

## **Esther Series – Consequences Esther 7:1-10**

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Way back in Esther Chapter 3 we met our super villain, our arch villain, Haman. Boo! He devised a plan to annihilate all of the Jews in the Persian kingdom which, in essence, was all of the Jews. We've been wrestling with the villain, Haman, since chapter three so I'm going to be making references today to Haman and what we've been wrestling with. If you haven't heard all of those previous messages, you need to get them and catch up so that you're right with us as we deal today with the consequences of Haman.

I'll just tell you again in case you've forgotten or are in denial or you haven't been here, Haman is a picture of us. Haman is a picture of the sin nature; specifically Haman is a picture of our pride, our arrogance, and our desire to be on the throne of our lives. That's why Haman is in the Bible. Plus, he's an antichrist – a picture of what other people in the world today have always been trying to do to God's people, the Jews.

For us, Haman is a picture of the pride and the arrogance that just has us in a vise. Let's just be honest. It just has us in a vise. It's the deepest of all sins. The good news is today is the last day we look at Haman as a picture of our own pride and arrogance. The bad news is we see really clearly today the consequences of our pride and arrogance. It's a good news/bad news message.

One thing we need to know for sure before we start is that our actions have consequences. Our choices have consequences. The way we address an issue in our life – what we do or don't do about a circumstance in our life – there are consequences associated with that choice, with that action.

Today we see the consequences of our Haman-like actions of pride, arrogance, and self-enthroning. But what I want you to hear today more than anything else is you don't have to go the way of Haman. You don't have to end up as Haman ends up today, even metaphorically. You don't have to end up impaled by your pride, your arrogance, and your self-enthroning. You can if you like, but you don't have to. Jesus Christ has made a way. He has made a way for us to escape the end that we see in Haman today.

The lesson is if we will crucify what we see in Haman in our own lives, then we will avoid the consequences we see in Haman. Is that pretty clear? Let's pray.

*Father God, please make it come alive like a popup book, Lord. God, just make your word come alive. Put us right in that place. Put us in Susa, the Persian kingdom, and show us Haman. As we look at him and as we look at his consequences today, show us our own pride. Show us our own arrogance. Show us our own self confidence and make us afraid, Lord. We give you the right to rattle us, to pierce us today, and to change us, Lord. We pray you would. In Jesus' name, amen. Praise the Lord.*

We left Haman back at his house after leading Mordecai through the city. He's back at his house and his wife and his friends are warning him that if he doesn't stop his maniacal ego plan, that things probably aren't going to work out so well for him. They switched. They flip-flopped on their counsel last message and right as they said that and Haman's jaw was dropping, then the king's eunuchs came to escort Haman out to his second feast with Queen Esther and the king. So the eunuchs scooped him up and they escorted him back.

We pick it up in Esther 7:1. ***“So the king and Haman went in to feast with Queen Esther. And on the second day (that means the second occasion, the second time they were gathered together), as they were drinking wine after the feast, the king again said to Esther, “What is your wish, Queen Esther? It shall be granted you. And what is your request? Even to the half of my kingdom, it shall be fulfilled.”***

Again, that's just kind of a figure of speech like I would say to my kids. "Listen, I'll give you anything you want. Just ask. I'll do it for you." That's the kind of figure of speech that King Ahasuerus is saying to Esther. He's saying, "Just ask. I'll give it you. What is it? What is your wish and what is your request?"

Now Esther has been extremely careful. We've seen that in her wisdom and humility in a number of messages. She's taken as much time as she needs to approach this subject because she knows that what she is about to say could create volatility in the king. What she is about to say not only implicates Haman in this murderous plot to annihilate the Jews, but it also implicates the king himself.

It's the king who took money from Haman to allow him to wipe out the Jews. It's the king who signed the decree mandating the annihilation of the Jews. Esther knows that if the king's pride is hurt too much (we know this guy is a volatile, impulsive, rash decision maker) or if she were to directly accuse him, then we know she wouldn't even be around to help her people. This would be her last attempt to help her people, so she has prepared herself. Everything is in place and now, after all of this has happened, we read in verse 3.

I know there is nobody old enough here to remember this but it reminds me of that TV series Dallas. Do you remember the “Who Shot J.R.?” three year buildup? I think it was like two full seasons. They don't really do that anymore. But this is like a “Who Shot J.R.?” buildup – a TV series grand finale.

Verse 3 ***“Then Queen Esther answered (finally), 'If I have found favor in your sight, O king, and if it please the king, let my life be granted me for my wish, and my people for my request.’”***

The king says, "Esther, what is your wish? What is your request? Even up to half the kingdom, I will give it to you." Esther replies, "If it pleases the king, let my life be spared for my wish and let my peoples' lives be spared for my request."

Very, very carefully and very subtly, the king asked for a wish and a request and she says. "In both cases, may my lives and my peoples' lives be spared." The king is probably somewhat still perplexed because he still doesn't know Esther is a Jew at this point. There's no indication, at least, that he knows. He's probably wondering a little bit what she's talking about. Verse 4 really spells it out for him. It gets really, really clear for the king.

Esther 7:4 Esther says, "***For we have been sold.*** (Do you remember all the money that Haman gave to the king's treasury, in order to get the decree signed?) ***We have been sold, I and my people...***"

Look in this next section of the sentence in verse 4. These are exact words out of the decree – word for word out of the decree. Esther says "***We have been sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be killed, and to be annihilated.***" Exact words that Haman put in the decree, and duped King Ahasuerus into signing, by giving him a ton of money. Now, suddenly, the king's making sense of it, right?

He is saying, "Oh, okay. Sold and destroyed, killed, annihilated." he is starting to get it. Esther's walking the tightrope. She knows that the king could go either way on this so she kind of backs off. This is so wise. And women, don't get all prideful. Hypothetically, there could be a man with this kind of wisdom. It could happen. I haven't seen it personally, but that's no reason for the women to get all prideful.

In the last half of Esther 7:4, Esther kind of backs off to make sure she doesn't cross the line and get killed herself. She says, "***If we had been sold merely as slaves, men and women, I would have been silent, for our affliction is not to be compared with the loss to the king.***" That's literal but the ESV kind of goes too literal there, so the NLT helps us. The NLT says, "***If we had merely been sold as slaves, I could remain quiet. For that would be too trivial a matter to warrant disturbing the king.***"

In other words, Esther is saying, "Listen, king, you have the right. You are the king. You have the right to sell the Jewish people into slavery. If that's all that you were doing, I wouldn't even bother you, but I thought you'd like to know you signed my personal death warrant. I am your queen and I don't think you're aware that you signed my death warrant. And not only my death warrant, but the death warrant of all of my people."

Now King Ahasuerus is rethinking all of this. It's all coming together. All of the pieces are coming back together for him. The king's figuring out what Esther is referring to. We've built the case pretty well that this guy isn't that wise of a thinker (this king) and he's easily manipulated, but right now, he understands. "I took money so that my own queen could be murdered. I signed a decree to not only murder my queen, but all of her people."

There is a little problem that's presented at this point. In absolute monarchs (and all the Persian kingdoms were absolute monarchs) the king is never wrong. He just isn't wrong. He's is never wrong and he never does anything wrong. So the kings in the Persian monarchs and all the ancient monarchs would keep around people who were scapegoats. If the king *were* ever wrong, he would have somebody to blame it on so that he would never be wrong.

I was somewhat encouraged to figure out that our politicians learned from their ancient history. I thought, "Hey, that's interesting." Our politicians have learned that they are never wrong and they keep scapegoats around in case they are wrong. Well it's the same with King Ahasuerus, so right now both the king and Esther are going, "Okay. How are we going to work this out?"

This is really, really critical. The king is implicated in it, but the king can never be wrong and he can never do anything wrong. As we read verse 5 you've got to understand that there's a little bit more going on. Not only is there fault being dealt with but much more importantly, what needs to happen is that the villain needs to be named and it cannot be the king. Somebody has to be put on the chopping block in order to begin to do anything about it. He's got to name the villain. It is a name and blame game. We see it in Washington all the time.

Esther 7:5 ***"Then King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther, 'Who is he, and where is he, who has dared to do this?'"*** The king is making it clear it's not him even though he was part of it. "Who is this guy? Where is he? Who has dared to do such a thing?"

Finally, the dramatic crescendo – Esther 7:6 ***"And Esther said, 'A foe and enemy! This wicked Haman.'"*** All of the sound systems in the palace all together somehow say "pum, pum, pum" and the place shakes. And now a commercial break.

What's happening is the king, Haman, and Esther are reclining on couches – like a chaise. They're all kind of reclining and eating – the palm trees, the grapes, and all that kind of stuff. And Esther points and says, "This foe and enemy! This wicked Haman." The timing is finally perfect. Remember that we dealt with timing last message? We've been dealing with timing but look at how it builds up, just real quick.

Mordecai had saved the king's life and not been honored for it. The king had a sleepless night just last night. It was just last night that the king couldn't sleep. His servant grabbed the book of the history of his rule and just happened to read to him about Mordecai saving his life and not being honored. At the same time that was being read to the king, Haman in his pompous, arrogant pride, is building a gallows 75 feet high, to hang (or probably more likely, impale) Mordecai on.

Then of course, Haman runs in to the king's presence (that was just this morning) to get the king's okay to impale Mordecai on this pole right as the king is listening about

Mordecai. They have that crazy conversation, "Hey, what should I do for someone I want to honor?" Haman thinks it is him. He spells out this whole thing to make him look like the king. The king says, "Okay. Go do that for Mordecai." That was today. That's the same day.

Haman had paraded Mordecai all through the city saying. This is what the king does to the man he desires to honor." And now Haman's there with the queen. That is all perfect timing.

Don't you see that in your life, giving God the sovereign benefit? Saying, "God, are you doing that in my life? Are all these things adding up for something? Of all these things that I have been through, are they working up to something up in my life?"

The answer is yes. It's one of the lessons in Esther, but it's not our specific lesson today. The truth is that at this point in God's perfect time (just like he'll do in your life) at this point, the tables turn. That's an important thing. We have this tendency to feel like where we're at is forever. This is it. Then suddenly, God does something and the circumstances of our life turn and we go, "Oh... Huh. God did have a plan. He is at work."

Well for Haman, he says "Oh" in a different way. Esther 7:6 (second half of verse 6) **"Then** (at that point) **Haman was terrified** (they always end up terrified) **before the king and the queen."**

It's funny how fast things change. We think all our lives, "This is the way, this is the way, this is the way." Then a series of events like dominoes fall, and all of a sudden, the tables turn and we say, "Wait a minute." If we're on Haman's side, we're terrified. If we're on Esther's side, we see God.

So Haman is terrified. We'll just say the king is extremely angry. Let's leave it at that. We'll see it right here in Esther 7:7 **"And the king arose in his wrath, from the wine-drinking** (they're drinking wine after dinner on their chaises) **and went in to the palace garden."** It's too much for the king, right? Finally something hits this king that's too much for him, that is overwhelming to him, that he doesn't know how to handle.

He's understanding that he took the money for his own queen to be murdered. He's understanding he signed the decree for his queen and all her people to be annihilated. He understands he's been duped by Haman who is now back in the room reclining with his wife, his queen, and he's furious. He's furious at Haman, but he's as furious at himself. He is mad at himself so he storms out of the room to get some fresh air.

I have looked since chapter 1 for something that this king has done that I would say, "That's a positive example." This is the first one I've found. If you are like me... I don't mean to say I'm that much like King Ahasuerus, but in our sin nature, we are. If you have that ready, fire, aim attitude, sometimes it is just good to leave the situation and get some

fresh air. Go take a walk in the garden. If you are going to be so out of control in your response – men, just excuse yourselves. Wives, if you know your husband has this impetuous, act-before-he-thinks kind of response, just tell him, "Maybe you need a walk around the block before you say *anything*." Husbands, take that advice. Or wives. You can switch that.

This is the first time I've seen a good example from King Ahasuerus. He goes out into the garden and he storms around. In the meantime, Haman is freaking out. We love this about Haman because we have grown to hate him, right? That's the purpose of the book – to hate Haman. Then someone like me has the audacity to say, "Haman is a picture of us," and we go, "Yeah, but we hate him." Okay, now you're getting it. You are getting what the Old Testament teaches.

So Haman stays in the room. Look at the end of Esther 7:7, "***But Haman stayed to beg for his life from Queen Esther, for he saw that harm was determined against him by the king.***" No kidding.

He didn't have to hear the king speak. He knew, "This is bad for me. Right at this moment, harm is determined against me." But here's the deal. If we don't repent of our pride, and arrogance, and our self-focus, we end up becoming connivers and schemers and manipulators to get our own way. In the end, we end up looking like Haman who's still trying to control the situation. He's still trying to connive and scheme and manipulate and talk his way out when he should be repenting on his face and asking for forgiveness.

But he's conniving and scheming. He's trying to avoid his consequences. Maybe you understand what that looks like. Esther's reclining on the couch and he's on his knees begging her, "Oh please, Queen Esther." It's interesting to have him on his knees begging a Jew. Remember he's an Agagite. He's a sworn enemy of the Jewish people, which is somewhat of the motivation behind his desire to annihilate them. He's on his knees begging her.

Wiersbe says right at this point – he quotes a Jewish commentary – "The arrogant bully became, as usual in the face of disaster, a whining coward." We like that in Haman. Not so much when we see it in ourselves. But we like it in Haman.

We read in Esther 7:8, "***And the king returned from the palace garden to the place where they were drinking wine, as Haman was falling on the couch where Esther was.***" That's called "sealing the deal," right there. You can be executed for *that* alone, in a second. So Haman's doing his whining coward dance and he falls on top of the queen right as the king walks back in the room.

The king says at the end of verse 8, "***Will he even assault the queen in my presence, in my own house?***" Consequences. Have you ever seen your life go from bad to worse

where you're trying so hard to dig yourself out of a hole and you're just digging deeper and deeper and deeper?

Was there another way for Haman to respond? Please hear me when I tell you, "Yes, there was." he could have repented and God would have saved him. Instead, he continues this crazy, self-handling of his problem and it's getting deeper and deeper and deeper. This is it. Fortunately for Haman, he gets no deeper than this.

The end of verse 8, "***As the word left the mouth of the king, they covered Haman's face.***" Now that's what you call a speedy trial. What that means is you're dead. When they cover your face, it's over. You are dead. It's the death sentence. As the word left his mouth, "Will he even assault the queen in my presence?" his eunuchs (his bodyguards), said, "Okay, you're dead," and they pull a bag over his head.

Here's where it gets really funny, if it hasn't gotten funny already. Haman's boasting determined the consequences of his demise. Listen carefully because the message is about sowing and reaping. The message is about consequences to our choices. I want you to see here that Haman's boastful pride determined his own demise. We see, seemingly, that this same morning when Haman got to the palace, he must have been bragging to the eunuchs in the courtyard. He must have been telling them what he'd been doing all night. "Hey, I've been up all night building this gallows and I'm going to impale that Jew Mordecai on them, so I'm here to see the king."

Esther 7:9 I love this because when we live like this, we have a way of digging our own hole, of making our own end. Esther 7:9 "***Then Harbona, one of the eunuchs in attendance on the king said, 'Moreover, the gallows that Haman has prepared for Mordecai, whose word saved the king, is standing at Haman's house, fifty cubits high.'***" How did Harbona know that? Because Haman was bragging to him earlier that morning. I love Harbona. I love him because he's watching this all go down and he says, "Hey, Your Highness. Here's an interesting fact. This character just built a 75-foot gallows to impale Mordecai who saved your life. Isn't that a 'coinkydink?'"

Esther 7:10 "***And the king said, 'Hang him on that.'***" ("He built it; impale him on it." So they hanged, or probably impaled, Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai.) ***Then the wrath of the king abated.***"

Earlier in the day, that very day, Haman had led Mordecai through the streets of Susa with Mordecai on the king's horse in the king's robe. Haman was forced to proclaim, "This is what the king does for the man he wishes to honor." But the whole time Haman was saying, "I should be led through the streets, and they should be proclaiming about me." Now he gets his wish. He's led through the streets with a black bag over his head. The black bag proclaims, "This is what the king does for the man who deceives him."

When we're so caught up with ourselves and we're so sure of ourselves and we're so consumed with ourselves, so often we set up our own demise. That's what we see in Haman. Seventy-five foot high pole (or gallows) with Haman impaled on it and suddenly all the Jews in Susa knew that their arch enemy was stuck on his own problems.

Just get a picture in your mind. Haman is a picture of the pride, and the arrogance, and the self-love that we have in our own nature. He is. We need to see him impaled on that pole. We have come to hate Haman, but what we need to hate is the pride and the arrogance that he typifies – that he's a type of – that's in our own lives.

This is such a difficult message for me to finish because I thought, "How am I going to finish this message?" This is such an important thing for Christians to hear. This sin of pride, of arrogance, of self-focus, self-love – it's rampant in Christians. It's alive in every one of us, me included. We have got to take the time to say, "Lord, I love you. I've prayed the prayer but that's me. I have that in me."

Galatians 6:7 says, "***Do not be deceived. God is not mocked. For whatever one sows, that will he also reap.***" That promise goes back to Adam and Eve who chose their way over God's. Really, it goes back one major step before them to Lucifer who chose his will over God's. God is not mocked. What we sow, we'll reap. I believe that's the biggest lesson we need to learn from Haman's life.

I know this is hard to describe but just stay with me. Have you ever seen a high school take a mangled car that's just been in a horrible car wreck and place it at the front of the school on prom week? Have you ever seen that? Do you know why they do that? They put that picture there for the kids – that illustration of that mangled car wreck – and they say, "This is a tangible lesson. This is what happens if you drink and drive." Then they don't really do so much the big assemblies where they say, "Don't drink and drive," because the kids don't listen. Instead they put an image of what it looks like when you drink and drive. They just put an image there in front of the kids so they will say, "Okay. I see it and I don't want it. I don't want that." The mangled up car says to the kids, "This is what happens if you drink and drive on prom night."

The mangled up life of Haman says to us, "This is what happens if we live in self-absorbed pride. This is what it looks like if we're allowing our own pride and our own arrogance and our own self-desire to drive us. We end up in this same mangled, destroyed life. We need to stand in shock at the life of Haman and say, "Lord, God help me. Don't let my life look like that. I want to choose correctly."

Just like the high school kid says, "Do you know what? I think I'm not going to drink and drive because of what I see in that car." We need to say, "God help me not be that prideful, arrogant Haman so that I don't end up mangled in a life wreck, impaled (even if it's metaphorically) on a 75-foot pole. I don't want to end my life there."



Christians (and non-Christians), this is our nature. If we don't crucify this self-nature, this is the natural direction we go. That's just the truth. That's the sin nature. That's how it looks.

Allow me to read some scriptures to paint this picture to put this life wreck – this mangled life wreck of Haman who represents our pride and our arrogance – in front of you.

Proverbs 11:2 ***"When pride comes, then comes disgrace*** (Fortunately, we get the positive side that's been displayed in Esther), ***but with the humble, is wisdom.***" (Verse 3) ***"The integrity of the upright guides them, but the crookedness of the treacherous destroys them."***

Proverbs 29:23 from the NLT (very simply), ***"Pride ends in humiliation, while humility brings honor."***

These are promises from God. They're promises from God that are as true in our lives as they were the day God wrote them.

Matthew 23:12 ***"Whoever exalts himself, will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself, will be exalted."*** This isn't rocket science. This isn't deep theology. You don't have to understand the original language to get this stuff. You go the way of Haman and your life ends up looking like Haman's. It's a warning. That's what it is. And it's maybe more to me than you. It's a warning.

Proverbs 16:5 is almost too hard a verse to read. Some of those verses you read and you go, "Certainly that's not true. Is it, God?" Proverbs 16:5 ***"Everyone who is arrogant in heart is an abomination to the Lord."*** God, what do you mean? What do you mean by that? Arrogance is that built up, self-confident pride. "I'm right, I've always been right, I always will be right. My way is right, and if you are not with me, then you are obviously wrong. Certainly God's going to come around to understanding that I'm right."

***"Everyone who is arrogant in heart is an abomination to the Lord."*** Christians don't want to be an abomination to the Lord, but we live our lives in such arrogance and pride. I'm getting to the good stuff. Here's the greatest news. Consequences are consequences, but the good news is that the positive consequences are just as great a promise as the negative consequences. Amen? This is the good news. This is the stuff you pay to hear.

Galatians 6:7 (we already read it) ***"Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap."***

But then look at verse 8. ***"For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption,*** (That's the negative. Here's what you want to hear.) ***But the one who sows to the spirit, will from the spirit, reap eternal life."***

Don't you see that all I'm trying to do is get you to pick one to sow to? You either sow to your own flesh – your pride, your “self” – or you sow to the spirit. Both of them have guaranteed consequences. They both do. It works just as much in the positive as in the negative.

Isaiah 32:17 ***"And the effect of righteousness will be peace."*** Hebrew Word, *shalom*. The effect of right living is shalom. I hope I don't have to tell you this but just in case you've been asleep, Haman's life did not have shalom. I don't have to describe the impaling again, do I? That's not shalom.

James 3:18 ***"And those who are peacemakers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of righteousness."*** That's what I like. Plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of righteousness.

Hosea 10:12 ***"Sow for yourselves righteousness, reap steadfast love."*** Hosea – the book of unconditional love and forgiveness. Steadfast love like the Hebrew word, *hesed* – steadfast love. It's the picture of God's unconditional, new every morning, love. Sow for yourselves righteousness; reap steadfast love.

We do not have to end up impaled on a pole, even metaphorically. What if you would say, "But, I've already been like Haman." Maybe you would even have the honesty before God to say, "I *am* like Haman. That is me. I'm just as prideful as him. I'm just as self-focused as him. Now what? Now what do we do?"

I need you to hear this. See this picture in Esther as a wakeup call. It's a wakeup call. This is what the Old Testament does so well. It just forces this picture in our minds and we go, "Okay, I get it. I don't want to go there." It's your wakeup call to repentance.

Haman had a chance to repent. He did. When he led Mordecai through the streets, he had a chance to be broken and repentant. When his family said, "Hey, listen. What you're doing is not working. You'd better lay off," he had a chance to repent. He could have repented and God would have received him. But he chose not to so God allowed the consequences to follow his actions. That's what God has promised to do. He has promised to allow our consequences to follow our actions.

Haman didn't have to seal his own fate, but he did. You and I don't have to seal our own fate, but we can. My encouragement to you is to stare at the car wreck. Stare at the car wreck and say, "I don't want to go down that road. I don't want to end up there. God, please don't let me. Do what you need to do to crush the pride, to crush the arrogance, the self-focus in my life. Give me humility. Give me peace. Give me shalom. Give me your spirit. Allow me to respond differently to things in my life."

I promise you if you will cling to Christ... I don't mean slip up a finger while everyone's eyes are closed. I mean commit your life. Cling to Christ like your eternal life depends on

it. It does. Cling to Christ. If you will do that, I promise you he will make you a new creation. He will make you a new creation.

2 Corinthians 5:17 says, ***"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ,*** (This term "in Christ" means immersed into Christ. It's the same image that Roman 6 uses for baptized [*baptiso*], to be immersed in Christ. For anyone who is immersed in Christ... Don't get me wrong. I want you to raise your hand and say the sinner's prayer, but the Bible says get in Christ, get immersed in Christ, be sunk in him, be found in him. Be immersed in Christ.)

***"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come."***

Just think what glory to God you would bring if someone said, "You know, you used to be a Haman." Key word is *used to be*. People say this to me all the time – so much so that I repent often. They say, "Wow, Dave. You've really changed." I go, "Really? Was I that big a jerk?" Usually they go, "Yeah."

The good news is that you've changed. You know that's glory to God when someone says, "you used to be like Haman, but God has transformed you. You're a new creation." All you have to do is allow the Holy Spirit to crucify your old life – to eliminate it, to crucify the old me – that self-nature that you were born with and that you've chosen in your old life. Crucify it. You make the choice; the Holy Spirit is the power. The position is enabled – is given to you – by Jesus Christ. You crucify the old life; he gives you his new life.

I want you to come forward. I want you to pray, but I want more tomorrow. I want you to commit your life to Jesus Christ tomorrow. I want you to wake up and say, "Lord, I don't want to be Haman. Don't let me be Haman today. I want to cling to you, Jesus. I surrender. I give up my pride. I surrender my life. I want to be in Christ today."

I can't come into your bedroom every morning and say, "Okay, raise your hand and repeat this prayer after me." you have to do that. You have to say, "Today, Lord, I'm committing my life to you. I want to put off the old me and I want to put on Christ today."

In my experience, for a Christian to overcome the sin of pride, it's a pretty big battle. It's lifelong. I want you to be saved. I want you to commit your life to Christ; I really do. But I'm telling you that pride is a deep-rooted sin. It is only ripped out by a daily immersion in Jesus Christ – by your life being crucified and his life living in you.

It takes full, all-in surrender. It takes full all-in surrender of every decision, of every thought, of every reaction. You need to say, "Here's what I think but I'm a Haman, so Lord, what do you think? What do you say? I want to surrender to you." Do you see how real it gets? "I want to surrender to you. I want to do it your way. I want to follow you."

It begins with a full life surrender. It really does. I want to give you a chance to do that, but don't think for a second that a 30-second prayer will root pride out of your life because it will not. It gives you the power. You receive Christ and the Holy Spirit takes up residence in you. You have the power of God. The same power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead, you have that power in your life. His name is the Holy Spirit. And now you *can* crucify the pride, but only if you choose it.

Here's a verse that conveys what I am trying to express.

Romans 12:1 ***"I appeal to you*** (I beg you) ***therefore, brothers,*** (In the last half of chapter 11 it's all about the phenomenal mercies of God, and then the Holy Spirit says, "Because of all God's mercies, I beg you, I plead with you, I implore you.") ***by the mercies of God,*** (by what God has given you) ***to present*** (your lives) ***your bodies*** (that means everything you are; present every atom in your being) ***as a living sacrifice,*** (a sacrifice is something that's consumed for the glory of God. Present your entire being to be consumed for the glory of God.) ***holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual*** (or your reasonable) ***worship.***"

It's the only way that we can reasonably respond. We present our lives to God. Let me give you a chance to do that. Let's pray.

*Lord, it's so big, God. Lord, I see it in my own life. I see it in Christians' lives. I certainly see it with a vengeance in non-believers' lives. Our nature is prideful, self-centeredness. Lord, we desire to give that up right now. We desire to surrender it to you. We want to give it up, Lord. We want to give it up, God. We want to give it up, Lord. I don't want to be Haman, Lord. I know I have been. I know I have his nature in me, but I don't want to be him. I see his life's wreck and I pray that you transform me.*

*Make me new, Lord. Make a new creation. Make me a new creation – not just today, but every day; not just in this place, but in every place in my life. I surrender my life to you. Save us, Lord. We pray, Lord, that you would immerse us in you, Jesus. That we would put off that old nature and that we would put you on. That the old life would be crucified and that we would let in Christ – in your power, in your character, in your nature, Lord. Draw us to that place, we pray. In Jesus' name, amen.*