



ESTHER 3:2-4

"2 All the royal officials at the king's gate knelt down and paid honour to Haman, for the king had commanded this concerning him. But Mordecai would not kneel down or pay him honour.

3 Then the royal officials at the king's gate asked Mordecai, 'Why do you disobey the king's command?'

4 Day after day they spoke to him but he refused to comply. Therefore they told Haman about it to see whether Mordecai's behaviour would be tolerated, for he had told them he was a Jew."

ESTHER 3:8-13

Then Haman said to King Xerxes, "There is a certain people dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom who keep themselves separate. Their customs are different from those of all other people, and they do not obey the king's laws; it is not in the king's best interest to tolerate them. 9 If it pleases the king, let a decree be issued to destroy them, and I will give ten thousand talents[a] of silver to the king's administrators for the royal treasury."

10 So the king took his signet ring from his finger and gave it to Haman son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews. 11 "Keep the money," the king said to Haman, "and do with the people as you please."

ESTHER 4:1-3

When Mordecai learned of all that had been done, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the city, wailing loudly and bitterly. 2 But he went only as far as the king's gate, because no one clothed in sackcloth was allowed to enter it. 3 In every province to which the edict and order of the king came, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping and wailing. Many lay in sackcloth and ashes.

START TALKING

1. What stood out to you from this Sunday's message? What challenged you or encouraged you?
2. What has God been doing in your world - what can we celebrate?

START THINKING

1. How does the story of Mordecai illustrate the qualities of grit and perseverance? What can we learn from Mordecai's faith and actions in the face of adversity?
2. How can you build a strong foundation of faith to help you withstand life's challenges?

START SHARING

1. How would you personally define grit?
 - a. Can you share a personal experience where you had to demonstrate grit to achieve a goal?
 - b. What are some practical steps you can take to develop more grit in your life?
2. Mordecai used his influence to bring about change. How can you use your influence, big or small, to make a positive impact in your community?
3. Mordecai saw Esther not as an orphan but as a daughter and, eventually, a queen. Think of someone you find challenging to deal with. How might seeing them differently, as God sees them, change your approach to them?

START PRAYING

Heavenly Father, thank You for Your goodness and faithfulness. Thank You that we have been called for a time such as this. Show us areas in our lives where our roots are not yet deep enough; please deepen and strengthen us in Your Word and in who it is that You have called us to be. We ask that if we don't know who it is that You've called us to be, that You would reveal that to us, and show us where we need to reorient our lives. Amen

START DOING

1. Reflect on a current challenge you are facing. How can you apply the principles of grit, passion, and perseverance to overcome it?
2. What specific actions will you take this week to demonstrate grit in your personal or professional life?

NOTES FOR LEADERS

Please diarise these upcoming events:

1. 30 July: Prayer Meeting at 7pm (supper will be on sale from 6pm)
2. 7 August: Business Morning with Bertie Lourens at 8am (coffee and muffins from 7:30am)



This Sunday, in part two of our Esther series, Ockie shared an encouraging message on "grit" based on Mordecai's story.

Grit refers to strong resolve and determination to persevere in pursuing long-term goals despite difficulties or delays. Grit shows up in times of adversity. True grit is a God-given trait, fully realised when one knows God.

Mordecai was a Jewish man living in Susa, the capital of the Persian Empire. He was a descendant of the tribe of Benjamin and a relative of Esther. His story is one of faith, courage, and resilience that led to triumph over adversity.

Three key takeaways from Mordecai's story:

1. Embrace the Call to Grit

The life of Mordecai might seem secondary in the extraordinary story of Esther, but Mordecai was more than just her uncle who welcomed her as his own daughter. He viewed her through lenses of faith rather than circumstances, and he saw in her inner strength and anointing.

As God's people, we are called to be people of grit, and we also need to see the world differently. We need to see people differently. We need to see the person we view as our biggest challenge differently - we need to see them through the eyes that God sees them, not the way we see them.

2. Take Action, Don't Be Idle

Mordecai found himself in situations where he had to stand up for the rights of others instead of hiding in the shadows. He was instrumental in ensuring the safety of not only Esther and the Jewish people but also in exposing treachery in her husband's kingdom. His actions in Esther's life story characterise attributes of wisdom, compassion, faith, courage, and hope.

One day, Mordecai was sitting at the city gates (which were a place of commerce) when he heard two guards plotting to overthrow King Xerxes. Being a man of substance (grit), Mordecai took action, sending word to the palace. The whole plot was uncovered, and the conspiring guards were put to death.

Mordecai's faith and perseverance were also evident when he refused to bow to Haman, an Agagite and a high-ranking official who demanded everyone bow to him. To understand the significance of this, we need to go back 972 years to the book of Exodus, where we first encounter the Amalekites.

The Amalekites famously attacked the Israelites at Rephidim. Following the attack, God commanded Moses to record the event and instructed that Amalek's name be blotted out from under heaven. 400 years later, God commands Saul to wipe out the Amalekites, which his army does, but Saul spares their king, Agag (and this results in Samuel's pronouncement of God's rejection of Saul as king). The Amalekites hated the Jews, and Haman was a descendant of Agag (of the Amalekites).

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whether Mordecai's behaviour would be tolerated, for he

had told them he was a Jew." Esther 3:2-4

Mordecai's refusal to bow to Haman was based on his values and faith, despite the pressure and danger it brought. His grit led to significant consequences, including Haman's plot to destroy all Jews.

Then Haman said to King Xerxes, "There is a certain people dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom who keep themselves separate. Their customs are different from those of all other people, and they do not obey the king's laws; it is not in the king's best interest to tolerate them. 9 If it pleases the king, let a decree be issued to destroy them, and I will give ten thousand talents[a] of silver to the king's administrators for the royal treasury."

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Even though there was a strong possibility of death, Mordecai didn't back down from standing up for his beliefs. This intensified more when Mordecai learned of Haman's plot.

When Mordecai learned of all that had been done, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the city, wailing loudly and bitterly. *2 But he went only as far as the king's gate, because no one clothed in sackcloth was allowed to enter it. 3 In every province to which the edict and order of the king came, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping and wailing. Many lay in sackcloth and ashes.* Esther 4:1-3

3. Leave a Legacy of Faith and Resilience

Mordecai's actions and influence, even in the face of adversity, led to generational benefits. His faithfulness and resilience not only saved his people but also influenced future generations. King Artaxerxes, the son of Esther and King Xerxes, became king in Nehemiah's time. He was a compassionate king who was okay with the Jewish community, and he sent Nehemiah supplies to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

Artaxerxes was in the court, he would have known Mordecai, he was part of the family, and he was the one who let Nehemiah and the Jews return to Israel to fix the walls of Jerusalem.

Isn't that incredible? One man's faithfulness to standing his ground leads to the next generation being able to go back to what was known as the Promised Land and fix what was broken. That is what people of grit do. Our actions today have consequences not only for tomorrow but also generational consequences for years from now.

God is not only the God of the present, He's also the God of the future. He knows what's going to happen, and we have a responsibility to embrace the call to be people of grit. Push through - don't shrink back - because, in the end, pushing through is where the blessing sits.