

Giving Up or Giving In: 1

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Esther 4:1–9 NLT

¹ When Mordecai learned about all that had been done, he tore his clothes, put on burlap and ashes, and went out into the city, crying with a loud and bitter wail. ² He went as far as the gate of the palace, for no one was allowed to enter the palace gate while wearing clothes of mourning. ³ And as news of the king's decree reached all the provinces, there was great mourning among the Jews. They fasted, wept, and wailed, and many people lay in burlap and ashes. ⁴ When Queen Esther's maids and eunuchs came and told her about Mordecai, she was deeply distressed. She sent clothing to him to replace the burlap, but he refused it. ⁵ Then Esther sent for Hathach, one of the king's eunuchs who had been appointed as her attendant. She ordered him to go to Mordecai and find out what was troubling him and why he was in mourning. ⁶ So Hathach went out to Mordecai in the square in front of the palace gate. ⁷ Mordecai told him the whole story, including the exact amount of money Haman had promised to pay into the royal treasury for the destruction of the Jews. ⁸ Mordecai gave Hathach a copy of the decree issued in Susa that called for the death of all Jews. He asked Hathach to show it to Esther and explain the situation to her. He also asked Hathach to direct her to go to the king to beg for mercy and plead for her people. ⁹ So Hathach returned to Esther with Mordecai's message.

As this situation seemed to be isolated to the Jewish people of the 127 provinces of Persia, but the reality is that this same message is at the feet of each of us. No matter of race, decree, nationality, gender, or age. We are all faced with the same decision of one or the other. And the one or the other is to "Give up or Give in". It was apparent to Mordecai's decision but the salvation of the Jews would be left in the hands of Esther.

We have all heard this story time and time again, but have we see it from the perspective of a choice. If we could stop and inspect this profound truth, we will see the resemblance of our decisions being of great importance as well. Our right now decision changes the future. And it not only the future for us but also the ones that God has entrusted us with. Whether we view it in this light or not, we all are influencers to many people. Our decision to give up or to give in speaks volumes of images upon the hearts of mankind. Our resilience or our frailty, our strength or weakness, our surrender or our stubbornness. We can all recall those certain people that were a beacon of inspiration. Those that soared far above any situation that would arise. Those that seemed to be water walkers. Those that would be surrounded by lion but come out unharmed. Those that were placed in a fiery furnace but yet defy the odds. But these witnesses of truth seem to be far and few between. But we have witnessed a vast number of individuals that fall by the wayside and devoured by the enemy. This picture of failure or being

devoured has become far to prevalent in this day and time that we live in. We are seeing too many people making a permanent decision because of a temporary situation. We are seeing too many “Christians” falling for the bait of Satan.

If we could go down this rabbit hole for a few moments we will clearly see what Jesus had to say to the reference of this topic. Turn with to [Matthew 18:6-7](#)

Matthew 18:6–7 NLT

⁶ But if you cause one of these little ones who trusts in me to fall into sin, it would be better for you to have a large millstone tied around your neck and be drowned in the depths of the sea. ⁷ “What sorrow awaits the world, because it tempts people to sin. Temptations are inevitable, but what sorrow awaits the person who does the tempting.

In the context Jesus was speaking to the reference of children in which in the Aramaic, children and servant are interchangeable. But the reference is still the same...One who is dependent upon another. Jesus was addressing the role and demeanor of a child of God. And the temptation to fall into sin comes from the greek word skandalizō:

The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament 4624. σκανδαλίζω skandalizō

a trap, stumbling block. To cause to stumble and fall. In the NT, figuratively to be a stumbling block to someone, to cause to stumble at or in something, to give a cause of offense to someone

To take offense means to feel insulted, resentful, or hurt by something someone has said or done. It implies reacting negatively to an action or statement perceived as rude, disrespectful, or unfair. Taking offense is a choice, as it involves choosing to hold onto hurt or anger rather than letting it go.

But it goes a little deeper than this. skandalizo comes from the greek word skandalon:

The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament 4625. σκάνδαλον skándalon

The trigger of a trap on which the bait is placed, and which, when touched by the animal, springs and causes it to close causing entrapment. Skándalon always signifies an enticement that could ruin someone's life.

The cause of a servant or a child of God to be offended with the purpose of ruining their life. If we think about what could the most detrimental stumbling block for one of these little ones is that they fall into the trap or the offense. An ambush if we could be so bold to say. Ambushed to sin... Ambushed to be offended... Ambushed to live an objective life... Ambushed to fall by the wayside... Ambushed to feel hurt and resentment.

And yet this is exactly what the Jewish people of the 127 provinces were faced with. But Mordecai chose to give in to the counsel of God's heart instead of the trap that Haman had set. Now Esther had to decide to give in or give up. Would she give into the heart of God or the heart of man. Let's find out what Esther's reply would be.

Esther 4:10–14 NLT

¹⁰ Then Esther told Hathach to go back and relay this message to Mordecai: ¹¹ “All the king’s officials and even the people in the provinces know that anyone who appears before the king in his inner court without being invited is doomed to die unless the king holds out his gold scepter. And the king has not called for me to come to him for thirty days.” ¹² So Hathach gave Esther’s message to Mordecai. ¹³ Mordecai sent this reply to Esther: “Don’t think for a moment that because you’re in the palace you will escape when all other Jews are killed. ¹⁴ If you keep quiet at a time like this, deliverance and relief for the Jews will arise from some other place, but you and your relatives will die...

Although Esther knew the truth but the situation was telling a different story. The evidence was undeniable because the former queen had been dismissed because of her defiance to the King. And this visual that we become so focused on is the antithesis of what the word of God declares. God’s word grants us the grace to defy what man says is impossible. Look at what Simon Peter did!

Matthew 14:24–32 NLT

²⁴ Meanwhile, the disciples were in trouble far away from land, for a strong wind had risen, and they were fighting heavy waves. ²⁵ About three o’clock in the morning Jesus came toward them, walking on the water. ²⁶ When the disciples saw him walking on the water, they were terrified. In their fear, they cried out, “It’s a ghost!” ²⁷ But Jesus spoke to them at once. “Don’t be afraid,” he said. “Take courage. I am here!” ²⁸ Then Peter called to him, “Lord, if it’s really you, tell me to come to you, walking on the water.” ²⁹ “Yes, come,” Jesus said. So Peter went over the side of the boat and walked on the water toward Jesus. ³⁰ But when he saw the strong wind and the waves, he was terrified and began to sink. “Save me, Lord!” he shouted. ³¹ Jesus immediately reached out and grabbed him. “You have so little faith,” Jesus said. “Why did you doubt me?” ³² When they climbed back into the boat, the wind stopped.

The part that is astounding to me is what we see in verse 22.

Matthew 14:22 NLT

²² Immediately after this, Jesus insisted that his disciples get back into the boat and cross to the other side of the lake, while he sent the people home.

Immediately after what? THE FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND! Did not Peter and the other disciples just witness Jesus do the impossible...and yet He told them to get in the boat and go to the other side? What part of this could they not grasp? What part are we not grasping? Jesus did not tell them to go half way and sink! What part of the other side do we not have enough faith for? What part of doing what God has called us to do, do we not have enough faith for.

Peter is often criticized because Jesus said he had little faith...but I did not read where any of the other disciples got out of the boat...!

As we continue the story of Esther...the Lord asked me a question. And the purpose of this question is meant to trigger our spirit to the fullness of God’s heart. What caused Esther’s heart to be changed? Cause if you really think about it...what did Esther have

to gain from this? I really need you to hear the Spirit of God speak to you right now! What will you gain if you give in or give up?

Let's find out what caused her heart to be changed.

Esther 4:14 NLT

¹⁴ ...Who knows if perhaps you were made queen for just such a time as this?"

These words could have never been truer! Her heart was changed because she got the revelation of why she was who she was where she was at in the specific timing. If we could capture this same revelation...the tables will be flipped on the enemy. When we understand that we have the upper hand. Haman was directly under the rule of King Xerxes but Esther had the King's heart. Paul declared in [Ephesians 6:12](#)

Ephesians 6:12 NLT

¹² For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.

But let us not get this confused that the devil is on the same playing field with God. God is in a league of His own. The devil has no power nor authority unless it is given to him. Why do you think in the book of Job that the devil was looking for someone to devour. Satan could only do what God allowed him to do. Often times we confuse this with testing and tempting. The temptation is when we are drawn away by our sinful desires, but the test is of our faith. Is it genuine? What are we hold fast to? What are we anchored or rooted in? Are we swayed by the circumstance or are firm on the foundation of truth? The testing of will you give up or will you give in. A decision that Mordecai could not make for Esther but he could remind her position. **The calling and placement of God is purposed and purposeful.** Don't fall into the trap that the enemy sets up for ambush. To be on defense means we are purposing for offense. The defense will setup the first play of offense. Watch this:

Esther 4:15–17 NLT

¹⁵ Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: ¹⁶ "Go and gather together all the Jews of Susa and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will do the same. And then, though it is against the law, I will go in to see the king. If I must die, I must die." ¹⁷ So Mordecai went away and did everything as Esther had ordered him.

Esther's heart for God, because the Jews were God's chosen people, she would seek for God's favor to defy what the past had predicted for her future. And because she thought more for the purpose of the Kingdom of God and less of herself, God granted favor for the Jews and for herself. But the tide doesn't stop there. As Haman's twisted plot was revealed the script had been flipped. And Haman himself was impaled on the very pole that he had planned for Mordecai.

Just as Esther decision of Giving up or Giving in changed the course of Mordecai and the Jews in the 127 different provinces, our decision to give up or to give in will affect people all around us. Esther did not get to witness the ripple effect for all the Jews but she walked faithfully in her purposeful time as Queen.

In closing:

Esther 9:20–26 NLT

²⁰ Mordecai recorded these events and sent letters to the Jews near and far, throughout all the provinces of King Xerxes, ²¹ calling on them to celebrate an annual festival on these two days. ²² He told them to celebrate these days with feasting and gladness and by giving gifts of food to each other and presents to the poor. This would commemorate a time when the Jews gained relief from their enemies, when their sorrow was turned into gladness and their mourning into joy. ²³ So the Jews accepted Mordecai's proposal and adopted this annual custom. ²⁴ Haman son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews, had plotted to crush and destroy them on the date determined by casting lots (the lots were called *purim*). ²⁵ But when Esther came before the king, he issued a decree causing Haman's evil plot to backfire, and Haman and his sons were impaled on a sharpened pole. ²⁶ That is why this celebration is called Purim, because it is the ancient word for casting lots. So because of Mordecai's letter and because of what they had experienced,

Let me pray with you today!