



# FAVOR FOR THE JOURNEY



## PREVIEW

The places God tells us to go can be tough. Sometimes they don't even make sense, and, quite frankly, they don't seem like "God destinations." But when we are in the will of God, He always packs enough favor for our journey.

## PRAISE

Did you know that when God calls us to journey with Him it's very rarely easy? In fact, besides sunny skies, balmy breezes, and green pastures, we should expect obstacles, mountains, valleys, and storms. Although this journey will be the tough at times, having the favor of God makes the journey well worth it.

## PARABLE

Have you ever been on a trip? Or maybe a picnic? Or a trip to the beach? When you go on a trip, you have to pack. There is a love/hate relationship with packing. We love to anticipate the journey while packing outfits and shoes, but there's always the chance we will forget something.

There's nothing worse than forgetting a necessary item: getting into the car for an eight-hour trip and forgetting the snacks; boarding a plane and realizing you forgot your headphones and you have nothing to entertain yourself with; getting to the beach and realizing that you forgot your sunscreen. Hello, sunburn! Even having a list and checking it twice doesn't guarantee you won't forget something.

Our walk with God is a daily journey. We pack our prayer life, we pack our fasting, we pack our Bible-reading, and we pack our spiritual covering and authority. But sometimes we forget about the favor God wants to give us for the journey. His favor is essential to reaching our destination safely. When the road gets hard, God's favor will encourage us. When things aren't clear, God's favor will show us the way.

## PRESENT



Jacob had worked for his father-in-law Laban for twenty years. During that time, the favor of God that rested on Jacob and had also extended to Laban's family. Then God appeared to Jacob in a dream and told him to return to the land of Canaan. Instead of saying good-bye, Jacob and his wives packed up everything they owned, gathered all their children, assembled all their flocks, and took off. When Laban found out three days later, he was furious and he and his relatives chased after them. One night during the chase God appeared to Laban in a dream and told him not to harm anyone in Jacob's camp. When Laban finally caught up to Jacob, he said, "It would have been nice to be able to kiss my daughters and grandchildren good-bye. Instead, you stole them away." Laban continued, "I could destroy you, but the God of your father appeared to me last night and warned me, 'Leave Jacob alone!'" (Genesis 31:29, NLT).

Jacob and his family ran into trouble again when they set up camp near the city of Shalem. One of the princes of the land mistreated Jacob's beautiful daughter Dinah. Without telling Jacob, Simeon and Levi avenged their sister by killing all the young men in the city. Jacob yelled at them: "You've made me stink among all the people of this land . . . we are so few that they will join forces and crush us. I will be ruined, and my entire household will be wiped out!" (Genesis 34:30, NLT). They hurriedly pulled up stakes and headed toward Bethel, where God had dealt with Jacob at the first.

Have someone read Genesis 35:5.

Even though two of Jacob's sons had done wrong, God gave his family favor for their journey, and they arrived safely at Bethel.

Things sometimes get dicey on our Christian journey, leaving us vulnerable to attack. But because we belong to God, His favor will keep us safe.

Have someone read Matthew 10:10.

Jesus sent out the twelve apostles to preach, heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, and cast out devils. He told them, "Don't take any money with you. Don't pack extra clothes or sandals or a staff for your journey." Why do you think He said this to them? (He wanted them to believe His favor would provide everything they needed for their journey.) The disciples came back rejoicing about the great things they had accomplished through God's power.

## PRACTICE

The enemy will try to hinder your Christian journey, but God will give you the same favor Jacob had in the midst of his troubles and the same favor the apostles had on their journeys. When you feel stressed, exhausted, depressed, and anxious, God will give you the favor you need to overcome. You might not feel up to the task or you might think the enemy and obstacles are too great for you, but God has equipped you for the journey. Trust Him to provide everything you need.

God is not a respecter of persons, but He is a respecter of sacrifice. One way to obtain God's favor is to sacrifice. Wherever Jacob went he built an altar and sacrificed to the Lord. The apostles and other disciples offered themselves as living sacrifices to the Lord. When we sacrifice, we obtain the favor of God.

Have someone read Romans 12:1.

## PRAY

God, thank You for protecting us from our enemies along the journey and for giving us power to win spiritual battles. Thank You that when we come to a dark valley or have to walk through a raging storm, we can trust You to give us the strength to come safely out on the other side. Thank You for being there for us even when things don't make sense. Thank You for Your favor!

## PLUS

What are some obstacles we encounter on our journey with God? What are some of the ways we can overcome the obstacles? What are some things we can sacrifice?