Obtaining God's Blessing
2 Chronicles 7:14

Objective: Teach what people must do to get God's favorable attention.
Reading: 2 Chronicles 7:11-16.
Memory: 2 Chronicles 7:14.

Introduction:
1. Sometimes people feel like God hates them. They look around, and life is a mess. They pray and pray, but nothing happens. Why doesn't God ever help or answer prayers?

We need to know how to obtain God's favor. (How?)
Solomon has overseen the building of a new temple, and dedicated it with many sacrifices, then spent time in prayer to God. In verse 14, in answer to Solomon's sincere and fervent prayer that God pay attention to the needs of the people and give them His blessing, God identifies what He is looking for if people are to receive His favorable attention and help.

God is not about to help those who are arrogant and independent or rebellious toward Him. He is not about to help those who ignore Him and His desires and instructions. A first requirement for God's help is for people to

I. Humble Ourselves.
A. Decide to render praise to Almighty God.
   1. Part of our humility is recognizing how great God is and worshiping Him.
   2. Israel led by Solomon, built an extravagant temple. They offered incredible sacrifices of their material possessions to do obeisance to God. 22,000 head of cattle, 120,000 sheep / goats.
   3. It cost them something. What are you willing to spend to honor God above yourself? Would you give up a half a day a week? Give up $? Time? Serve with no expectation of return?
   4. Then they fell prostrate before God. We don't like to get off the sidewalk for people. It takes humility to make a gesture that says YOU are so much more important than I am.

B. Decide to willingly submit to God's will and leading.
   1. The people recognized how much they needed God's help.
   2. Solomon recognized his need for help in leading – His first prayer was for wisdom to lead.
   3. Realize your own need. “Show me the way. I can do nothing without your help and leading me.”
   4. You can't even breath without God supplying oxygen. You can't even water your garden without God supplying water.

C. Realize that “I” don't “deserve” any blessings.
   1. We tend to live and act like it is normal and right for God to serve us. That He exists to provide for our wants and needs.
   2. We tend to think we deserve things because we have always had them, or because others have them; just a house and car, like everyone else, just three meals a day and regular snacks. And a large screen TV. And nice jeans...
   3. You don't really deserve these, they are gifts, blessings from God. We should constantly render thanks for them! They are all blessings, not rights.
   4. What I “deserve” is to be abandoned because of my sin – the way I have lived in regard to all God has already done for me. I deserve to be beaten, defeated, humbled.

On the basis of such humility, we need to go ahead and

II. Pray.
A. What exactly does it mean to “pray”?
   1. Does not mean to “place your order” and expect results like you do at McDonalds.
   2. It is more than asking. Earnestly imploring. Beseeching. More like of begging than just asking.
   3. God invites you to come to Him and politely, respectfully, in humility, solicit His help.
   4. Don't demand things like some televangelists tell you to do. Nothing humble about that.

B. Jesus actually taught His disciples how to pray.
   1. They were raised as religious people and still asked Jesus to teach them to pray.
3. You learned how to write a “friendly” letter in school, maybe a request to God is at least as important as a “friendly letter”. Anything sincere, offered in humility will probably do, but maybe we should spend a little time practicing, looking at what Jesus taught.
4. Notice the respect, humility and repentance of Jesus’ teaching in Luke 11:1-4: “One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.” He said to them, “When you pray, say: ‘Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation.’
5. Scriptures are full of prayers we can learn from. Check out several in Ephesians, Psalms.

Adding to the humility and actually beseeching God for His blessing, the passage also teaches we are to III. Seek God’s Face.
A. This is the opposite of what many folks actually do.
   1. It seems to be more common for folks to basically ignore God until they really need Him.
   2. Or, rather than seek his face, people actually do things that are offensive or degrading to God, then wonder why God doesn’t seem to be around when they want something.
   3. Would you hang around to help someone who constantly insulted you when you deserved honor?
   4. Seeking His face is going out of your way to see Him, spend time in His Presence.
B. To “seek” is to try to get the privilege of an audience.
   1. How do you get an audience with the President of the U.S.? You can’t just walk in.
   2. Can’t generally even see a bank president without some preparation and appointment. Usually have to go through his secretary first. Then you probably dress up some first.
   3. This will involve some intentional time and effort and preparation. Spend intentional time to get into God’s Presence.
C. Learn and do that which is appropriate and pleasing.
   1. If you hoped to spend some time with “Tiger” Woods, you’d learn some golf concepts. Maybe to see God, you should learn some spirituality!
   2. Need to learn some proper etiquette before you enter the presence of the Queen of England.
      Proper etiquette is even helpful if not essential when coming into presence of a traffic court judge; NOT good idea to come in dirty jeans and T-shirt. Not good idea to call him “buddy” or say “Listen Lady”, and make demands. Better to use “sir” or “Madam” or “your honor”.
   3. How will you enter the Presence of the King of kings?

A major part of obtaining an audience with God, and required etiquette for such an audience is to IV. Turn From Wicked Ways.
A. This is called “repentance”.
   1. If it’s bad manners to belch at the President’s dinner table, so stop it if you want an audience.
   2. Anything “evil” is bad manners in God’s Presence. Turn away from such things.
B. Stop doing whatever it is that God objects to.
   1. Would you help someone who continued to do things that were detestable to you?
   2. Oh that’s just me! That’s the way I am! You would change it if it was sufficiently important to you!
   3. Would you bless someone who insisted on, continued being offensive to you?
   4. Don’t expect His blessing if you verbally cuss Him, if you are practicing adultery or homosexuality or any other sexual perversions. Or using taro cards, or other means to fellowship spiritual forces other than the Holy Spirit. Or cheat. Or lie. Or anything contrary to His instructions.
In our time,

V. This is all realized “in Christ”.

A. Christ enables all of this to happen.
   1. He portrays the spirit.
   2. He leads into truth.
   3. His spirit convicts us.
   4. His sacrifice enables the forgiveness.

B. Turn to God through Christ.
   1. *In Christ* is where you find the right clothing for the occasion. Galatians 3:26-27, “You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.”
   2. *In Christ* is where we find the privilege of Coming confidently into God’s presence to ask His help; Hebrews 4:14-16, “Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. 15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. 16 Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.”
   3. *In Christ* is HOW we prepare ourselves to be pleasing to Him; Colossians 3:5-14.
   4. Then whatever we ask for “in His name” we can be confident of receiving. John 16:23-24; “I tell you the truth, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.” The “name” of Christ is not a verbal incantation. It is receiving forgiveness of sins through Christ’s sacrifice and your giving of yourself totally into His care. It is belonging to God through Jesus. It is living and abiding in accord with His Spirit. It is putting off the old and putting on the new.

So What?

Whatever your life is like, you *can* gain God’s favor. He is wanting to bless you, but you need to behave in a nature suitable for His friendship. Humble yourself before Him. Talk to Him in prayer. Respectfully seek audience with Him, and stop doing bad things. Come to God in purity and reverence through Jesus.
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“Let us, therefore, come near to God with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may encourage one another within our Hearts, for we partly share in the sufferings of Christ, being abundantly confident of his glory. So then, as the Holy Spirit says, ‘If today you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as sinners did in the wilderness, with their fathers after the test of my patience, but with a適當的心去信靠神，我們的心纔會被清潔，我們的身體纔會被潔淨。我們要堅定不移地保持我們的信念，因為他已經承諾要實現。而且我們要考慮如何在心裏鼓勵彼此，因為我們部分地分享了基督的痛苦，我們對他榮耀的確信是充分的。所以，正如聖靈說，‘如果今天你聽見他的聲音，就不要像當初的罪人一樣，他們的父親在試煉中對我的耐心表現出反應，而是要用適當的心去信靠神。’”

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What it takes to receive His favorable attention and help.

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A. Decide to render praise to Almighty God.

B. Decide to willingly submit to God’s will and leading.

C. Realize that “I” don’t “deserve” any blessings.

II. Pray.
A. What exactly does it mean to “pray”?

B. Jesus actually taught His disciples how to pray.  
   Luke 11:1-4

III. Seek God’s Face.
A. This is the opposite of what many folks actually do.

B. To “seek” is to try to get the privilege of an audience.

C. Learn and do that which is appropriate and pleasing.

IV. Turn From Wicked Ways.
A. This is called “repentance”.

B. Stop doing whatever it is that God objects to.

IV. This is all realized “in Christ”.
A.

B. Turn to God through Christ.

So What?
Humble yourself before God. Talk to Him in prayer. Respectfully seek audience with Him, and stop doing bad things. Come to God in purity and reverence through Jesus Christ.