

## ESTHER 4:12-13 (TLB)

12 So Hathach gave Esther's message to Mordecai.

13 This was Mordecai's reply to Esther: "Do you think you will escape there in the palace when all other Jews are killed? 14 If you keep quiet at a time like this, God will deliver the Jews from some other source, but you and your relatives will die; what's more, who can say but that God has brought you into the palace for just such a time as this?"

### 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. Consider Esther's transformation from fear to courage.
  - a. What steps did Esther take to align herself with God's divine plan?
  - b. How can we apply Esther's example of seeking God's guidance (e.g., through fasting and prayer) to our own lives when faced with difficult decisions?
2. Reflect on Mordecai's words: "who can say but that God has brought you ... for just such a time as this?"
  - a. How does it make you feel to know that God's divine hand is working out His plan behind the scenes in all the seeming chaos and 'coincidences' in our world?
  - b. How do you believe God wants to use you in your current location (job, neighbourhood, circle of friends, etc?)

### START SHARING

1. Mooi shared the following keys to Divine influence: **Obedience, Letting Go and Letting God, Knowing God and Making Him Known, Aligning with God's Plan, and Taking Courage.**
  - a. Which of these keys do you find most challenging to apply in your life?
  - b. What one step will you take to grow in that area?
2. Looking back, how has a difficult situation in your past led to personal growth or a deeper understanding of God's plan for your life? How can you use the lessons learned from past experiences to face current challenges with faith and confidence?

## START PRAYING

Pray for the courage to recognise and follow God's divine influence in your lives.

Ask God for the strength to let go of our fears and trust in His greater plan.

Seek God's guidance in making Him known through our actions and decisions.

## START DOING

Are there areas in your life where you feel God is asking you to step out in faith despite the risks?

- How can Esther's story encourage you in this?
- What next step of courage will you take?

## 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 the final part of our Esther series, Mooi shared an encouraging message on Divine influence based on Esther's story. Divine influence refers to supernatural impact or inspiration. In other words, it occurs when God, in His sovereignty, uses a human being to do what a human being cannot do by nature.

Esther's original name was Hadassah (meaning myrtle tree), symbolising peace, love, courage, and victory. Her name was changed to Esther to hide her identity upon becoming the queen of Persia.

We pick up the story where Mordecai has been employed as an official worker in the king's palace, and Esther is in the process of preparing herself to be chosen as the queen of Persia. In the midst of this, Mordecai uncovers a plot by Haman (who was a king's advisor) to exterminate the Jews.

Mordecai approaches Esther and urges her to use her position to make the King aware of the plot and plead for her people's lives. At first, she says no. She has risked her life (hiding the fact that she is a Jew), and she has lost so much already.

Mordecai sends a message back to Esther: *12 So Hathach gave Esther's message to Mordecai.*

*13 This was Mordecai's reply to Esther: "Do you think you will escape there in the palace when all other Jews are killed? 14 If you keep quiet at a time like this, God will deliver the Jews from some other source, but you and your relatives will die; what's more, who can say but that God has brought you into the palace for just such a time as this?"* Esther 4:12-14 (TLB)

It's like Mordecai was saying to Esther, "Look beyond then where you are. Shift your eyes from the current circumstances and from what you have lost. God has a bigger plan. I know that it's risky. I know that it's a life and death-situation. I'm fully aware that it's a crisis, but Esther, what if God has brought you into the palace for such a time as this? "

Wayne W Dyer puts it like this: You are a Divine creation, a Being of Light who showed up here as a human being at the exact moment you were supposed to. You are the Beloved, a miracle, a part of the eternal perfection.

But Esther couldn't see what lay ahead. She couldn't see God's divine plan for her life. She couldn't see that God can use any circumstance to:

- Reveal Himself as Omnipotent God
- Reveal Himself to us as an individual
- Reveal Himself through us
- Use us to save His people or His nation

Esther's story still speaks to us today. In some other instances, we need to change the way we look at our situations. We need to change the way we look at our crises and look beyond the situation. What if God wants to reveal himself through us and our circumstances?

In the midst of the situation, Esther changed her mind: *15 Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: 16 'Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my attendants will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish.'* Esther 4:15-16.

She changed her perception and found the courage to risk her life and approach the king without being summoned. She aligned herself with God's divine plan, which she couldn't see at the beginning of it all. She revealed her conscious trust in God and made God

known in the community of the Jews and in the family of Haman, who wanted to exterminate the Jews.

Sometimes, as believers, we need to make God known in our circumstances - even in the face of persecution. Esther made that decision and aligned herself with God's divine plan for her life.

God has a divine plan for our lives, and we need to connect with it. As Esther's story shows, there is a bigger picture in everything, including what we face.

Keys to Divine Influence:

- Obedience (submission to another's authority)
- Let go and let God
- Know your God and make Him Known
- Aligning yourself with God's divine plan for your life
- Take courage

Esther lost her virginity because, in preparing to be chosen as the queen, she would have had to spend a night with the king. After that, had she not been selected as queen, she would not have been allowed to marry anyone else from the kingdom. But God had a greater plan for Esther!

*Ecclesiastes 7:8 says The end of a matter is better than its beginning.* It doesn't matter how it started, but what matters is how you end. Your starting point may be low, but it's okay because *Christ in you, is the hope of glory.* (Colossians 1:27). You will end in victory! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! The end of the matter is far greater than the beginning of it all.

The God of the Jews turned the tables, and Haman and his sons were all killed. God is just and righteous, so we should always take courage in any situation.

Esther went on to assist Mordecai in writing a letter decreeing that the Jewish community must establish the festival of Purim to commemorate their deliverance and the reversal of their fate.

Esther's story is not only about Israel; it is also about us because we are adopted into the kingdom of God. The same God who delivered Israel from Haman's evil plot is the same God who will deliver us from whatever we're facing. The Bible says God is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Shift your eyes from what you are facing now. Take courage. God has a bigger plan. He wants to use your situation. The end of the matter is better than the beginning of it all.