Module: Understanding, Accessing & Growing in GRACE

Session 11: Humility Accesses ‘A Greater Grace’ - Part 3

Focus: Grace Attends Humility Expressed and Evidenced as Obedience

Manifesting Glory - The Example of ESTHER.

The spiritual father-son dynamic is the God-ordained means in and through which God has elected to transmit His grace via His Word and so facilitate the execution of His purposes in the earth. I have already taught many principles relative to this in prior sessions. Whilst there is great love and connectedness between spiritual fathers and sons (and vice versa), this relationship will cost you everything. In it, God will require the spiritual father to live for the benefit of his son, to be selfless in pouring the Word of God into the son as well as his own life. For the son’s part, God will require, not just submission to the Word of God carried in and expressed through the spiritual father, but also submission to his mandate as well as bold obedience to his word of instruction. It is this latter part where many spiritual sons fail the test. In the next few examples, we demonstrate how that the obedience of a spiritual son to a spiritual father accessed the full quantum of the intended grace transfer, and how that the obedience of an individual son had positive and widespread impact upon a wider corporate community, including an enhancing effect upon the spiritual father.

The spiritual father-son relationship models of Abraham-Isaac; Isaac-Jacob; Jacob-Joseph; Mordecai-Esther, Naomi-Ruth, Elijah-Elisha, and Paul-Timothy are powerful case studies illustrating the sheer power of Divine GRACE. These contain incredible insights and amazing correlations between the following factors:

- Spiritual Fathering & Sonship
- Humility and Submission as opposed to pride and Insubmission
- Grace Reception and Grace Maximisation
- Courageous Selfless Obedience
- Fulfillment of Divine Purpose for Your Personal Life
- Fulfillment of Divine Purpose Globally
- The display of God’s Glory

Time and space do not permit us in this series to deal with all of these case studies. The Mordecai-Esther example is given brief treatment here. Other case studies are covered in other study themes available from my website.
EXAMPLE OF ESTHER

[Read the entire book of Esther before proceeding. Much of what follows will not make complete sense if you are not au fait with the details of Esther’s story]

The Story of Esther in Brief: Here is an extremely brief overview of the book of Esther. Some details have been omitted. The Persian empire of the 4th century BC extended over 127 provinces covering the territory from India to Ethiopia, and all the Jews were its subjects. When King Ahasuerus had his wife, Queen Vashti, deposed for failing to follow his orders, he initiated a search among the most fairest virgins in all his kingdom to find a new queen. A Jewish girl, Esther (Hadassah), found favour in his eyes and became the new queen - although she, under instruction/guidance of her older cousin Mordecai, refused to divulge the identity of her nationality. Meanwhile, Hāman was appointed prime minister of the empire. Mordecai, who seemingly occupies a leading position among the Jews in Susa, defied the king’s orders and refused to bow to Hāman. Hāman was incensed, and convinced the king to issue a decree ordering the extermination of all the Jews on the 13th of the 12th month (Adar) - a date chosen by a lottery Hāman made. Mordecai galvanised all the Jews, convincing them to repent, fast and pray to God. Meanwhile, Esther asked the king and Hāman to join her for a feast. At the feast, Esther revealed to the king her Jewish identity and the plot of Hāman to destroy the Jews. Hāman was hanged, Mordecai was appointed prime minister in his stead, and a new decree was issued - granting the Jews the right to defend themselves against their enemies. On the 13th of Adar, the Jews mobilised and killed many of their enemies. On the 14th of Adar, they rested and celebrated.

The book of Esther contains several contrasts. Here are some examples:

- Carnal indulgent feasting versus spiritual fasting
- Perils of potential orphanity versus the potential blessing associated with sonship
- Pride versus Humility
- God opposing the proud but giving grace to the humble
- The pride of the Persian empire versus the humility of the Jews
- The pride of Ahasuerus versus the humility of Mordecai
- The pride of Hāman versus the humility of Mordecai and Esther
- Selfish, self-centred actions (Hāman) versus the selfless actions designed to benefit corporate welfare (Esther)
- Prejudice manifested in the Persian’s perceived prideful ascendancy over other nations which are viewed as inferior (inclusive of the Jews)
- The satanic plot of destruction versus the power of Divine preservation.

The story of Esther contains Mordecai’s and her sold-out loyalty and obedience to God and His purposes. Humility expressed as obedience is a major theme of the book. It demonstrates the GRACE of God in action within the spiritual father-son dyad and how this grace finds its way to multitudes of God’s people globally. Esther is an orphaned girl, fathered by Mordecai, from a
nation of Jewish slaves. She eventually marries a king, whose favour shown to her is key to foil a deviously designed plot for their destruction. The narrative paints an extremely riveting and gripping playing out of the Sovereignty of God within the affairs of men and how His Divine power and orchestration of events surrounding Mordecai’s and Esther’s lives ultimately serve to facilitate His purpose to protect the Jews from a satanic plot to annihilate them. Weaved throughout the story is the sheer genius of God in using strategically placed sons within a volatile context that threatens His purpose within His people. From what would seem like certain destruction and calamity, God’s people emerge victorious and His will vested in and through them is preserved. Factors that play a significant role in ensuring that God’s will triumphs for His people are …

- principles of spiritual fathering and sonship;
- the wise counsel of a spiritual father;
- the willing, submissive obedience of a spiritual son;
- the passionate concern for the corporate state of God’s people by a spiritual father (Mordecai) and a spiritual son (Esther);
- the daring and courageous obedience of a son (Esther);
- the corporate participation and involvement of a whole people in prayerful fasting (the Jews).

**ESTHER - A STORY ABOUT A SPIRITUAL FATHER AND A SPIRITUAL SON FACILITATING AND ACCOMPLISHING PERSONAL AND CORPORATE DIVINE PURPOSE**

**Esther 2:7,8** He was bringing up Hadassah, that is Esther, his uncle’s daughter, for she had no father or mother. Now the young lady was beautiful of form and face, and when her father and her mother died, Mordecai took her as his own daughter.

Esther was orphaned at an early age. Her older cousin, Mordecai, raised her as his own daughter in a godly fashion in the ways of Jehovah God. Mordecai would have a significant influence on Esther’s life and destiny. He would guide her into a lifestyle of courageous and daring obedience to God. Mordecai was the PRIMARY spiritual influence in her life. Mordecai exhibits all the traits of a spiritual father toward Esther, who herself portrays the character of an ideal spiritual son (There are huge parallels here with Naomi’s spiritual fathering role in the life of Ruth, her spiritual son – Ruth 4:15). Without Mordecai’s strategic role and function, Esther’s chances of fulfilling her destiny or contributing anything of significance towards God’s global purposes are negligible.

Although orphaned, the spirit of the orphan did not attach itself to Esther. God positioned Mordecai in her life to raise her into sonship. Her obedient expression of sonship exhibited towards Mordecai as a spiritual father would be the process in and through which she would express her divine sonship toward God, and so play a critical role in ensuring God’s will prevails not just for her and Mordecai, but for the entirety of God’s people (the Jews).
God used the father-son dynamic in the Mordecai-Esther relationship not just to bring about His will for their personal lives, but that relationship was used to facilitate and fast-track God’s purposes within his wider kingdom. The spiritual father-son dyad must go beyond the ‘romantic’ and become purposeful. There must be intense love and commitment between spiritual fathers and sons, but the relationship must grow to a level beyond the primary concerns /needs of the father or the son, and elevate to a place where God is able to use it as a channel in and through which He may transmit profound grace to accomplish significant aspects of His purposes within the wider kingdom. In this regard, it must always be remembered that a spiritual son to some spiritual father is actually GOD’S SON and biblically is also called ‘son of the KINGDOM’ (Matt. 13:38). Hence all sons of God, given to the custody, oversight and nurturing of spiritual fathers, must primarily be plugged into their relationship with their HEAVENLY FATHER and be used to effect wider Kingdom-related purposes. Mordecai fathered Esther for kingdom function.

The father-son relationship must never deteriorate to a level where it is self-absorbing and only inwardly focused upon the two parties comprising it. Its very initiation and construct is designed to accomplish purpose beyond itself, after the son has been sufficiently matured.

ESTHER, A SON HIDDEN TO SHINE, EMITTING DIVINE FRAGRANCE

Esther’s original Hebrew name was ‘Haddasah’. She was Haddasah before she was Esther, her Persian name.

Haddasah means ‘Myrtle’. Myrtle suggests joy and is a symbol of God’s blessings. The myrtle plant has a pleasant fragrance. Of the myrtle, it is often said by God Himself that He will place it in a desert and there it will thrive. Esther is placed by God in the vortex of a carnal, worldly system as God’s son, and in that environment she, the embodiment of the blessing of God, would permeate her environment with the fragrance of God’s nature and purpose and so ensure His will triumphs above the wicked schemes of men.

The name ‘Esther’ means ‘Star’ and ‘She that is Hidden’.

The symbolic indication of ‘star’ is sonship. Recall that Joseph in his dream saw the sun and moon, depictive of his parents, and eleven stars, representing other sons of his parents as well as his brothers, all bowing to him. So stars denote sonship, and by extended implication, brotherhood. Recall too that God said to Abraham that his descendants (sons) would be as many as the stars of the sky. From this we also conclude that stars do not just simply represent sonship, but corporate sonship.

All these principles are embodied within Esther. She is a model singular son with a corporate mentality and focus, who has great concern for her ‘brothers’ (the Jews). Her personal obedience would ultimately benefit the corporate welfare of the entire ‘brotherhood’. Her private obedience
to Mordecai, her spiritual father, would amplify her private obedient behaviour and make its impact be vast - far beyond what she could ever have imagined.

Esther’s obedience has not just widespread positive ramifications, but also powerful effects beyond her time in that her individual actions preserved the entire Jewish nation so that the promised seed of Messiah - our Lord Jesus Christ - was to be preserved - and not just Him, but we the church too, which would result from Him.

Esther also means ‘she is hidden’. Hiddenness is essential before God uses you publicly. She co-operated with the season of her obscurity under Mordecai’s watch. Jesus was hidden for 30 years under Joseph and Mary’s fathering oversight before He was publicly revealed to fulfill destiny within 3 and a half years. Moses was hidden for 40 years under Jethro’s fathering before he was to be used by God to lead Israel out from Egyptian bondage. Paul spent at least 14 years in the Arabian desert after his conversion before being ushered into Apostolic ministry.

**Ps. 127:4,5** Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, So are the children of one’s youth How blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them; They will not be ashamed When they speak with their enemies in the gate.

**Isaiah 49:1-2** Listen to Me, O islands, And pay attention, you peoples from afar. The Lord called Me from the womb; From the body of My mother He named Me. He has made My mouth like a sharp sword, In the shadow of His hand He has concealed Me; And He has also made Me a **select arrow**, He has **hidden Me** in His quiver.

Select arrow = Polished arrow (KJV); Pointed arrow (CEV); Sharpened arrow (GWV); Chosen Arrow (DRB).

Select = **bārûr** = To purify, to sharpen.

Hidden = **satar** = To hide, conceal.

It has the sense of preventing someone to know or see something, to keep something from public notice or from certain persons.

Note the emphasis given to the fact that the arrow (son) remains hidden in the quiver for the purposes of being polished, purified and sharpened. The pointed arrow must be purified and polished before being chosen and select for purpose. As a son, do not be frustrated during the season of your purification and sharpening by a spiritual father. Wait for the appointed time of release.

The hiddenness of Esther could allude to the fact of her inward inner beauty - her true beauty was not so much outward as much as it was inward. Her attractiveness inwardly enhanced her external
beauty. Biblically, hidden beauty is a GENTLE and QUIET spirit. The condition of one’s spirit affects the perception of your external form.

1 Pet 3:1-5 In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior. Your adornment must not be merely external - braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; but let it be the HIDDEN PERSON OF THE HEART, with the imperishable quality of a GENTLE AND QUIET SPIRIT, which is PRECIOUS in the SIGHT OF GOD. For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to ADORN THEMSELVES, being submissive to their own husbands; just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, and you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear.

‘Gentle’ here equates to HUMILITY and MEEKNESS. ‘Quiet’, here relates to that which is tranquil, undisturbed from without. Esther – a true son – embodied humility and quietness of spirit – true inner beauty that is precious in God’s sight.

The ‘quiet’ disposition within Esther is contrasted with the personality of Haman. Haman’s name has two nuances in its meaning. The one is ‘a riioter; the rager; their tumult’10. Haman is not just loud, noisy and boisterous but a riioter – instigating opposition to Divine plans and purposes. He is the face of the Persian pride and the agent of their ‘tumult’ seeking to instill disorder and fear.

Contrary to this representation of Haman, is inwardly QUIET Esther. The way to respond to any distasteful characteristic of the enemy within men, is to act in the opposite spirit. Haman’s external noise is met with Esther’s inward quietness and humility. GRACE that attends humility and quietness is actually a formidable source of empowerment against overt attempts of the enemy to instill fear within us by his loud and frontal display of rage intended to induce fear.

Prov. 15:1 A soft answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger. (NKJV)

Esther, the STAR, shines because she understood the value of the time of her hiddenness and her hidden beauty. Grace attended her inwardly because her spirit was meek, gentle, humble and quiet.

MORDECAI, THE HUMBLE SPIRITUAL FATHER

The name Mordecai means “little man; bitter bruising; bitterly reduced; bitterness of my oppression”11.
This description of his name highlights his humility. He is a ‘little’ man. He was obviously well-respected among the Jews and seems to have occupied some position of prominence amongst the Jews, yet his inward heart disposition is lowly. He must have suffered bitterly in some respects through the years, and this had the effect of instilling within him an extremely humble position.

Suffering is designed to keep us humble. While he was ‘bitterly reduced’, he did not become embittered by his suffering, just like Jesus suffered but refused to take bitter gall whilst dying on the cross. All spiritual fathers must have a deep sense of inward humility and ‘reduction’ of any pride or arrogance, if God is to ever work through them to affect His purposes in their spiritual sons. Mordecai lived solely for the welfare of Esther, his spiritual son, and for the welfare of all the Jews scattered throughout the 127 Persian provinces. This can be seen from the following verses:

**Esther 2:11** Every day Mordecai walked back and forth in front of the court of the harem to learn how Esther was and how she fared.

**Esther 10:3** For Mordecai the Jew was second in rank to King Ahasuerus, and he was great among the Jews and popular with the multitude of his brothers, for he sought the welfare of his people and spoke peace to all his people.

Because of his humility, great grace attended Mordecai. That grace found its way to an equally humble spiritual son, Esther. Humility in both fathers and sons is required if God’s purposes is to prevail for the multiplicity of His people.

**FASTING AND OBEDIENCE**

Esther, Mordecai and the Jews all fasted. Fasting itself is an expression of an intent to humble your soul with a view to express obedience.

**Psalm 35:13b** I humbled my soul with fasting

**Psalm 69:10a** I chastened my soul with fasting (KJV)

I humbled my soul with fasting (YLT)

**THINGS CAN CHANGE OVERNIGHT**: SATANIC SCHEMES DESIGNED FOR OUR DESTRUCTION BECOME DIVINE OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUR CONSTRUCTION

A comparison between Esther 4:3 and 9:22 depicting the state of God’s people succinctly captures how God can miraculously intervene to protect His people and alter their state.

**Esther 4:3** In each and every province where the command and decree of the king came, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping and wailing; and many lay on sackcloth and ashes.
Esther 9:22a as the days on which the Jews got relief from their enemies, and as the month that had been turned for them from sorrow into gladness and from mourning into a holiday.

Where are you right now? Are you in Esther 4:3 or 9:22 above? If the state of your life is characterised by despair, anxiety, distress, then fasting with prayer coupled with courageous acts of obedience and honour of spiritual fathering could alter your circumstances. ‘Weeping and wailing’ can be turned into ‘gladness’; ‘mourning’ can be turned into a ‘holiday’ (literally meaning a ‘good day’). Grace makes the difference. The thing we all need is more grace, and it is available through courageous obedience to the Word of God.

Psalm 30:11 You have turned for me my mourning into dancing; you have loosed my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness, that my glory may sing your praise and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give thanks to you forever.

The name ‘Purim’ means ‘LOT’. Haman determined by lottery, the date on which the Jews would be exterminated, viz. 13th of the 12th month, Adar. But on this very day, Jews were authorised to defend themselves and kill their enemies (a total of 75000 of their enemies were killed). The times and seasons that our enemy, satan, might have determined for our demise could very well turn out to be the hour and moment we can experience our greatest breakthroughs and victories. Literally, their ‘lot’ was turned from destruction to construction, from trial to triumph, from sorrow to rejoicing, from despair to hope, from death to life, and from fasting to feasting.

The Feast of Purim was to be celebrated for two days every year from this point. However, in Susa, the capital, Mordecai, Esther and Jews celebrated it for three days (Esther 9:18). The three days of fasting turned to three days of feasting. In a day of restoration, it is acceptable to have sober and festive rejoicing in celebration of God’s goodness.

The serious nature of the plot against God’s people is clearly indicated in the following verse:

Esther 3:13 Letters were sent by couriers to all the king’s provinces to destroy, to kill and to annihilate all the Jews, both young and old, women and children, in one day, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar, and to seize their possessions as plunder.

The annihilation of the Jews was to be brutal (‘kill’), total (‘all’; ‘young and old’; ‘women and children’), swift (‘in one day’) and impoverishing (‘seize their possessions’). There is a modern counterpart of this intended historical plot against the Jews relative to the modern-day church. There is an all-out satanic war designed to swiftly destroy every representation of God within men, women, and children of all ages. This war today is more ideological than physical, although we also see the rise of radical sectors in some religions bent on the physical killing of ‘Christians’. But God has always and will still protect and preserve His people.
The Attack Was ... :

1. **Preventing The Manifestation and Representation of Christ.**

Exterminating the Jews would equate to eradicating the means through which the Messiah would issues forth. This the hatred of Haman toward the Jews and the intend genocide of them would be a direct attempt to thwart any possible manifestation and revelation of Jesus Christ to the world. Much of the attack the church is experiencing today has this same motive, viz. the prevention of the revelation and presentation of Christ in and through His church.

2. **Opposition to Spiritual Fathering.**

Haman’s hatred for Mordecai is notable in the book of Esther. Haman hates him, because Mordecai refuses to bow to him. Discerning Mordecai knew the evil in Haman’s heart and refused to bow to it, giving it credence. Mordecai’s disdain for Haman is in part the reason for Haman’s hatred of the Jews. Haman’s hatred for the Jews could be possibly traced to Samuel, who, under King Saul (a Benjamite) slayed the Amalekite King, Agag. Haman was an Agagite possibly harbouring a longstanding historical bitterness and revenge for Benjamites – and Mordecai was of the tribe of Benjamin.

Mordecai is the representation of a spiritual father. Hence the plot to destroy him is an attempt to eradicate the fathering principle. This is patricide – the murder of fathers. Fatherlessness is the problem underneath every other problem. Fatherlessness is the spirit of Moab, a term meaning ‘what father?’ - implying the denying of the need for spiritual fathering. Because the church at Pergamos permitted the murder of Antipas, whose name means ‘One like the father’, satan set his throne in their midst (Rev 2:13). Wherever the spirit of fathering is discounted or rejected, satanic initiatives and intentions run rampant.

If the father-son wineskin is the primary construct in and through which GRACE vested in the Word is transmitted, then to attack the biblical validity of necessity for spiritual fathering, would equate to forgoing a specific, God-determined quantity and quality of grace.

3. **Corporate Welfare.**

Esther’s personal obedience benefited the corporate good of the Jewish nation. Every son must be corporately minded and have the welfare and interests of the BROTHERHOOD at heart. We are expected to ‘love the brotherhood (1 Pet. 2:17). Personal obedience is paramount because it impacts corporate well-being and fast-tracks God’s purposes attendant with the entire group.
The other nuance attached to the meaning of Haman’s name is ‘well disposed’ and ‘alone and solitary’\(^2\). He is individualistic and isolationist because he thinks he is sufficiently well endowed and is self-sufficient, needing no-one. He is the epitome of independence. Esther, by contrast, is selfless and has no problem risking her life in obedience to her spiritual father (who knows the will of God for her) in approaching the king - because this action would benefit a whole lot of people outside of her. She is interdependent.

Even at the suggestion of the king to reward the man who foiled the plot to assassinate him, Haman presumed it would be him – but did not know the king was referring to Mordecai. His arrogance and pride refused him to even factor into his thought that the king would have thought of another to honour. He took for granted that it would be him. Pride always acts in presumption of its own advancement even to the neglect of others who are actually much more deserving. Also, so long as it would bolster his reputation within the kingdom, Haman pushed for the accolades of men, to the total neglect of the state and welfare of the corporeity of the whole group. He ruled as prime minister not for the benefit of those under his rule but for his own personal benefit.

**See Esther chapter 5.** Haman’s wife and friends (supposedly ‘wise men’) supported and fueled his prideful individualism. The worst thing about a proud, independent and selfish person, is to have another like you who does not point this negative disposition out to you in the hope of helping you, but who rather supports you in the same. His wife could have redeemed him but actually hastened his road to his demise. It was actually his wife’s suggestion that he build gallows to hang Mordecai. Your pride is not acceptable simply because it is endorsed by others that are close to you. Their support of your pride simply speeds the pathway to your destruction.

The predominant characteristic of the family of God’s people should be humility – because grace is most attracted to humility. Pride distances itself from corporeity and seeks to entrench solitariness and alone-ness. In the present age, the most dangerous position to be in is outside of the spiritual family of God, the church. To be a part of the church is to embrace corporeity and community.

**ESTHER’S ‘OBEDIENCE UNTO DEATH’**

Mordecai was convinced that ‘deliverance for the Jews’ would come anyway, whether through Esther, or someone else:

**Esther 4:14A** For if you remain silent at this time, relief and **deliverance WILL ARISE** for the Jews from another place …
No one is indispensable. If you and I are not willing to comply with God’s expectation to obey him in some matter in which it will cost you everything because His will attendant with his people is at stake, then God will simply choose and use someone else. In selecting you, He simply offers you the privilege of partnering with him in ensuring His will triumphs.

Factors that Ensured Her Obedience:

- The Honour of Her Spiritual Father

Esther 2:20  Esther had not yet made known her kindred or her people, even as Mordecai had commanded her; for Esther did what Mordecai told her as she had done when under his care.

She listened to Mordecai before she was Queen; she obeyed Mordecai after she was queen. Her high ranking and authoritative position in the kingdom did not in any way cause her to despise the very person whose guidance and counsel got her to that position in the first place. Although possessing great political authority as the king’s wife, she knew protocol that even that dimension of authority needs to submit and bow to spiritual authority. Her great political authority was subservient to the spiritual authority and guidance vested in and through Mordecai.

There are many spiritual sons who ascend to positions of great wealth, influence and power and then get intoxicated by it, and losing sobriety, they tend to dishonour the spiritual leadership that God positioned in their lives, and which served to facilitate their success.

An Aside - Cf. Joseph and Jacob:

When Joseph ascended to great political and economic power in Egypt, he requested that his father be brought down to Egypt to see his glory (Gen. 45:13). This was not for prideful or an ostentatious showing off of his own prestige in a boastful or arrogant fashion. Rather, it was actually an expression of his humility. He realised that the power and influence he had in Egypt meant very little if he did not submit that influence he attained to the prophetic counsel and wisdom vested in his father Jacob, his patriarchal father. He confessed to his father that God has made him a father to Pharaoh. Although Pharaoh was the king of Egypt, Joseph was the guiding fathering principle positioned in Pharaoh’s life. But Joseph himself realised that he needs the counsel and wisdom of a father (Jacob). When Jacob came down to Egypt, he prophesied extensively over Joseph and his two sons (Ephraim and Manasseh - Gen. 48), including the rest of Joseph’s brothers (Gen.49). These prophecies are Divine directives not just for the future, but for how they should posture themselves mentally and behaviourally. Joseph, like Esther, honoured his spiritual father before he was raised to prominence, and still whilst in a prominent position, he needed that fathering guidance ALL THE MORE! In fact, although he fathered Pharaoh,
Joseph’s priority was to present Jacob to Pharaoh as the source through which Divine will and purpose flowed and in fact he facilitated the blessing of Pharaoh by Jacob (Gen. 47:7).

- **Her Willingness to Deal with Fear**

Esther did not allow the fear of loss to prevent her obedience. She was willing to lose her life in order to gain it (Esther 4:16).

- **Her Boldness and Humility to Request Support by Prayer With Fasting**

Even in her desire to fast as an expression of her humility, she included her maidens in the act and requested that ALL THE JEWS join her in this expression of HUMILITY before the Lord. Her private inclination to obey God was fueled, supported and given impetus by the corporate fasting and prayer of all the Jews. Corporate threats demand a corporate response, but that corporate welfare sought after will be secured through the private actions of key role players. When these key role players boldly fulfill their expression of obedience, they are acting representatively on behalf of the entire group. Selah!

- **Her Determination to Obey Irrespective of the Consequences.**

Esther was willing to obey to the **point of death**. You can only come to this place of obedience when you have died to self and to your own ambition.

**Esther 4:16** Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast in like manner; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish.

May I encourage you to commit to a resolve to obey God completely, irrespective of the consequences. Do whatever He requires of you. For example, forgive those who hurt you – just do it; Obey God’s financial principles of first fruits, tithes and offerings – just do it; submit your life completely to the one whom God has positioned in your life as your spiritual father – just do it.

Say to yourself, as Esther said, “If I perish, I perish”. May I paraphrase this: she is really saying, “If I die in the act or the process of obeying a difficult command of God, then so be it; I would rather die in the act of obedience, than to live being disobedient”. Mary said to those at the wedding of Cana in her bid to get them to obey Jesus, “Whatever HE says, do it!” (John 2:5).

**Esther 4:14** For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place and **you and your father’s house will perish**. And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this.
The word ‘silent’ (‘haras’ in Hebrew) apart from implying muteness, also means ‘to be deaf’. Hence, disobedience could be indicative of not just the refusal to obey what you hear, but also the stubborn and rebellious refusal to hear the Word in the first place. You may have heard it audibly with your external ears, but not inwardly with readiness of mind and spirit.

Esther was prepared to pay the ultimate price for obedience - by risking her life.

**Your obedience will bring your brothers and sisters into rest and oneness.**

Your personal and private obedience will have public and corporate effect and impact.

**Est 9:16,17** And the other Jews that were in the king’s provinces gathered themselves together, and stood for their lives, and had rest from their enemies, and slew of them that hated them seventy and five thousand; but on the spoil they laid not their hand. This was done on the thirteenth day of the month Adar; and on the fourteenth day of the same they rested, and made it a day of feasting and gladness.

Note the condition of her brothers before her obedience to death of self:

**Esther 4:3** In each and every province where the command and decree of the king came, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping and wailing; and many lay on sackcloth and ashes.

Note the condition of her brothers after her obedience:

**Esther 9:16,17** And the other Jews that were in the king’s provinces gathered themselves together, and stood for their lives, and had rest from their enemies

Esther’s people had no hope of standing for their right to defend themselves. It took Esther’s obedience to bring them to a place of confidence and courage. Because one stood up obediently, many were able to stand up, being empowered by kingly decree and authority. You and I will never know just how much weight and impact our private obedience carries. Grace in one can filter out to many far and wide.

**GRACE BEFORE MEN**

The grace of God attendant with the humility in Mordecai and Esther brought them into great favour and grace with men. Esther found grace and favour in the eyes of the King. Mordecai would eventually find grace and favour in the eyes of the king too and be promoted to prime minister in Haman’s place. The grace of God in you will certainly cause men on the earth to favour
you. Jesus grew in favour (grace) with God and men (Luke 2:50). Be humble; honour your spiritual father in Christ; stay obedient; do not be proud; do not be selfish; be selfless; love the brotherhood; seek the welfare of the broader Body of Christ; then … GREATER grace will attend you and manifest itself outwardly by men of significance on the earth bestowing kindness and great favour on you.

May all grace and peace be multiplied to you.

Randolph Barnwell

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**ENDNOTES**

1. Hitchcock’s Bible Names Dictionary
2. Is. 41:19; Neh. 8:15; Zec. 14:16
3. Is. 41:19-20
5. Gen. 37:9
12. 1 Sam. 15