

A
MESSAGE OF HOPE,
comfort and freedom in Jesus Christ

“The Favor of God” by Kyle Murphy

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With 2015 having come to a close and a new year beginning, it seems like a good time to discuss the growth we've experienced over the past year. I'm always hesitant to discuss anything to do with numbers, though, because that has never been and will never be our goal, but I do realize that it can be a useful mark as to whether or not we are headed in the right direction. Before discussing where we are at, though, maybe a better conversation would be – why we are where we are at. So, “Why have we experienced the growth we have had over this last year?” The answer is simple – it is solely because of the favor of God.

In the New Testament we read that Jesus gained the favor of God and man. Luke 2:52 – our quarterly scripture verse – states, “Jesus grew in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and men.” Throughout the Bible we read about others finding favor in the sight of God as well. A couple of examples that come to mind: 1 Samuel 2:26 says, “Samuel continued to grow in stature and in favor with the LORD and with men.” Also, in Luke 1:20 we read, “The angel went to [Mary] and said, ‘Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.’”

The Bible is full of many other

examples of individuals who received the favor of God and He continues to show favor to those in this day and age. It is important to note, though, God's grace and favor are not given based on merit. Samuel, Mary and the other biblical characters we read about did not earn the favor of God and we don't either. But, we can live and operate in such a way as to be more ready recipients of His favor.

When we seek God's favor and His will in our lives, we become better equipped to recognize the blessings He provides and act on them accordingly. With the favor of God comes amazing blessings. When He chooses us to enjoy His undeserved kindness (whether meaning us as a ministry or as an individual or group of people) His blessings are not meant for us alone. The blessings that come with the favor of God are also to be shared with those around us.

Since Message of Hope began in 2012, we have strived to continue to seek God's favor and His will in all that we do. When we are able to operate in way such as this, it is Him and Him alone who gets the glory. We are grateful and humbled to be

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Quarterly Scripture Focus:

Luke 2:52
“And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.”



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It has been such a blessing to see God at work through Voices for Christ...from behind the narrow windows over this past year. One noteworthy update is that we were blessed to add two additional committee members. Jonathan Reid and Eddie Yousif have partnered with us in order to assist in the Stage 2 Review Process. They both bring an amazing amount of biblical knowledge to the ministry as well as a passion for serving God. We want to thank them – as well as thank those members who have been with us since this ministry first began – George Westerman Jr., Brian Wagner and Dale Ashton. What an honor to have such faithful men of God to serve alongside of. More updates as well as additional information about VFC is included in the insert that is enclosed.



The James Group classes at Macomb County Jail (est. Sept 2015) are off to a great start. As of this writing, we have started our 2nd round of classes and averaging about 16 men in attendance each week. We hold classes for both the East and West side of floors 10 & 11 every Friday night. During our 1st round of classes, we gave out 19 workbooks and 10 certificates of completion. As was expected, several of the guys either went home or were transferred but we were grateful to have 10 who completed the class. Two of them even returned for the 2nd set of classes!

The James Group at Carson City Correctional Facility (est. Sept 2015) is also off to a great start. Our gratitude goes out to Chaplain Adamson for allowing the James Group into his facility. Hunter Tokar, the ministry leader and class facilitator at that location, reports that their first group is due to graduate in January. He runs the program a bit different than at other locations with groups being limited to 10 people at a time with a new group added each month. The group then stays together for the duration of the class in order to build a network of support and accountability with one another. As of this writing, there are 5 separate groups meeting simultaneously with a total of 42 class members! We are so grateful for Hunter and the heart he has for Jesus Christ and to Real Life Christian Church for providing the bibles for the James Group at Carson City!

The James Group at Macomb Correctional Facility (est. Dec 2012) continues to enjoy the favor of God. We have been maintaining maximum capacity with 20 men in the class with anywhere from 10-12 people on the waitlist for quite some time now. We are exploring options (such as adding a 2nd class) to get these men into the James Group quicker and ask for your prayers in this matter. As for our current class, a couple of our members - John & Tore - have blessed us in recent weeks (and months) with facilitating the class. Both are great instructors and anointed men of God. It is such a blessing to be a part of this group! There is no better place to be on a Wednesday night!!

Special thanks go out to Roseville Church of Christ for supplying ALL the workbooks for ALL of these classes! Words cannot express what a blessing Roseville has been and continues to be to this ministry.

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able to experience the favor of God and pray that He will continue to guide us, bless us and allow us to bless others. We pray that He will continue to bring about growth within this ministry in order to bring many more to Him – for His glory and for their salvation.

There have been many evenings that I have broken down in tears on the way to the James Group at Macomb Correctional Facility (MRF) because I am so thankful that God would allow me to serve Him in such a way. I have approached His throne many times requesting that He grant me the privilege to continue to serve Him in the jail and prison system for years to come. Up to this point, He has answered that request. The favor of God is certainly not deserved, especially not by me – the sinner that I am, but it is an awesome and wonderful thing!

Whatever it is that God has called you to do, whether it involves something within the jail or prison system or elsewhere – whatever passion He has placed in your heart, whatever purpose He has placed on your life – seek His favor and His will and you will find success and growth. We read in Proverbs 16:3, “Commit to the LORD whatever you do, and he will establish your plans.” There is great truth in that. There is no better place to be than in the favor of God.

Seeing how we are entering into a new year what better time than now to ensure that all we are doing is for God’s glory. Following the example of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, may we also grow in wisdom and stature and in the favor of God and man.



As of the end of the year 2015, Message of Hope has 27 friends inside in Michigan (as well as 1 from California) enrolled and actively participating in correspondence courses. We also have 6 wonderful men and women of God who are serving as “instructors.” In addition, we now have licenses for 8 of the 13 courses made available by NewLife Behavior Ministries which, besides being used as correspondence courses, we continue to use in the James Group at MRF in between our twelve-step studies.

We have witnessed a great deal of growth in this area of ministry over the last year. We began offering these courses in January 2015 and have had a total of 46 requests for lessons. Many have since been paroled, completed the course(s) they were interested in, or broke off communication (unfortunately, we do not hear back from every student we send lessons to).

Just recently, we received a request from one of our friends inside at Women’s Huron Valley Correctional Facility (WHV). She submitted a list of 85 women who desire to take part in a Bible study through the mail! While we are not equipped to meet this need, it is encouraging to know there are so many at WHV who “hunger and thirst for righteousness.” God promises that those who do so will be filled. We would be honored to act as God’s vessels in helping them grow in wisdom and stature and in favor of God and man, but we need your help to do so. If you are interested in grading papers or becoming an instructor please contact us through our website, Facebook page or by phone or email!

MESSAGE OF HOPE

PO Box 221
Washington, MI 48094

Website address:

www.messageofhope.org

Interested in receiving our
quarterly newsletter by mail
or through email?

Send your request to:

murphy_k@live.com

Message of Hope weekly schedule

The James Group: Wednesday evenings from 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

@ Macomb Correctional Facility, New Haven, Michigan

The James Group: Friday evenings from 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

@ Macomb County Jail, Mount Clemens, Michigan

If you haven't already done so make sure you...



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