



JOEL OSTEEN

#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR

THE POWER OF FAVOR

*THE FORCE THAT WILL TAKE YOU WHERE
YOU CAN'T GO ON YOUR OWN*

THE POWER OF
FAVOR

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Where You Can't Go on Your Own

JOEL OSTEEN



New York Nashville

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CHAPTER ONE

The Power of Favor

What God has in your future you can't accomplish on your own. There are places He's going to take you that you can't get to by yourself. There will be obstacles that look too big, dreams that seem impossible. You're going to need assistance for where you're going. The good news is, God has put something on you that gives you an advantage, something that will open doors that you can't open, something that will make you stand out in the crowd. It's called "favor." Favor will cause good breaks to come to you. Favor will take you from the background to the foreground. Favor will give you preferential treatment, things you don't deserve. You weren't next in line, but you got the promotion. On paper it didn't make sense, but the loan went through. That person who was so against you—for some reason they've changed. Now they're for you. That wasn't a coincidence. That was the favor of God.

We can work hard, be faithful, be diligent, and that's important, but that will only take us to a certain level.

We'll go as far as our education, as far as our background allows. But when God breathes His favor on you, things will happen that you couldn't make happen; opportunities will open that you didn't see coming. The right people will track you down. I've heard it said, "One touch of favor is worth more than a lifetime of labor." Just one good break, one phone call, meeting one person can catapult you to a new level. You've worked hard. You've been faithful. You've honored God. Now get ready for favor. Get ready for God to show out. He's about to do something unusual, something that you haven't seen, good breaks that you didn't work for, a promotion that you didn't deserve. You can't explain it. You can't take credit for it. It's the favor of God.

God told Noah to build an ark, a 450-foot-long boat. Noah wasn't a builder. That wasn't his profession. It seemed impossible, but God will never ask you to do something and not give you the favor to do it. You have favor. The question is, Do you have the faith? Are you going to talk yourself out of it? "I don't have the resources. I don't know the right people. I don't have the talent." That's okay, because you have something that makes up for all of that: Favor is on your life.

It's good to have education, but education alone is not enough. Talent alone is not enough. You need favor for where you're going. You may not know the right people, but don't worry, God does. He has already lined up divine connections, people who will come into your life and use their influence

to open doors, to give you opportunity that will push you forward. You don't have to manipulate people, try to convince them to like you, or compromise to get your way. If someone is not for you, you don't need them. Don't waste time trying to win them over. The people whom God has lined up for you don't have a choice. They may not like you, but they will help you anyway. They will go out of their way to be good to you. You don't have to find them. They will find you. You keep honoring God, believing and expecting. The favor on your life will cause the right people to show up.

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The people in Noah's day didn't care anything about God. They were living wildly, partying, and worshipping idols. God was so upset that He was about to destroy the Earth through a great flood. He could have wiped everyone out and started over, but the Scripture says, "Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord." Why did he find favor and not all the other people around him who were about to perish? The next verse says, "Noah continually followed God's will and did what was right." Noah could have compromised, fit in, done what everyone else was doing, but he made the choice to walk in obedience. When you honor God, when you keep Him first place, you will find favor in the eyes of the Lord. There is a blessing on your life that will push you up when others are going down.

Favor Brings You into Prominence

“Well, if I have favor, why am I having these difficulties? Why did these people come against me? Why did business slow down?” Having favor doesn’t mean you won’t have challenges, but favor is what’s going to keep the challenges from defeating you, and sometimes God will put you in a situation so He can show you His favor. One definition of *favor* is “to endorse, to bring to prominence, to give notoriety.” If you ask someone to endorse your book, you find a person who has more influence, more credibility, a bigger following than you. When they put their name on your book, their prominence instantly gives you more credibility.

Oprah Winfrey used to have her book club. When she would endorse a book, the author might have been unknown. Nobody had ever heard of them. Without the endorsement, the book would sell a few thousand copies. But when Oprah said on her talk show, “This is a great book. You should read it,” that simple endorsement could cause the book to sell hundreds of thousands of copies.

It’s great to have people’s endorsement, but you need to get ready. The Creator of the universe is about to endorse you. God is going to make things happen that are so big, so amazing, that people will know it couldn’t have been just

The Creator of the universe is about to endorse you.

you. The medical report said you were done. “How’d you get well?” God endorsed you. His favor caused you to overcome what looked impossible. “How’d your business get so successful? How’d you get so far ahead? We went to the same school.” God endorsed you. He showed His favor so people would know that you belong to Him.

This is what happened to Daniel in the Scripture. Favor didn’t keep Daniel out of trouble. The trouble was a setup for God to endorse Daniel, to bring him into prominence. Daniel was a teenager living in a foreign country. The king made a decree that no one could pray to any god except to the king himself. But Daniel worshipped Jehovah. He made the decision that he wasn’t going to compromise, so he kept praying just as he did every day. Some people saw him praying and ran and told the king. The king had Daniel thrown into a den of hungry lions. That should’ve been the end, but for some reason the lions couldn’t open their mouths. I can hear one of those lions saying, “I’m hungry. I want to eat this guy, but my jaws are messed up.”

Favor doesn’t keep you out of the lions’ den, but favor will keep the lions from harming you. The next morning the king went to check on Daniel. When he found out Daniel was okay, he said, “From now on we’re all going to worship the God of Daniel.”

“Well, Joel, maybe that was a lucky break. Maybe the lions weren’t hungry that day.” No, when they brought Daniel out of the lions’ den, the king had them throw the people

who were against Daniel into the den. Before they hit the bottom of the pit, the lions tore them apart. When people saw that, they knew the Lord was on Daniel's side.

God is going to do some things that bring you into prominence, into new levels of influence and credibility. People can debate what you say, but they can't debate what they see. When they see you running the company, paying your house off, and graduating with honors, they'll know God is endorsing you. When they see you breaking the addiction, beating the cancer, coming out of the lions' den unharmed, and accomplishing dreams way over your head, they will know God's hand is on your life and He's about to bring you into greater prominence. You've been in the background long enough, serving faithfully, helping others with no recognition. Your time is coming.

David spent years in the shepherds' fields taking care of his father's sheep, and I'm sure at times he thought, *I don't have favor. I'll never do anything great. I'm stuck out here. Nobody believes in me.* The truth is, you don't have to have people believe in you. The Most High God believes in you. When David defeated Goliath, that one good break, that one endorsement, launched him into a new level of his destiny, and it made up for all those lonely years. You may feel like you're falling behind, like it's too late to accomplish a dream, like you'll never get well. What God can do for you in one moment will put you fifty years down the road. That's the power of God endorsing you.

The Seal of Approval

You've seen a seal of approval on certain products. It may be stamped on the outside of a company's box, and it can be on a little-known product. Nobody's ever heard of it. But when that big company puts their stamp on it, their seal of approval, that product has notoriety and prominence, not because of what it is, but because of who endorsed it. The Creator of the universe is about to put His stamp on you. He's already accepted and approved you, but He's about to endorse you. He's about to go public. He's going to show people that you belong to Him. You're going to accomplish what you couldn't accomplish on your own. People are going to go out of their way to help you. You're going to defeat giants that are much bigger. People don't think you have a chance, but they don't know what's on you. They can't see the favor yet, but when God endorses you, when He shows out, they're not going to have any doubt that the Lord is on your side.

Joseph's brothers threw him into a pit and eventually sold him into slavery. He was falsely accused of a crime, put in prison for something he didn't do. All the odds were against him. But the Scripture says, "Joseph had favor in everything he did." One thing I've learned is that you can't keep a favored man down. You can't keep a favored woman down. You may have some obstacles, situations that are unfair. That doesn't mean you don't have favor. Challenges come to

Favor is why you're going to rise back to the top.

us all, but favor is why you're not going to stay down. Favor is why you're going to rise back to the top.

Joseph spent thirteen years in the background, being overlooked and mistreated. There were plenty of lonely nights. He didn't get bitter. He kept doing the right thing. One day, Pharaoh had a dream that no one could interpret, so they brought Joseph out of prison and into Pharaoh's presence. Now he was standing in front of one of the most powerful people of that day. Joseph interpreted the dream. Pharaoh was so impressed that he made Joseph the prime minister, second in command. I can imagine that meeting took no longer than an hour. Joseph walked in as an imprisoned slave. An hour later, he walked out as the prime minister.

You don't know what God can do in an hour. He can take years of heartache, years of being overlooked, years of praying, believing, not seeing any good breaks, and in one hour He not only can deliver you, not only bring a dream to pass, but He can do something that catapults you to a new level of your destiny. How can this happen? The favor on your life. When God breathes on you, doors will open supernaturally. Obstacles that look permanent will turn around. People who were against you will suddenly be for you.

Years later, Joseph's brothers came to the palace looking for food—the same ones who had thrown him into the pit. There was a great famine in their country, and they had traveled to Egypt. Now Joseph, the prime minister, was in

charge of the food supply. The brothers had done their best to keep him down, but God knows how to endorse you. He knows how to put you in a position of prominence.

You may feel like you're in a pit today. Don't get discouraged. We all have pit stops along the way in life. The good news is, that is not your final destination. God has an endorsement coming, and I've learned that the greater the opposition, the greater the endorsement. Much as with a bow and arrow, the more the enemy tries to pull you back, the more you're going to go forward. He thinks he's pulling you back to hinder you. He doesn't realize he's setting you up to shoot farther than you've ever imagined. When God says it's time, you're going to shoot into prominence, shoot into new levels of influence, leadership, respect, income, and credibility.

When the brothers saw Joseph and finally realized who he was, they nearly passed out. They thought they had gotten rid of him. But what they meant for harm, God used for good. God is not going to just deliver you, not going to just bring you out, He's going to endorse you. He's going to put you in a position of prominence where people can see you honored, respected, and admired.

You're Being Set Up for Endorsement

For over forty years, Lakewood Church was located in a neighborhood on the northeast side of Houston, and over

time that area of the city became more industrial and a little more run-down. When I was growing up, Lakewood met in a small metal building, with metal folding chairs and a gravel parking lot. We had a portable wood building for the nurseries, and some people looked down on us because we couldn't afford much. We were second-class. We were at a disadvantage.

When I became pastor, there were certain people I saw during the week who weren't a part of Lakewood and wouldn't give me the time of day. They barely even acknowledged that I was there. But in December 2003, the Houston City Council voted for us to have the former Compaq Center as our building. We went from being in the industrial part of town with small roads, back in a neighborhood where hardly anybody could find us, to being on the second-busiest freeway in the nation in one of the most well-known, prestigious buildings in our city. That one good break catapulted us to levels of influence and respect that we couldn't have reached on our own in our whole lifetimes, and those same people who wouldn't give me the time of day started to ask me if I could save them seats. I told them, "Of course I will, right up by the flag."

What am I saying? God knows how to endorse you. He knows how to cause you to be seen in a different light. Don't be discouraged by where you are. God sees what's happening. He's keeping the records. He's going to make the wrongs right. He hears the disrespect. He hears them making

fun. The Scripture says, “God heard Miriam criticizing Moses behind his back.” They may not give you the time of day now, but don’t worry, an endorsement is coming, not by people but by the Most High God.

He’s going to do things that are out of your league, things you couldn’t make happen.

He’s going to do things that are out of your league, things you couldn’t make happen. He’ll not only amaze you, but people around you are going to be amazed.

When people congratulated me for getting the Compaq Center, I thought, *If you only knew*. Yes, I prayed, and I believed, but God made things happen that I could never have made happen. The Scripture says, “God will turn the heart of a king.” God turned council members who had been against us for years, and suddenly they were for us.

Right now, God is working behind the scenes in your life. He is setting you up for an endorsement, setting you up for something you’ve never seen—promotion, influence, relationships that will thrust you to a new level. That city council vote probably took ten minutes. The mayor brought the motion to the floor, there was a little discussion, and then they went around the table and fourteen council members voted. It’s amazing what God can do in ten minutes. Those ten minutes changed the course of my life. It’s amazing what God can do in an hour—Joseph meeting with the Pharaoh. It’s amazing what God can do overnight—Daniel protected in the lions’ den.

“That Day” for You Is Coming

God has some of these destiny moments already lined up for you. You can't see them now. If He showed you, you'd think, *There's no way*. But when God endorses you, it's not like when people show you favor. When God does it, it catapults you ahead, and it's not going to take a long time. Yes, you have to be faithful. Joseph was in difficult places for thirteen years, but it only took him an hour to get out. He didn't see it coming. He woke up that morning thinking it was another ordinary day in prison. He didn't know that was his day to be endorsed. He didn't know that day was a destiny moment.

What God has for you is going to happen unexpectedly. You're doing the right thing, honoring Him. Out of the blue, someone will call and offer you the promotion.

Father, thank You for endorsing me today.

The medical report will say no more cancer, the contract will go through, or you'll bump into the person of your dreams. What would happen if we'd get up each day and say, “Father, thank You for endorsing me today. Let people see that I am Your child”?

As the Israelites were about to cross the Jordan River, God told Joshua, “Today I will begin to make you great in the eyes of all the Israelites.” God was saying, “Joshua, this is your moment. I'm about to endorse you. People are going to see the greatness I've put in you. You've been in the

background serving Moses, being faithful, but today you're coming into the foreground." Not long after that, Joshua led the Israelites into the Promised Land.

The Scripture says, "That day God made Joshua great in the eyes of all the people." God has a "that day" for you, a time when He will make you great, when He will cause you to stand out, where you will accomplish things you never dreamed you could accomplish. You will know it, and the people around you will see the greatness in you.

Helen Major was a longtime member of Lakewood. She taught elementary school for nearly forty years, faithfully pouring her best into the children. She got one promotion after another, then became assistant principal, then principal. After a very distinguished career, she retired. A few months later a new school was opening in the school district. The school board voted unanimously to name it the Helen Major Elementary School. She never dreamed a school would be named after her, but God knows how to endorse you. He knows how to make your life significant, and it's not so we can say, "Look who we are. Look how great we've become." It's about letting God's glory be seen through you. God wants to make you an example of His goodness, and if you will walk in humility and always give God the credit, there's no limit to how high He will take you.

Romans 8 says, "All creation is eagerly waiting for the day when God reveals who His children really are." That's talking about when we get to Heaven, but even now, God is going to show people that you belong to Him. All creation

is waiting for you to come into *that day*. The stage has been set. The audience is in place. You keep honoring God, and He's going to show people who you really are. He's going to bring you into a position of greater prominence.

You may be behind the scenes as I used to be when I was doing the television production at Lakewood, and there's nothing wrong with that, but God has something bigger. He's going to use you to accomplish something significant, not just be a small part. You're going to shine. You're going to stand out. People are going to see the greatness in you. It's good to celebrate others. It's good to cheer your friends on. It's good to admire those who are ahead of you, but God doesn't want you to live in a cheerleader mode, always thinking about how great others are. Can I tell you that there is greatness in you? You have talent, creativity, ability, courage, and strength. It's going to come out in a greater way, and when you come into "that day" when God endorses you, people are going to step back and say, "Wow, I didn't know that was in them. I never dreamed they would shine that brightly." God is going to show people who you really are.

Favor Is Given to Fulfill Your Purpose

There was a young Jewish girl in the Scripture named Esther. She was an orphan, having lost both her parents. She was living in exile in Persia. It didn't look as though she would ever do anything great, but one day the king was looking

for a new queen. He decided to have a nationwide beauty contest where he would choose the next queen. The king sent people out looking for young ladies, and they brought Esther back and put her in the contest. Esther had never been groomed to be a queen, never had the training. She didn't come from a prominent family. They lined all the young ladies up in front of the king. They were all beautiful, all wearing the latest fashions; all had the best hairdos and makeup. I can imagine the king looked at their résumés. Some of them came from wealth and influence. Some had impressive résumés, great educations, were standouts in their field. There were plenty of obvious choices, but for some reason the king chose Esther, an orphan, a foreigner.

When God endorses you, it will cause you to stand out. His favor will cause you to be preferred. They could've chosen anyone for the contract; for some reason they chose you. They could've bought any house in the neighborhood; for some reason they liked yours best. There were plenty of students who deserved the scholarship; for some reason they picked you. God knows how to make you attractive. He knows how to make people like you. Sometimes they don't even know why. They can't put their finger on it. There's just something about you. That's God smiling down on you.

“Well, Joel, this sounds good, but I don't have the training. I don't have the experience.” Neither did Esther. Favor is more powerful than your résumé. Favor will take

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résumé.*

you where you don't have the qualifications. Favor will open doors where you look up and think, *How did I get here? I was the least likely one.* Esther never dreamed of becoming a queen. That wasn't even on her radar. But when you come into "that day" when God endorses you, He will bring you into prominence that you've never imagined. He'll cause opportunity to come to you. Esther wasn't looking for that position. The position came to her. She went from the background to the foreground. Later, Esther used her position to save the Jewish people from a plot to destroy them. I believe one reason God gave her such prominence is that He knew she would use the influence to fulfill her purpose.

Favor is not about having a bigger house, a better car, or more stuff. There's nothing wrong with that, but that's not why God is going to favor you. Favor is given to fulfill your purpose. It's to advance His kingdom. When your dreams are tied to helping others, to making the world a better place, to lifting the fallen, then you will come into some of those "that day" moments when God will shine more on you than you've ever imagined. When God can trust you, He will take you from obscurity to notoriety.

Now you've worked hard, you've been faithful, you've honored God. Get ready, for the curtain is about to come up. God is about to show people who you really are. I believe and declare you are coming into a new level of prominence, a new level of influence, a new level of income. God is about to endorse you. People are going to see the greatness He put in you!

CHAPTER TWO

Declare Favor

One way our faith is released is through our words, and there is a connection between speaking favor and receiving favor. It's not enough to just believe you have favor. It's not enough to just expect favor. You have to take it one step further and declare favor. Every day you should declare, "I have the favor of God. Favor is on my family. Favor is on my health. Favor is on my business. Favor is on my finances." When you speak something out, you give it the right to come to pass. When you face difficult situations, instead of being discouraged, thinking, *Why did this happen?* you need to declare, "The favor of God is turning this around. Favor is bringing healing, freedom, vindication, and victory into my life."

It's one thing to think it, but when you declare it, angels go to work. In the unseen realm, things begin to change. We prayed, we believed, we hoped. That's good, but it's time to start speaking favor. Speak favor over your finances. "Father, thank You that Your favor is bringing me clients. Thank

You that Your favor is causing me to stand out. Thank You that what I touch will prosper and succeed.” The Scripture says, “Jesus increased in favor with God and with people.” You can increase in favor. The more you thank God for it, the more you declare it, the more favor you’re going to see.

“Joel, you say I have favor, but I never get good breaks. I never see anything unusual.” Maybe it’s because you’re not declaring it. Why don’t you step it up a notch? All through the day say, “Father, thank You that Your favor is endorsing me. Thank You that Your favor is bringing me into prominence. Thank You that Your favor is taking me to new levels.” That’s not just being positive. That’s releasing your faith for the favor of God.

Your Words Release Your Faith

There were five of us Osteen children growing up. We never left the house without my mother saying, “Father, thank You that my children have Your favor.” I like to joke that it worked for all of us except my brother, Paul. Four out of five is not bad. But it’s good to pray over your children. Ask God to protect them, guide them, give them wisdom, but don’t stop there. Speak favor over them. “Father, thank You that my children have favor with their teachers, favor with other students, favor that causes them to excel.”

David did this. He said, “Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life.” In one Bible translation,

the word *goodness* is *favor*. David was saying, “Surely favor follows me all my life.” In effect he was saying, “Favor is keeping enemies from defeating me. Favor is making me attractive. Favor is bringing promotion and opportunity.” He didn’t just think about it. He didn’t just hope it would work out. He spoke favor over his life. No wonder the prophet Samuel came to him and anointed him the next king. No wonder he defeated a giant twice his size. No wonder King Saul couldn’t kill him.

When you’re constantly talking about the favor of God, bragging on His goodness, you will go places you couldn’t go on your own. You will overcome obstacles that seem impossible. Maybe you’ve been single for a long time. You don’t think you’ll ever meet the right person. Start declaring, “The favor of God is bringing someone awesome into my life. Favor is making me attractive. Favor is putting me at the right place at the right time.” If you’re struggling in your finances, instead of complaining, start declaring, “The favor of God is bringing increase and promotion. Favor is opening doors that I can’t open. Favor is causing good breaks to come to me.” Or the medical report doesn’t look good. You could just pray about it, hope you get better, and that’s good. But also start declaring, “The favor of God is bringing healing. The favor of God is causing me to recover. The

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favor of God is helping me to defy the odds. With long life, God will satisfy me.”

Ever since I started ministering, I’ve said, “Father, thank You that Your favor causes me to stand out, that when people see me on television, they can’t turn me off.” Every week somebody tells me, “I was flipping through the channels. I don’t like TV ministers. I never watch them, but, Joel, I turned you on, and I couldn’t turn you off.” I know that wasn’t a coincidence. It wouldn’t have happened if I had not declared favor.

Activate This Favor

The dreams that God has put in your heart, you need to speak favor over them. Those problems that look impossible, declare that the favor of God is turning them around. In the Scripture, Nehemiah had a dream to rebuild the walls around Jerusalem. They had been torn down, and the people living there were unprotected. This dream seemed impossible. Nehemiah was living a thousand miles from Jerusalem, working as a cupbearer to the king. He didn’t have the influence, the connections, the resources, or the funding, but when God gives you a dream, He lines up everything you need. His favor will cause it to all come together. The question is, Are you going to activate this favor?

Nehemiah wasn’t a cabinet member. He wasn’t on the

king's executive staff. He was working in the kitchen, but he understood this principle: The favor on his life would help him accomplish dreams he couldn't accomplish on his own. He asked the king for permission to return to Jerusalem to work on the project. For some reason the king liked him. It didn't make sense to let him be gone that long, but the king said yes. Nehemiah said, "I'm going to need protection. Will you give me a letter addressed to all the leaders in the cities I'm traveling through, telling them who I am?" The king agreed. Nehemiah didn't stop there. He said, "One more thing, King. I don't have any supplies to rebuild the wall. I don't have any money. I need a letter from you that tells the people who own the lumber mills and the stone quarries to give me the materials I need." When you know you have favor, you'll have a boldness, a confidence to ask big, to expect advantages. Again the king said yes.

In Nehemiah 2, he said, "The king granted me these requests because the gracious hand of God was upon me." He was saying, "I know why all this happened. The favor of God is on my life." When you see God's favor, always take time to thank Him. Take a moment to say, "Lord, I recognize this was Your goodness. Thank You for favoring me. Thank You for making things happen that I couldn't make happen."

Nehemiah started on the wall, and he had all kinds of opposition, but every time the favor of God helped him to overcome. It should've taken him more than a year to

It's not going to take as long as you think to accomplish your dreams.

rebuild it, but he did it in just fifty-two days. God's favor will accelerate things. It's not going to take as long as you think to accomplish your dreams, to recover from the illness, to pay off your house. The favor on your life is speeding things up. Nehemiah said, "I told all the people how the gracious hand of God was on my life." He was constantly bragging on God's goodness, constantly talking about His favor.

When you face situations that seem impossible, don't talk about how big the problem is. Do as Nehemiah did and start declaring, "The gracious hand of God is on my life." "Well, your child is off course." "Yes, but the favor of God is bringing him back." "You can't start your business. You don't have the connections." "Yes, but I have an advantage. The favor of God is bringing the right people to me." "Well, the medical report says you're done." "Yes, but I have another report. It says I will live and not die. Father, thank You that Your gracious hand is on me. Thank You that Your favor is doing what medicine cannot do." "Well, Joel, I tried this for two weeks, and nothing happened." No, this needs to be a way of life, where every day, whether it's sunny or rainy, whether you're on the mountaintop or in the valley, you get up in the morning and say, "I have the favor of God." That's not just to remind yourself, not just to show God that you're trusting Him, but you're showing the enemy who you belong to.

Crown Your Efforts with Success

The Scripture says, “If you will acknowledge God in all your ways, He will crown your efforts with success.” One way to acknowledge God is, all through the day, under your breath, declare His favor. Before you make that presentation at work, say, “Father, thank You that I have favor with these people.” Going to the mall, say, “Lord, thank You that Your favor will help me find what I need.” The favor of God will help you get the best deals. Favor will put you at the right place at the right time. You pull into a crowded parking lot. Right when you drive in, a car backs out. You get that up-front spot. That wasn’t a lucky break. That was the favor on your life.

Years ago I promised our daughter, Alexandra, that I would get her a cell phone. The next day she came running in and said, “Dad, can we go to the store?” I said yes. When Jonathan heard we were going, he wanted to come. I said, “That’s great, Jonathan, because we’d love to have you, but you already have a cell phone.” He said, “I know, Dad. I just want to look.” Then when Victoria heard that we were all going, she decided to come along as well. It turned into a family affair. Driving to the store, under my breath, just out of habit, I said, “Lord, thank You for Your favor. Thank You that You’ll help us find what we need.” We walked into the store and a salesman came out to wait on us and showed us some phones. Alexandra found the one she wanted.

We were about to check out when Jonathan came over and said, “Dad, I really want the newer version of my phone.” His phone was not even a year old, practically brand-new, and I really didn’t want to do that. The salesman asked to see my phone, then he typed something into the computer and said, “You’re due for an upgrade at no charge.” I said, “Well, great. Give Jonathan the new phone, and I’ll take his.” His was like new to me. We were about to leave, but then the salesman said to Victoria, “What kind of phone do you have?” She showed him hers, and he said, “You need a new phone.” He checked the computer, but she wasn’t due for several years. I thanked him for checking and for all his help. As we were walking out, the store manager said, “Wait a minute. She’s not leaving without a new phone.” The salesman looked at the manager with an expression that said, “What do you mean? What do you want me to do?” He said, “Just give her a phone.” The salesman’s eyes got really big. He said, “You mean, like, give her, like, free, like, not charge her?” The manager said, “Yes, give her any phone she wants.” We had gone in there to get one phone. We walked out with four, but we only paid for one. You may think that was good luck, but I know that’s the favor of God.

Driving home, I reached my hand back to my children and said, “Come on, get some of this favor off me. I can’t stand it all.” When you not only recognize you have favor, but you declare favor, God will show out in your life. You will see things that you don’t deserve. If you’re in real estate,

declare, “Father, thank You that Your favor is causing my properties to sell. Thank You that Your favor is bringing the right buyers.” Before you take the exam at school, declare, “Father, thank You that Your favor is causing me to excel.” Before you meet with those new clients, declare, “Lord, thank You that Your favor is making me attractive.”

Ask for Rain

“Well, Joel, God’s got bigger things to deal with than me getting a cell phone or finding a good parking spot.” Can I tell you that you are God’s biggest deal? You are the apple of His eye. He wants to show you His goodness. That’s what favor is. The prophet Zechariah said, “Ask for rain in the time of rain.” In the Scripture, rain represents favor. This seems odd. If it’s raining, why do you need to ask for rain? God was saying, “Just because My favor is available, you’re not going to experience it unless you call for it, unless you declare it.” You may not be able to see it, but right now it’s raining. It’s raining healing, raining freedom, raining promotion, raining spouses, raining good breaks, raining abundance. God is showering His favor like never before. My challenge is, don’t let it pass you by. Don’t go around just hoping and believing. The way you get in the rain is by declaring favor: “Father, thank You that Your favor is opening doors

*He wants to show you
His goodness. That’s
what favor is.*

no man can shut. Thank You that Your favor is bringing good breaks, advantages, preferential treatment. Lord, thank You that Your favor is defeating enemies, turning negative situations around, breaking forces that are trying to stop me.” Every time you declare favor, you’re asking for the rain. That’s what allows God to show out in your life.

I have friends whose son played on a minor league baseball team. His dream was to make it to the big leagues. He’s extremely talented, led the division in hitting for several years, but it seemed as though every time he was about to get promoted to the big leagues, something would come up and he got passed over. His parents told me, again and again, how he was leading the league in home runs, how he was having a banner year, but for some reason he was overlooked. They could’ve been discouraged and thought it’s not meant to be, but they did what I’m asking you to do. They kept declaring the favor of God: “Father, thank You that Your favor is on our son. Thank You that Your favor is putting him at the right place. Thank You that Your favor is causing him to stand out.” The team he played for had a star player in the major leagues in his same position. It looked as if that player would be there for years, but one day, unexpectedly, the star player requested a trade and was sent to another team. This young man was suddenly promoted to the big leagues. He went on to live out his dream of playing Major League Baseball.

When you declare God’s favor, He will move people out of the way to make room for you. Favor will promote you sud-

denly, unexpectedly, to things that you didn't see coming. You may not see how you can accomplish a dream or how you'll get well. It doesn't look as if it's ever going to change. I have good news. It's raining. If you'll do your part and keep declaring God's favor, as with my friends' son, God is going to do something unusual, something that you weren't expecting, where suddenly you're promoted, suddenly you get well, or suddenly you meet the right person.

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Don't Get Talked Out of Your Dreams

When we acquired the Compaq Center, we hired architects to draw plans to see what it would take to renovate it. We had to build our own power plant plus an additional five-story building. The cost came right at \$100 million. We didn't have those kinds of funds, so we met with our bank to see what they would loan us. We had known these bankers for years, way back with my father. They knew the church's finances, how strong the ministry is, and the potential for growth. We met, and they were very nice, but they were as negative as can be. They told me all the reasons why it wasn't going to work out, how they could never take that kind of risk of loaning us that money, how every bank was going to say no, on and on. I left there so discouraged. I was young. I didn't know any better.

I've since learned that people don't have the final say. People don't control your destiny. People can't see the favor on your life. They don't know what God is about to do. Don't let them talk you out of your dreams. Don't let people convince you that you can't get well, you'll never afford a nice house, you'll never break the addiction. They're looking at the natural. We serve a supernatural God. One touch of His favor will catapult you ahead. They may be negative, discouraging, and condescending. Let it go in one ear and out the other. None of that can stop your purpose. The favor on your life will defy the odds. Favor will take you where you don't have the qualifications. On paper, it may not make sense. Don't worry. God knows what He's doing.

I woke up the next morning with a fire in my spirit. Something inside said, "Joel, God didn't bring you this far to leave you where you are. He didn't move the Rockets basketball out of that building, cause the mayor to be good to you, change a city council member's mind, and bring you through a lawsuit so you could get stuck where you are." I realized the favor of God had brought us that far, and the favor of God was going to keep us going. Instead of being discouraged, thinking, *Look how big these obstacles are*, my attitude was, *Look how big my God is. Father, thank You that Your favor is bringing the right people, people who will get behind the vision. Thank You that Your favor is making a way where I don't see a way.*

We decided to try another bank. We had never met these bankers, never had any contact with them, but when

we walked in, it was a night-and-day difference. From the very beginning, they were for us. They had a letter on the table, offering us a loan three times the amount of what the other bank said we'd never get. They hadn't even seen our finances. They'd never looked at our books. When I saw they would loan us that much, I said, "How about loaning us the whole amount so we could do it all?" They said, "That won't be a problem. We'll make that happen."

God has these divine connections lined up for you, people who will be behind your vision, people who will be for you, not people you have to convince. You may not have seen them yet, but they are in your future. God has already ordained them to help you. The favor on your life is going to close the wrong doors and open the right doors. "Well, Joel, I've been declaring favor, but I don't see anything happening. It doesn't look like it's ever going to change." The apostle Peter says, "Hope to the end, for the divine favor that is coming." You may not have seen it yet, but favor is on the way. Healing is on the way. Promotion is on the way. The right people are on the way.

Mountains to Molehills

I met a man a few years ago who was so discouraged. He's in the graphic design industry. At one time his company had been very successful, but over the years, his business had gone down. He'd lost all his major clients. It looked as if

bankruptcy was inevitable. He went on and on, telling me about the problem, going into great detail to explain all the setbacks he had suffered and how unfair it was. I finally had to interrupt him and say, “We’ve talked long enough about the problems. Let’s start talking about the solution. Let’s start talking about what God can do. Let’s talk about the fact that favor is on the way.” We prayed together. Then I said, “There’s something you have to do. Every morning, you need to declare, ‘I have the favor of God. Favor is bringing me

Every morning, you need to declare, “I have the favor of God.”

new clients. Favor is turning my business around.’ Then all through the day, under your breath, keep thanking God for that favor.” I saw him several months later. He was like a new person, beaming with joy. He

told how, at his lowest moment, when he thought he was done, a company that he had never worked for contacted him and asked him to make a presentation. They chose him over several major firms. He said, “With this one new client, I will have more income than from all my other clients combined.” He was on pace to have a record year.

What you’re facing may seem impossible. Don’t talk about the problem. Talk about the solution. Talk about the fact that favor is on the way. “Yes, my finances may be low, but I know favor is coming.” “These people at work aren’t treating me right. I’m not going to live bitter. I know favor is on the way.” “Well, my child is off course, but I know it’s only temporary. The favor of God is turning it around.”

This is what a man named Zerubbabel did in the Scripture. He was in charge of rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem. Everything came against him. City leaders hired attorneys to try to stop him; they wouldn't give him the permits. Other people were causing strife and trouble. It looked impossible. He could've been discouraged. But he heard the prophecy that the Lord gave to Zechariah about him, and based on that he said, "Who are you, O great mountain that stands before me? You shall become a mere molehill. I will finish the temple by shouting grace to it." He was saying, "I have this big mountain in front of me, but I'm not worried. I know it's about to become a molehill." How is this going to happen? What was his secret? By speaking grace to it. Another word for *grace* is *favor*. He was saying, "Yes, this obstacle is big, but I have the favor of God. Favor is making my crooked places straight. Favor is defeating my enemies. Favor is going to help me finish this project." He didn't talk *about* his mountain. He talked *to* his mountain.

When you face challenges, don't get discouraged. Speak favor over them. Look at your bank account and speak favor to it. "I will lend and not borrow. What I touch will prosper and succeed." Speak favor over your health. "This sickness is not the end. This pain is not permanent. The favor of God is bringing healing." Speak favor over the legal situation. "I will be victorious. The favor of God is keeping my enemies from defeating me." It's not enough to just pray about it. It's not enough to just believe. What's going to turn the mountain into a molehill is by speaking grace to it.

I want to make a declaration of favor over you. If you let this take root in your spirit, I believe chains that have held you back are going to be broken, and you're going to be released into a new level of your destiny. I declare that right now the favor of God is on your life in a new way. I declare favor over your family, favor over your marriage, favor over your finances. I declare favor at work, favor with your boss, favor with your colleagues, favor with your clients. I declare favor is opening new doors of opportunity, bringing promotion, increase, and abundance, causing the right people to be drawn to you. I declare favor over your health, strength, energy, wholeness. You are free from sickness, chronic pain, depression, and addictions. I speak favor over every force that's trying to stop you, and I declare that mountain is becoming a molehill. As with Nehemiah, God's favor is going to accelerate it. Things are going to happen sooner than you think. I declare the favor of God is going to catapult you to a new level. You're going to take new ground, set new standards, and reach the fullness of your destiny.