

Esther Chapter 1:1 to 2:18

If you watch Mission Impossible, you know each movie starts with a clear mission in the beginning. Then, they can plan about achieving the mission. What about preparing for an unknown mission? Is that sound strange? Sometimes, God can do that to you. Let's see the case of Esther.

Esther is an Old Testament book. Bible books Ezra and Nehemiah are about the Jews moved back to Jerusalem and the surrounding area from an area used to be Babylon. When the Persia kingdom took over Babylonian, King of Persia allowed the Jews to go back home. Esther is part of those Jews that did not move back and remained in the area near the central control region of Persia. Esther, similar to Jews in the region, was in the lower class (Jews were slaves during Babylonian control).

1) No self-pity (You can't start a mission with self-pity)

- a. Esther's father and mother died (Esther 2:7), but she has no self-pity. How often do we blame on our failures due to our bad heritage or unchangeable condition or our past?
- b. She was not unhappy nor felt ashamed about her Jewish heritage. Jews were the lower class in that society. To be successful in life, one must not use our heritage, family, environment, past events, etc. as excess to prevent us to persuade success.

2) Recognize the world is not perfect and you might have been placed in the most "unfair" situation, but you still can be positive.

Esther was already raised with no parents. She was a Jew. These weren't bad enough; she got forced to be part of the queen selection process. She was only one of thousands or even millions of ladies in the pool. She didn't give up. Would you give up or have a bad attitude about the whole ordeal and the society? You should still have confidence and bravery to go forward even you had recognized the world is far from perfect plus you are in a bad situation. Seek God to help. Ask God to give you hope, confidence, strength and wisdom. Continue to seek God for confidence and

strength is a preparation for your future success. (Joshua 1:7, James 1:5)

3) Be patience and have endurance, not rebellious

She tried her best in this non-ideal position. She was patience and not rebellious. She won Hegai's favor (Esther 2:9). She supposedly need to spend 12 months in the harem. If she did not get selected, she would have wasted 12 months of her life. She has a positive attitude. It is possible that God used that time to train her. Finally, her genial and friendly personality won others' favor (Esther 2:15). God's training often seems long and difficult. (James 1:2-5)

4) God love you and God can use you

- a. **God love you regardless.** She was lowly in the society. You can see that God love her and gave her a big favor. Described in later chapters that she was the queen and was used by God to save the Jews. God love all of us (John 3:16). All we need to do is individually turn back to Jesus (repent and accept Him as savior).
- b. Esther is not perfect but God gave her unique features (beauty) and gifts (wisdom to win favors as shown in this chapter, make right decisions and in good timing as shown in later chapters). However, God given spiritual gifts often need to be cultivated and refined to be truly useful. **You should know your gifts and have endurance when God train you.**
- c. **When you are willing to be used by God, He can provide and lead your way.**
God is almighty and do not need your little effort. However, if you are willing to be used, God can use you when you are ready. You might not know God's plan in the beginning but trust God. Esther has no idea her final mission is to save her people (Jews). That is a big and important mission!

God would use you when you are ready means training likely be needed. I remember I watched a movie call The Karate Kid. The kid wanted to learn karate. He got a good master. One of the first sets of tasks the master asked him to do was to paint the big fence. He had to paint with his hands/arms moving up and down the fence for a long time. He was

frustrated about this task that seems nothing to do with learning karate, but he went through it. Later in the movie, he found out that painting task was a good training for his hand and arm movement for karate to defend attacks. Esther went through the harem experience. You might need to go through some other training that seems not matching your presumed mission. Not until the mission has been completed then you can recognize God's purpose in the training. Even Jesus himself had to go through 40 days in the desert (Luke 4:2).

In this physical world, you often prepare for a known mission. In God's spiritual world, be ready for an unknown mission, and that is more challenging. Let us follow the steps like Esther and be ready for God's purpose.

(Note, God sometimes make your mission known very early but sometimes not.)