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Uncommon Courage You Are Not Forgotten

Esther 2:1–18 (HCSB)

Some time later, when King Ahasuerus's rage had cooled down, he remembered Vashti, what she had done, and what was decided against her. ² The king's personal attendants suggested, "Let a search be made for beautiful young women for the king. ³ Let the king appoint commissioners in each province of his kingdom, so that they may assemble all the beautiful young women to the harem at the fortress of Susa. Put them under the care of Hegai, the king's eunuch, who is in charge of the women, and give them the required beauty treatments. ⁴ Then the young woman who pleases the king will become queen instead of Vashti." This suggestion pleased the king, and he did accordingly. ⁵ In the fortress of Susa, there was a Jewish man named Mordecai son of Jair, son of Shimei, son of Kish, a Benjaminite. ⁶ He had been taken into exile from Jerusalem with the other captives when King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon took King Jeconiah of Judah into exile. ⁷ Mordecai was the legal guardian of his cousin Hadassah (that is, Esther), because she didn't have a father or mother. The young woman had a beautiful figure and was extremely good-looking. When her father and mother died, Mordecai had adopted her as his own daughter. ⁸ When the king's command and edict became public knowledge, many young women gathered at the fortress of Susa under Hegai's care. Esther was also taken to the palace and placed under the care of Hegai, who was in charge of the women. ⁹ The young woman pleased him and gained his favor so that he accelerated the process of the beauty treatments and the special diet that she received. He assigned seven hand-picked female servants to her from the palace and transferred her and her servants to the harem's best quarters. ¹⁰ Esther did not reveal her ethnic background or her birthplace, because Mordecai had ordered her not to. ¹¹ Every day Mordecai took a walk in front of the harem's courtyard to learn how Esther was doing and to see what was happening to her. ¹² During the year before each young woman's turn to go to King Ahasuerus, the harem regulation required her to receive beauty treatments with oil of myrrh for six months and then with perfumes and cosmetics for another six months. ¹³ When the young woman would go to the king, she was given whatever she requested to take with her from the harem to the palace. ¹⁴ She would go in the evening, and in the morning she would return to a second harem under the supervision of Shaashgaz, the king's eunuch in charge of the

concubines. She never went to the king again, unless he desired her and summoned her by name. ¹⁵ Esther was the daughter of Abihail, the uncle of Mordecai who had adopted her as his own daughter. When her turn came to go to the king, she did not ask for anything except what Hegai, the king's trusted official in charge of the harem, suggested. Esther won approval in the sight of everyone who saw her. ¹⁶ She was taken to King Ahasuerus in the royal palace in the tenth month, the month Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign. ¹⁷ The king loved Esther more than all the other women. She won more favor and approval from him than did any of the other young women. He placed the royal crown on her head and made her queen in place of Vashti. ¹⁸ The king held a great banquet for all his officials and staff. It was Esther's banquet. He freed his provinces from tax payments and gave gifts worthy of the king's bounty.

1. EVERYONE HATES FEELING _____

- The Jews were _____ forgotten in the Babylonian captivity.
- Esther was feeling forgotten being orphaned and placed in this beauty contest for the king.
- You may feel forgotten in your _____, but God has not forgotten you.

2. IN GOD'S PLAN, THERE ARE NO _____

- Esther may have been reluctant to participate in the beauty contest to be crowned queen, but she was where she _____ to be.
- Everything is allowed for a purpose.
- We may not _____ at the time, but God has a plan for us.

3. WE MUST HAVE _____ FOR OUR MOMENT

- Esther did not set out to be the queen.
- Several events had to occur, but she was ready for her _____.
- Are you ready for God to use you for His _____?

The Next Step:

Get ready now for the moment God wants to use you.