

# THE REACH

*filtering everyday life through the word of God*

With thoughtful planning, most people generally direct a successful course for their life. However, in the coaching profession, that is not always the case. Circumstances and decisions, out of our control, can destroy our plans within 24 hours!

Esther had probably done some thoughtful planning and dreaming of her own. But, Scripture does not record a single plan she ever made. Her story begins with a dramatic event, completely out of her control, forcing this ordinary girl into a King's haram. (Esther 2:1-8)

- Tell about your **FIRST** pivotal, life-altering event as a coach's wife, the one that changed everything for you. Maybe it was good, yet hard, or maybe it was bad and really hard! Regardless where did your "growing up" story begin?

"MATURITY, ONE DISCOVERS, HAS EVERYTHING TO DO WITH THE ACCEPTANCE OF NOT KNOWING."  
MARK Z. DANIELEWSKI

Esther's day-to-day accounts contain a good amount of symbolism adding depth to the message. Let's focus on a few of these symbolic references while taking a look at a specific event that changed the course of history. This was perhaps Esther's growing up story, turning her from a young, timid girl among a haram, into a brave Jewish woman who tackled adversity head-on.

Read Esther 3:1-6. Haman, the king's nobleman, was promoted above all others, enabling him to exercise the king's power and authority. In this passage, there are fundamental, symbolic references which can deepen our understanding of these events as well as other events throughout Scripture.

- Read Ezekiel 28:14-15. Who is Ezekiel talking about? Comparing the two passages, who does Haman symbolize?

- Considering Mordecai's actions, who does he symbolize, or foreshadow? Read Matt. 4:8-10.

Haman, infuriated by Mordecai, planned to destroy the entire Jewish nation. The Hebrew word describing Haman's rage is *b'hema*, or beast; *a large animal that makes you feel small and powerless when confronted*. Read 1 Peter 5:8. Walking in Mordecai's shoes, and understanding Haman's savagery, helps us resonate with the severity of this situation.

- As a coach's wife, have you ever felt cornered, small, or powerless? How did this *strengthen* your devotion to your husband? BRIEFLY, describe your scenario focusing on the victory.
- Read 2 Chron. 16:9. Always remember, Satan prowls and roams, but our Lord runs!

"COURAGE ISN'T A FEELING YOU WAIT FOR. COURAGE IS DOING IT WHEN YOU DON'T HAVE COURAGE. COURAGE IS DOING IT SCARED." JILL BRISCOE

Read Esther 3:8-11, and Esther 4:1. This faithful, Jewish man, Mordecai, wept for his people, yet another symbol, or foreshadowing of Jesus weeping over us in the Garden of Gethsemane. (Luke 22:44)

Through this harrowing turn of events, Esther and Mordecai communicated through a middleman. Mordecai reported to the king's eunuch; the eunuch reported to Esther; then Esther told the eunuch what to tell Mordecai; etc. Have you been there? For example, this job might be open; your husband knows coach so and so; and they talk to coach so and so; and so on... It can be frustrating, testing our patience, but necessary in gathering important information.

Read Esther 4:8-14. Esther's life was in jeopardy if she went to the king, but her death was certain if she did not. Her options were, "Well, I might die," or, "I probably will die."

Mordecai wisely points out that all the previous circumstances of her life prepared her for this moment! That final phrase, *“For such a time as this,”* is repeated frequently in our Christian circles.

- **Often, coaching choices are a double negative. They seem ambiguous, carrying a lot of baggage on either side. Have you and your husband ever encountered a choice like that? If so, share the steps and tools you used to make your decision.**
- **Is there something in your past, maybe years ago, good or bad, hard or easy, that has prepared you for your current role, *for such a time as this*?**

**“TO BE A FOLLOWER OF THE CRUCIFIED MEANS, SOONER OR LATER, AN ENCOUNTER WITH THE CROSS. AND, THE CROSS ALWAYS ENTAILS LOSS.” ELISABETH ELLIOT**

Chapter 4 is the pivotal moment in Esther’s story where she did some growing up. Wisely, she quit looking at her inward struggle and focused on the struggle of her people around her. Read Esther 4:15-16. Esther solicited 3 days of prayer and fasting among her community. Think about that, have ever fasted from food? If so, you know it is a “type” of sacrifice. (Sacrifice means giving up something you need, not *just* a want.) And, 3 days is a repeated increment of time throughout Scripture, actually appearing 21 times in the gospels alone. (*\*When Scripture repeats itself, always pay attention!*)

- **What symbolism, or New Testament foreshadowing, do you see in this “sacrifice” for the period of 3 days?**

**“PRAYER IS MORE THAN A WISH, IT IS THE VOICE OF FAITH DIRECTED TO GOD.”  
BILLY GRAHAM**

Read Joel 2:12-14. This passage is called a “literary echo” written BEFORE Esther’s time, to the Jews in Persia, by the prophet Joel. It was a symbolic foreshadowing, or “echo,” instructing the Jews how to respond to *such a time as this*.

*(\*Side note, the Old Testament is not laid out chronologically. The book of Joel comes after Esther in your Bible, but he prophesied before this event.)*

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- **Joel’s passage stirs something deep within me, it is both beautiful and powerful! *Rend your heart and not your garment...* WOW! What is the symbolism here? Mordecai tore his garment, but what does Joel mean about dealing with our heart?**

Basically, Joel is saying the condition of our heart is God’s primary concern. Ripping your garment is a mockery to God if you are not ripping your heart.

- **Joel’s “literary echo” gave the Jews (down the road) an example of how to respond to overwhelming circumstances, hence the word, echo. Is there an echo you carry in your experience? Maybe a piece of advice you received from a CW, maybe a verse or passage of Scripture, maybe a lesson you learned, etc.**

**“YOU CAN ONLY LEARN WHAT OBEDIENCE IS BY OBEYING.” DEITRICH BONHOEFFER**