

*The book of Esther is a study of the survival of God's people surrounded by hostility. The Bible message is God's **WORD** for all generations. Kingdom truth, foundational principles and practical Christian guidelines never change—they are eternal. So what does the book of Esther have to say to the church today? Consider the following never-changing principles found in this story.*

You reap what you sow—the law of consequences. Adam and Eve disobeyed God and the consequence was rejection from the Garden of Eden, and all their posterity was born with a sinful nature. Violation of human conscience led to debauchery and licentiousness in Noah's time and the consequence was a global flood. Fast forward to the 5th Century B.C. when Israel departed from the laws of God and the consequence was becoming slaves, scattered among the 127 Provinces of Persia. This is the setting for the Book of Esther. This law will show up again later.

Be prepared. Keep your heart in tune with God. Keep your skills and talents up-to-date and ready for use. Mordecai was an honest praying man who learned about a conspiracy against the king and asked queen Esther (his orphaned, adopted cousin) to alert the king, who investigated the plot, executed the conspirators and officially recorded the entire event—an act that later spared all the Jews and promoted Mordecai to Prime Minister of Persia. Read the entire story in the Book of Esther. Both Mordecai and Esther were praying, worshipers of God, and therefore they were positioned by God to be in the right place at the right time—and they were prepared spiritually to save the Jews in Persia.

Be patient. Wait for God's timing and prompting. Don't act in haste, but take time to pray and then do what the Lord directs you to do. Read the account of Esther's daring to enter the king's presence, inviting him, and Israel's enemy, Haman, for dinner the next day—and the wisdom of her words that caught Haman off guard, brought about his death on the gallows he erected for hanging Mordecai, and Mordecai's promotion as Prime Minister. Patience and waiting have virtue. Read Psalm 37.

This unexpected turn of events for Haman illustrates the law of consequences again. Haman was motivated by pride and when Mordecai would not bow to him Haman built gallows to hang Mordecai; but the events above caused the king to hang Haman on the gallows meant for Mordecai, and to promote Mordecai to Haman's vacated position. Talk about consequences—pride goes before a fall, and planning evil for innocent people comes back to haunt you. This was a negative consequence for Haman. A positive consequence for Mordecai was his concern for the king's safety which led to the king reading from the records and then honoring Mordecai. Our actions have either good or bad consequences.

Be prayerful. Prayer (and even fasting) may be needed to discern God's plan, method, timing, etc. Esther knew this and she took the time to pray and fast—she even asked those around her to pray and fast with her. She knew that God was real and that He answered prayer. And she needed to have a plan from

God's heart to save her life when going uninvited into the king's presence; and to have God move on the king's heart to spare the Jews in Persian exile.

Be persistent. When all hope seems lost—keep your faith and trust in God. He is faithful to fulfill each and every purpose designed for you—Psalm 20:4. When facing disaster God is our only hope and our faith needs to be persistent, in fact, unshakable. This is supported by other Bible stories like Daniel in the Lion's den, his three friends in the fiery furnace, Joseph in persistently believing in the dream of his youth, and so many other Bible stories.

Identify with God & His people. Never deny The Lord, the church, the faith. Be willing to die if necessary and be a bold witness trusting in the faithfulness of God. Esther was willing to die in an effort to save the lives of Jewish captives. She identified with both God and the Jews in Persia who faced death.

Unity and cooperation are required. Don't try to do everything by yourself. Use members of God's Body on the earth who have different but needed gifts and abilities. Teamwork is important. Mordecai and Esther worked together, their gifts were different but supportive. Without one the other would fail—and Esther reached out to her closest friends for prayer and fasting support.

Be willing to lay your life down. It may even cost your life in order for God's purposes to be fulfilled; purposes that only God understands at the time. Martyrs do not die in vain. A seed must die before a new plant can grow. Esther risked her life to save others. So did David and his mighty men. So did Jesus and His disciples; and a host of Christians in the past nineteen centuries continuing til the present time. We are normally asked only to lay down our fleshly lives (lusts, pleasures, pursuits, etc.) to serve the Lord and live lives that conform to biblical moral standards. We should be committed to a life that "live or die", we are going to live by Bible principles to fulfill God's Call.

Don't forget to give God thanks. When the victory is won and life returns to normal, stop and worship the Lord with thanksgiving and praise. Remember the 10 lepers—only one returned to give thanks. Shame on the other nine! The Psalms and Epistles are loaded with Praise and thanksgiving. Start with Psalm 95:1&2—“Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving” and Psalm 100:4—“Enter His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise.”

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