not give them a formula or 7 steps to success, but rather He gave them truths and principles (I call it the Favor Factors) that would not only change their prayer life but every area of their life.

First and foremost Jesus told them a truth that shook the very core of their religious mindset. Jesus told them in Luke 11:2, You now can call God YOUR FATHER.

In the old testament people were not allowed to even pronounce the name *Yaweh*... much less call God Father.

Gal. 4:5-6 God sent His son... that we might receive the adoption as sons, our heart crying "Abba Father", The word Abba actually means "daddy".

Eph. 1:5-6 having predestined us to the adoption as sons... by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved.

What does this mean to us? Because we are now God's sons, we are loved, accepted, and approved by Him no matter what we do. One thing I have always heard from a new mom or dad, when the nurse places the little baby into their hands, a flood of love overwhelms them, and at that very moment they know that they love that baby no matter what. This is how God feels about us. His love for us floods the heavens and the earth, no matter what we do! He looks at us and he proudly proclaims: "This is my beloved son, my beloved daughter, in whom I am well pleased!"

Yes we might not have all our acts together, we are struggling with bad habits, we might fail to do what's right, but don't you think God knows that? Just Imagine a small baby trying to walk his first step... The daddy on the other side is elated, cheering him up with sweet words, and wide open arms.

You are trying to walk the walk of faith, you want to be holy as He is holy. And so what if you are making mistakes, at least you are trying... and so what if you are falling, just get back up and keep walking. God is on the other side with encouraging words and open arms. He is elated and excited about you, just because of who you are. If God is for us, who can be against us! Rom. 8:31.