

# MENTOR



# FOR LIFE

## DARING GREATLY

*"If I perish, I perish."* Resigned but determined, last Week we witnessed Esther willingly accepted her responsibility to save the Jewish people from slaughter. Teddy Roosevelt has a fantastic quote regarding the critic who judges versus the one doing the deed. He says that only the man in the arena knows the "triumph of high achievement, and who at worst, or if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly. So that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory or defeat."

As Esther's plan unfolds, she faced impossible odds. Her plan seems questionable in places. Yet, let us not criticize too harshly. It's impossible to ignore our hindsight. Instead, let us admire one "who strives valiantly," "daring greatly."

ESTHER 5:1–8, 13–14

<sup>1</sup> On the third day Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the king's palace, in front of the king's quarters, while the king was sitting on his royal throne inside the throne room opposite the entrance to the palace. <sup>2</sup> And when the king saw Queen Esther standing in the court, she won favor in his sight, and he held out to Esther the golden scepter that was in his hand. Then Esther approached and touched the tip of the scepter. <sup>3</sup> And the king said to her, "What is it, Queen Esther? What is your request? It shall be given you, even to the half of my kingdom." <sup>4</sup> And Esther said, "If it please the king, let the king and Haman come today to a feast that I have prepared for the king." <sup>5</sup> Then the king said, "Bring Haman quickly, so that we may do as Esther has asked." So the king and Haman came to the feast that Esther had prepared. <sup>6</sup> And as they were drinking wine after the feast, the king said to Esther, "What is your wish? It shall be granted you. And what is your request? Even to the half of my kingdom, it shall be fulfilled." <sup>7</sup> Then Esther answered, "My wish and my request is: <sup>8</sup> If I have found favor in the sight of the king, and if it please the king to grant my wish and fulfill my request, let the king and Haman come to the feast that I will prepare for them, and tomorrow I will do as the king has said."

<sup>13</sup> Yet all this is worth nothing to me, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate."

<sup>14</sup> Then his wife Zeresh and all his friends said to him, "Let a gallows fifty cubits high be made, and in the morning tell the king to have Mordecai hanged upon it. Then go joyfully with the king to the feast." This idea pleased Haman, and he had the gallows made.

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Esther's dramatic moment came as the king raised his golden scepter and her life was spared. If God didn't act, Esther's life would have been forfeit. Ironically, as much as Esther needed God's power to spare her life, we all need God's power to maintain ours.

We often forget our complete and utter dependency on God for every facet of our lives. Scan the QR code to worship, "*Lord, I need You, Every hour, I need You. My one defense, my righteousness, Oh God, how I need You.*"



## DISCUSSION

Unpack the Roosevelt quote from the introduction. Can you give an example of Daring Greatly?

1. How did the king respond to Esther's entrance? (2-3)

2. What was Esther's reply to the king's second ask? (7-8)

3. What did Haman's party suggest he do before he went "joyfully with the king to [Esther's] feast"? (14)

4. Who seems to be in control here? Explain. (5)

5. In what ways is your worship and trust of God based on circumstances?

6. How might the questions at the end of the study notes help you go beyond circumstances in worship and obedience?

We need God to move in other people's hearts for many things, including salvation. But, often times, our circumstances requires our own change of heart. Talk to your Coach today!

ICEBREAKER

OBSERVATION

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

# MENTOR



# FOR LIFE

## STUDY NOTES MISSION IMPOSSIBLE

“Your mission, should you choose to accept it...” Perhaps this line makes you think of Tom Cruise free soloing a desert mountain, hanging from a plane taking off, climbing the Burj Khalifa, or base jumping a dirt bike off a cliff. The *Mission Impossible* movies revolve around, well, impossible missions. The craziest part of those movies isn’t the plot points, it’s that Tom Cruise really performed all the stunts listed above.

Although risky, stunts are controlled and highly coordinated by teams of experts. As we open our passage today in Esther 5, we see a truly impossible mission. Esther stood alone, no CGI or paramedics on standby. All she had was her people praying and fasting that God would intervene on her behalf.

Consider Esther’s 5 impossible obstacles: 1) To speak to the king, Esther had to break a law carrying the death penalty. 2) Esther had concealed her Jewish heritage. 3) Esther must ask the king to reverse an irreversible law. 4) Esther must oppose the king’s right hand man. 5) Esther’s plan threatened the king’s pride causing him to admit he was tricked.

We can only assume that with shaky knees, **Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the king’s palace.** Her life depended on the king raising his golden scepter or not. Thankfully, Proverbs 21:1 states, “*The king’s heart is a stream of water in the hand of the LORD, he turns it wherever he will.*”

## MENTEES MUST USE GOD-GIVEN OPPORTUNITIES

**When the king saw Queen Esther standing in the court, she won favor in his sight, and he held out to Esther the golden scepter that was in his hand. Then Esther approached and touched the tip of the scepter.**

With the first hurdle crossed, the king asked, “**What is it, Queen Esther? What is your request? It shall be given you, even to the half of my kingdom.**” Now, obviously, the king’s statement was exaggerated, but the king was willing to give Esther a huge ask.

Esther invited **the king and Haman to a feast.** We see the king’s eagerness to please Esther by commanding that **Haman** come **quickly.** Notice the humor here—Haman hated the Jews and manipulated the king into signing their genocide into law. Here the king not only obeyed a Jew, but commanded that Haman do so with haste.

The Navy Seals have a motto saying, “Don’t run to your death.” Slow and methodical wins the race. Haman eagerly and foolishly ran to his

downfall. We read of his excitement in the verses we weren’t able to include in this Week’s study so check it out.

After eating and drinking, the king repeated his question regarding Esther’s ask for which she risked her life. We don’t know why, but Esther punted, asking **the king and Haman** return for a **feast tomorrow.** It seemed as though the king was happy and Esther could have made the “ask,” but regardless, the Lord didn’t waste the time in-between the two feasts.

Haman saw Mordecai leaving the feast and it ruined his jubilation. Haman invited some friends over along with his wife and told them the exciting news—that he’s apparently in the good graces of the queen. Remembering Mordecai, Haman said, “**Yet all this is worth nothing to me, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king’s gate.**”

Then those gathered offered a solution—just kill him. They urged Haman to manipulate the king one more time saying, “**Let a gallows fifty cubits high be made, and in the morning tell the king to have Mordecai hanged upon it. Then go joyfully with the king to the feast.**” **This idea pleased Haman, and he had the gallows made.** Perhaps this is where the phrase “gallows humor” comes from. But, spoiler alert, this plan ends up backfiring with outrageous irony.

## GOD-GIVEN OPPORTUNITIES OFTEN MOVE HEARTS

My former pastor often said, “A blessing at the wrong time is a curse.” For example, winning the lottery has ruined a lot of lives. The converse is also exemplified by Esther—a seemingly impossible challenge at the right time (in God’s time) is a blessing.

You and I are bad judges of the real opportunities and obstacles before us. First, it’s easier to see another person’s situation more clearly than our own. Second, and more importantly, we simply never know how God will move in either the ups or downs of our lives. As we’ve said previously, it’s often only in hindsight that we see God’s invisible hand navigating us through life—things that “just so happen” to work out.

A good mentor will have ridden the waves through enough peaks and valleys to understand that God is worthy of our desperate surrender in the peaks just as much as he deserves our praise and thanksgiving in the valleys. Your circumstances *should not* determine your worship, *nor* your obedience.

How are you evaluating present opportunities or obstacles? From whom are you seeking wisdom? Whose heart needs to change, and how does it need to change, to find a solution? Where are you trusting God for the impossible?