

Day 1
September 23



Pray | Ask for forgiveness for conforming to society's ways

Ethical shortcomings.

Esther and Mordecai adopted the dress, customs, and practices of their Gentile neighbors, at least to the extent that they could successfully conceal their identity as Jews. They were sinners conforming to society and not to their Jewish heritage and God.

The story of Esther is a powerful encouragement to all of us. We can know that whether we are right or wrong, whether we are living with pure motives or impure, God is at work through all of our decisions and actions to fulfill his perfect purposes. It is easy to look at the decisions of others and judge them, thinking that we know clearly what is right and what is wrong and that if we were in their shoes, we would have known what was the right thing to do. Only God knows the end of our story from the beginning, and we are simply responsible for living faithfully in obedience to him in every situation as we best know how.



Read | Esther 2:8-16, Romans 12:2



Reflect | Spend some time reflecting on one or more of the following:

Hundreds of girls gave up their lives just for a chance to gain the king's favor. If they were not favored, they were confined to live a boring and restricted life in the harem, degrading and destructing their lives. What would you be willing to give up for a chance of political power, or fame and fortune?

Like Esther, we are called to prepare ourselves for the day we will meet our king, Jesus. The external beauty this world desires can be cultivated, but there is no easy path toward developing the heart that God wants you to have. What are some things that you have found helpful to build yourself more into the person God has called you to be? What are some changes you see that you need to make or things you need to stop doing to better prepare yourself for Jesus?

Esther compromised her beliefs and hid her heritage to win the favor of the king. In what ways do Christians compromise and attempt to hide their identities in Christ? Reflect on a time you have compromised your faith; why did you choose to put your worldly image first instead of your relationship with God?

Day 2
September 24



Pray | That you will bring honor to God today

She won favor.

The king loved Esther more than all the women. He had many to choose from, but it was Esther whom he enjoyed and adored more than any other. He showed her favor and kindness, a side of him that hadn't been evident before. External beauty alone would not bring this out of the king; there was something about Esther's inner beauty that had this effect and influence upon the king. God was showing himself powerful and faithful to his people even in the midst of difficult circumstances—circumstances which they had brought upon themselves on account of their rebellion and disobedience to him.



Read | Esther 2:17-18, Proverbs 31:30



Reflect | Spend some time reflecting on one or more of the following:

God always has a plan. Esther didn't see it at the time, but God made Esther queen so that she would be in a position to help the Jews. Reflect on time when you've made a job change or a move where, looking back now, you see God's purpose in that situation. What big change are you considering now but are nervous about? Do you have full faith in God and his plan for this change?

Esther found herself in a palace, placed there according to the sovereign will of God. Where has God placed you? Consider the roles and relationships you have in life and how God can use you to further his kingdom. List what comes to mind.

How does your life look to others? Is it one filled with beauty that comes from the inside? Or is it only external beauty? Spend some time in prayer and reflection and ask God to show you if your focus needs to be directed towards him.

Day 3
September 25



Pray | Commit your day to working for Jesus

A plot uncovered.

Have you ever “been at the right place at the right time”? We often say things happen coincidentally or by chance, but is that really the case? In this scene in the book of Esther, we see that Mordecai is “at the right place at the right time” and “happens” to overhear two eunuchs plotting to kill the king. There are no accidents or chances. While we may not hear the voice of God in the book of Esther, we see him at work. Take comfort in this reminder—that in your own life there are no such things as chances. The places God brings you to are not by happenstance but by his plan and his divine appointment.



Read | Esther 2:19-23, Colossians 2:17



Reflect | Spend some time reflecting on one or more of the following:

Had Mordecai not been sitting at the gate at that particular time, he would not have overheard the assassination plot, would not have saved the king's life, and would not have been recorded in the king's chronicles as the one responsible for saving the king's life. Nothing happens by chance. God is in the every detail of our life. Reflect on a “coincidence” that has happened in your life. Do you recognize God's work in the situation?

God appointed for Mordecai to be at the gate on that particular day and to overhear that particular conversation. In all actuality, the plot to kill the king was really foiled by God. When have you “been in the right place at the right time”? Did you give the credit and glory to God, or did you take credit and bask in the limelight yourself?

Even though we don't always see it, God is continually working in our lives for our good and the good of others. Spend some time in prayer reflecting on God's plan for your life and that he is working all things together for your good even now.

Day 4
September 26



Pray | Commit to actions today that will honor God

Honoring the king.

Mordecai seeks after the welfare of his city by seeking out the welfare of his king—a king of a different faith and different ethnic background. Mordecai chooses to do what is right in honoring the king, even when there is no personal gain for him. This is such a reminder to us of the importance in doing the right thing—even when no one is looking, and especially when there is no recognition for our worldly integrity. Our behavior always needs to reflect the Lord and be honoring to him even when we get no recognition, thanks, or fame for being honorable and respectable citizens. We represent Christ and we are his kingdom ambassadors.



Read | Esther 2:19-23, Jeremiah 29:7, 1 Peter 2:17



Reflect | Spend some time reflecting on one or more of the following:

When Mordecai uncovered a plot to assassinate the king, Esther obediently passed his warning along to the king and the plotters were foiled. Although her Jewish identity was still hidden, she still expressed faith in her God by showing a humble, obedient spirit. Reflect on a time that showed your faith and dedication to God even though the environment you were in was not accepting of God.

Have you ever been in a situation where you do everything right but you don't receive any recognition or reward for what you've done? How did that make you feel? Were you able to let it go and give the glory to God?

In what ways can you see that the Lord has placed you exactly where he wants you? What gifts has God given you that you can use to grow his kingdom? Do you believe he can use you today to accomplish his purposes?

Day 5
September 27



Pray | For the strength to stand up for God today

Bow down.

While we are typically not ordered to bow down to our government officials, we still are tempted to “kneel” to other things in our lives that we deem important. When our coworkers, neighbors, and close friends are encouraging us to do something that we feel wrongly about participating in, do we find the conviction to stand up for what we believe and say no? If we are truthful with ourselves, we all can identify specific instances in our lives where we are faced with standing up for the Lord or passively sitting down saying nothing.

As we read today, Mordecai stood strong in his belief that he could not honor anyone but God. Mordecai’s action reminds us that we serve first and foremost our heavenly King—his commands guide our actions and give us courage to stand up for our beliefs, no matter how unpopular they may be.



Read | Esther 3:1-5, 1 Peter 3:15-17



Reflect | Spend some time reflecting on one or more of the following:

Mordecai experienced pressure from his peers to compromise. When he would not bow down to Haman, they stirred up trouble by calling attention to Mordecai. In the same way, a believer today might be singled out for making a godly stand on principle. Have you been in such a situation? How did you handle it?

1 Peter 3:15 prepares us for pressure to compromise. In what ways have you personally experienced pressure to compromise in your daily life or faith? What have those experiences taught you?

Mordecai was a man who was determined, devoted, and loyal in the face of extreme opposition. Is there a particular situation or area of life where you know God wants you to stand up for him? Consider what would be honoring to God and how you will respond.

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