



Lesson 2 - THE HEART OF THE MATTER

Key Focus and scripture from previous lesson:

One woman, one king, one people, one destiny. Courage and fear, faithfulness and evil motives, love and betrayal—we find it all in the book of Esther. And above all, we see how the mighty hand of God worked through ordinary people to protect and redeem His chosen people. We see God's faithfulness, sovereignty, and power.

Key Focus: To understand better the providence of God in the ordinary events of our lives.

Key Scripture: Esther 2:17

¹⁷ And the king loved Esther more than any of the other young women. He was so delighted with her that he set the royal crown on her head and declared her queen instead of Vashti.

Overview: Chapters 4-6

The book of Esther teaches us many lessons—how to deal with hardships and suffering is one of them. God uses pain in our lives in many ways. It disciplines (Hebrews 12:1-11). It builds empathy (2 Corinthians 12:6). It drives us to dependency on Him (Psalm 34:18). It gives voice to the gospel and reveals the glory of God. (1 Peter 4:12-19). And it calls us back to Him.

C.S. Lewis "Pain insists upon being attended to. God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our consciences, but shouts in our pains. It is his megaphone to rouse a deaf world."

Chapter 4:1-3;10-15

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.

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

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.

Discussions:

- In what ways do you identify with Esther's dual identity?
- What makes it difficult at times to ask for help and support?
- What have been the most "defining moments" of your life? How do you see God's hand during them?

Reflections:

1. God places us in situations where he wants to use us.
2. When God is moving in our life, we are faced with the choice of doing what God calls us to do or we can go against what God says.
3. Whether the stakes are large or small, it takes the same character qualities of courage and moral strength to choose what is right.
4. When confused or conflicted about a decision, prayer and fasting can bring you the answers you need!

Chapter 5:1-9

¹ On the third day of the fast, Esther put on her royal robes and entered the inner court of the palace, just across from the king's hall. The king was sitting on his royal throne, facing the entrance. ² When he saw Queen Esther standing there in the inner court, he welcomed her and held out the gold scepter to her. So Esther approached and touched the end of the scepter.

³ Then the king asked her, "What do you want, Queen Esther? What is your request? I will give it to you, even if it is half the kingdom!"

⁴ And Esther replied, "If it please the king, let the king and Haman come today to a banquet I have prepared for the king."

⁵ The king turned to his attendants and said, "Tell Haman to come quickly to a banquet, as Esther has requested." So the king and Haman went to Esther's banquet.

⁶ And while they were drinking wine, the king said to Esther, "Now tell me what you really want. What is your request? I will give it to you, even if it is half the kingdom!"

⁷ Esther replied, "This is my request and deepest wish. ⁸ If I have found favor with the king, and if it pleases the king to grant my request and do what I ask, please come with Haman

tomorrow to the banquet I will prepare for you. Then I will explain what this is all about.
⁹ Haman was a happy man as he left the banquet! But when he saw Mordecai sitting at the palace gate, not standing up or trembling nervously before him, Haman became furious.

Discussions:

- What character qualities have you noticed so far regarding Esther?
- What character qualities do you think are important to exhibit in order to do the right thing in challenging situations?
- Can obeying God ever place us in a difficult situation?

Reflections:

1. When faced with **difficult situations** that involve difficult people **your heart** will determine if you respond with **courage and humility** vs **anger, bitterness, and pride**
2. Our response to **difficult tasks or people** that anger us tells a great deal about our **character**.
3. You can step out **in faith**, trusting that God can **equip you** with the courage you need, **when you need it**.
4. The power of **God's love** and grace is **available** for all of us and an encouragement to pursue a **deeper knowledge of Him**.

Chapter 6

¹ That night the king had trouble sleeping, so he ordered an attendant to bring the book of the history of his reign so it could be read to him. ² In those records he discovered an account of how Mordecai had exposed the plot of Bigthana and Teresh, two of the eunuchs who guarded the door to the king's private quarters. They had plotted to assassinate King Xerxes.

³ "What reward or recognition did we ever give Mordecai for this?" the king asked. His attendants replied, "Nothing has been done for him."

⁴ "Who is that in the outer court?" the king inquired. As it happened, Haman had just arrived in the outer court of the palace to ask the king to impale Mordecai on the pole he had prepared.

⁵ So the attendants replied to the king, "Haman is out in the court."

"Bring him in," the king ordered. ⁶ So Haman came in, and the king said, "What should I do to honor a man who truly pleases me?"

Haman thought to himself, "Whom would the king wish to honor more than me?" ⁷ So he replied, "If the king wishes to honor someone, ⁸ he should bring out one of the king's own royal robes, as well as a horse that the king himself has ridden—one with a royal emblem on its head. ⁹ Let the robes and the horse be handed over to one of the king's most noble officials. And let him see that the man whom the king wishes to honor is dressed in the king's robes and led through the city square on the king's horse. Have the official shout as they go, 'This is what the king does for someone he wishes to honor!'"

10 "Excellent!" the king said to Haman. "Quick! Take the robes and my horse, and do just as you have said for Mordecai the Jew, who sits at the gate of the palace. Leave out nothing you have suggested!"

11 So Haman took the robes and put them on Mordecai, placed him on the king's own horse, and led him through the city square, shouting, "This is what the king does for someone he wishes to honor!" **12** Afterward Mordecai returned to the palace gate, but Haman hurried home dejected and completely humiliated.

13 When Haman told his wife, Zeresh, and all his friends what had happened, his wise advisers and his wife said, "Since Mordecai—this man who has humiliated you—is of Jewish birth, you will never succeed in your plans against him. It will be fatal to continue opposing him."

14 While they were still talking, the king's eunuchs arrived and quickly took Haman to the banquet Esther had prepared.

Discussions:

- How do the previous chapters contrast Esther's character with Haman's character?
- Haman was consumed with Mordecai even though he had so many other things: wealth, prestige and recognitions. What can cause a bad heart to others even when God is blessing us

Reflections:

1. For each of us there are things about our character that are displeasing to God.
2. When we let harmful things grow in our lives rather than allowing God to remove them, we can expect to experience various consequences.
3. Ungodly character traits can seep into any relationship and damage various consequences.
4. There may be one thing in our lives that consumes us to the detriment of all the other blessings God has given us.

The successes in our life that you are working towards requires the character of a woman, not a girl. When a woman chooses to respond to situations in life it is with wisdom, patience and diligence. When you walk in wisdom as a woman, you manage your life in such a way that your radiance shines, directing people to God.

"God will make this happen, for he who calls you is faithful"
1 Thessalonians 5:25

Woman King is a Woman Queen
https://youtu.be/j99tHV_CZv4