

MENTOR



WEEK 2

FOR LIFE

INTOLERANT

Former Navy Seal and author of *Extreme Ownership*, Jocko Willink, famously said, "It's not what you preach, it's what you tolerate." Your coach can scream until he or she is blue in the face to "Hustle!" but if there's never consequences for slacking off, do you think it matters? Of course not. Leaders have to set expectations, then hold those they lead accountable.

If you tolerate the unacceptable, then the unacceptable is what you will receive. That's true on a team, in an organization, and in your personal life. However, what you find acceptable and unacceptable in people should be informed by Scripture. King Xerxes had no such desire, but that doesn't mean we can't glean important lessons from his response both as mentors and what we seek as mentees.

ESTHER 1:13–22 (SELECTED)

¹³ Then the king said to the wise men who knew the times (for this was the king's procedure toward all who were versed in law and judgment, ¹⁴ the men next to him... the seven princes of Persia and Media, who saw the king's face, and sat first in the kingdom): ¹⁵ "According to the law, what is to be done to Queen Vashti, because she has not performed the command of King Ahasuerus delivered by the eunuchs?" ¹⁶ Then Memucan said in the presence of the king and the officials, "Not only against the king has Queen Vashti done wrong, but also against all the officials and all the peoples who are in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus. ¹⁷ For the queen's behavior will be made known to all women, causing them to look at their husbands with contempt...

¹⁸ This very day the noble women of Persia and Media who have heard of the queen's behavior will say the same to all the king's officials, and there will be contempt and wrath in plenty. ¹⁹ If it please the king, let a royal order go out from him, and let it be written among the laws of the Persians and the Medes so that it may not be repealed, that Vashti is never again to come before King Ahasuerus. And let the king give her royal position to another who is better than she. ²⁰ So when the decree made by the king is proclaimed throughout all his kingdom, for it is vast, all women will give honor to their husbands, high and low alike." ²¹ This advice pleased the king and the princes... ²² He sent letters to all the royal provinces, to every province in its own script and to every people in its own language, that every man be master in his own household and speak according to the language of his people.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

At some point, as leaders and mentors, someone comes to us and says, "I'd like your advice." Frankly, many of us love this question because it's a compliment that someone values my opinion. Let's also remember that this question brings with it a tremendous responsibility (see James 3:1–2).

Want some help to give good advice? Scan the QR code for more information on taming your advice monster and how you can help people solve their *real* issues.



DISCUSSION

Who is the first person with whom you want to share good news? Why them?

1. To whom did the king go to ask advice? (13)

2. What Empire-wide concern did Memucan envision & express? (17–18)

3. What consequence did Memucan suggest for Vashti's actions? (19)

4. List some general advantages and disadvantages of seeking advisors.

5. What kinds of situations have you faced where you sought out advice?

6. What qualities should or did you look for in the people you asked for advice?

ICEBREAKER

OBSERVATION

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

Maybe you're walking through something right now and you could use some godly advice. We all have those seasons. If you need help or want to talk, talk to your Coach today!

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STUDY NOTES MAKE AN EXAMPLE

On December 3rd, 2020 the reigning district defensive player of the year, Emmanuel Duron, was ejected from the game for a personal foul and unsportsmanlike conduct. Although Duron initially walked to the sideline, he turned and charged at the ref who made the call, body slamming him to the ground. The ref sustained a possible shoulder injury and concussion.

Duron's actions had serious and wide-spread consequences. He faced a Class-A assault charge with a bond of \$10,000. His team was removed from the playoffs. Duron lost the privilege of competing in any athletics for the remainder of his senior year—which included not only football, but an expected state wrestling championship. Further, league administrators placed Duron's coach and the school's athletic department on probation through the following school year.

Last Week, we saw Queen Vashti refuse the order of the king. This week, King Xerxes sets the stage for God's plans by establishing the consequences for her actions. Like the consequences for Duron, Xerxes wanted her punishment to be a message throughout the Persian Empire that this won't be tolerated.

Vashti had defied the king's command—probably for good reason. However, this created several problems that extended beyond a marital dispute. A wife not only defied her husband, which went against Persian culture, but she defied the *king's* command. Additionally, we discussed last Week that the months-long festivities were hosting Xerxes' war council. What emperor could lead armies to victory if his own wife didn't adhere to his orders? Vashti's refusal created many problems for Xerxes, and he needed advice quickly.

MENTORS MUST FACE REALITY

Admirably, Xerxes sought wise council. *The king asked the wise men who knew the times "According to the law, what is to be done to Queen Vashti?"*

Again, neither Xerxes nor his advisers were biblically informed. *Memucan said... "The queen's behavior will be made known to all women, causing them to look at their husbands with contempt... This very day the noble women of Persia and Media who have heard of the queen's behavior will say the same to all the king's officials, and there will be contempt and wrath in plenty. If it please the king, let a royal order go out from him, ... that Vashti is never again to come before King Ahasuerus. And let the king give her royal position to another who is better than she."*

Memucan skillfully devised a punishment for Vashti that spoke of the dishonor to husbands whose wives disobey them without ever mentioning the dishonor to Xerxes. *This advice pleased the king and the princes. So, he sent letters to all the royal provinces.*

Vashti lost her privileged role as queen and was forbidden to enter into Xerxes' presence. She lost power and prestige and could never again hope to receive the king's special favors. Ironically, Vashti received the "permission" to do exactly what she wanted to do—to stay away from the king.

This punishment probably had more consequence than we understand 2,500 years later. However, Xerxes advisers considered this punishment enough to keep all wives from usurping authority such *that every man be master in his own household.*

REALITY INCLUDES FACING HUMAN NATURE

As our study seeks to examine lessons on mentorship, there are two key lessons from Esther 1.

First, deciding consequences for wrong actions is one of the most difficult decisions any leader makes. Good mentors need humility to seek wise council. Xerxes' example is worth following—even if it may be rooted more in a character flaw than actual humility (as we will see). Caution, Seeking wisdom isn't a chance to avoid responsibility or delay doing the right thing. But, it's helpful when the best move seems unclear.

Second, although Memucan solved the need of the moment, we'll see as we continue that Xerxes received the advice of many who manipulated him. A wise mentee knows that not every voice should have the same weight in our lives. The greatest weight should be given to godly people who want our absolute best and get nothing out of their love for you.

Sometimes our parents, our teachers, and our coaches offer up life wisdom that's more self-serving—even if it helps you in the short-term. Be careful taking such advice. Don't tolerate advice purely designed to make the adviser look good. A good mentor wants the best for *you*, not *themselves*.

We all need advice sometimes, and we must maintain the humility to ask for it. But, by the same token, we must shrewdly select our advisers. More than a strategic thinker, we need someone who knows the Lord, knows God's Word, and can help us apply it—and will do so unselfishly. The only unselfish people I know are walking intimately with Christ. That's what we should look for in mentors, but also the kind of mentors we should strive to become.