

# 10

## Esther: Saying Yes to God

### *Esther 4*

We often find it easy to obey God when there is little risk or cost involved. However, when God prompts us to speak to a stranger about Christ, to take an unpopular position on a moral issue or to take a step of faith into the unknown, we often become indecisive.

**GROUP DISCUSSION.** In what situations do you find it difficult to openly confess or obey Jesus?

**PERSONAL REFLECTION.** Think of the life situation in which God has placed you (where you live, marital status, occupation, family). Ask him to show you his purpose for your life.

Four centuries before Christ, Esther found herself at a fork in the road: she could offer herself as God's instrument or deny her identity as one of God's people. She was a young Jewish woman living in Susa, the capital of the Persian Empire, when the king deposed his queen. To find another queen, he held a beauty contest. Esther's cousin, Mordecai, convinced her to conceal her Jewish nationality and to enter the contest. She was declared the winner and made queen of Persia.

Trouble began when Haman was made the king's right-hand man,

and he determined to massacre all the Jews in the empire because of Mordecai's refusal to bow down before him. He convinced the king to issue a royal edict and to fix a day on which all Jews would be annihilated. *Read Esther 4.*

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1. How do Mordecai and the Jews in the provinces react to the edict of the king (vv. 1-3)?

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2. What steps does Esther take to comfort Mordecai and understand his distress (vv. 4-5)?

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3. Describe the message Mordecai gives to Esther through the king's servant Hathach (vv. 6-9).

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4. Esther is reluctant to heed Mordecai's exhortation (vv. 10-11) because neither the king nor officials know she is a Jew. This could cost her both the throne and her life. When have you been asked to do something that involved personal risk or cost? Explain.

5. What arguments does Mordecai use to contend with Esther's hesitation to intervene on behalf of her people (vv. 12-14)?

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6. What does verse 14 reveal about Mordecai's understanding of God?

How does he view Esther's hesitance to act?

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7. Mordecai asked: "And who knows but that you have come to the royal position for such a time as this?" Where has God placed you at this particular time in your life?

What may be a few reasons for which God has placed you there? Explain.

8. How does Esther finally respond to Mordecai and ultimately to God (vv. 15-16)?

What kind of help did she need in order to obey God?

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9. How does the support of Christians encourage you to say yes to God?

10. Esther is graciously received by the king and effectively intercedes on behalf of the Jews. How can her example encourage you to make better use of the opportunities God has given you?

*Ask God to give you boldness to faithfully speak and live for him.*

**Now or Later**

Read Acts 4:21-31. Study the prayer of the apostles as they faced threats and persecution. What can you learn from them?