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Uncommon Courage

Knowing When to Take a Stand

Esther 2:19–3:15 (HCSB)

When the young women were assembled together for a second time, Mordecai was sitting at the King's Gate. ²⁰ Esther still had not revealed her birthplace or her ethnic background, as Mordecai had directed. She obeyed Mordecai's orders, as she always had while he raised her. ²¹ During those days while Mordecai was sitting at the King's Gate, Bigthan and Teresh, two eunuchs who guarded the king's entrance, became infuriated and planned to assassinate King Ahasuerus. ²² When Mordecai learned of the plot, he reported it to Queen Esther, and she told the king on Mordecai's behalf. ²³ When the report was investigated and verified, both men were hanged on the gallows. This event was recorded in the Historical Record in the king's presence. ¹ After all this took place, King Ahasuerus honored Haman, son of Hammedatha the Agagite. He promoted him in rank and gave him a higher position than all the other officials. ² The entire royal staff at the King's Gate bowed down and paid homage to Haman, because the king had commanded this to be done for him. But Mordecai would not bow down or pay homage. ³ The members of the royal staff at the King's Gate asked Mordecai, "Why are you disobeying the king's command?" ⁴ When they had warned him day after day and he still would not listen to them, they told Haman to see if Mordecai's actions would be tolerated, since he had told them he was a Jew. ⁵ When Haman saw that Mordecai was not bowing down or paying him homage, he was filled with rage. ⁶ And when he learned of Mordecai's ethnic identity, Haman decided not to do away with Mordecai alone. He planned to destroy all of Mordecai's people, the Jews, throughout Ahasuerus's kingdom. ⁷ In the first month, the month of Nisan, in King Ahasuerus's twelfth year, Pur (that is, the lot) was cast before Haman for each day in each month, and it fell on the twelfth month, the month Adar. ⁸ Then Haman informed King Ahasuerus, "There is one ethnic group, scattered throughout the peoples in every province of your kingdom, yet living in isolation. Their laws are different from everyone else's and they do not obey the king's laws. It is not in the king's best interest to tolerate them. ⁹ If the king approves, let an order be drawn up authorizing their destruction, and I will pay 375 tons of silver to the accountants for deposit in the royal treasury." ¹⁰ The king removed his signet ring from his finger and gave it to Haman son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the enemy of the Jewish people. ¹¹ Then the king told Haman, "The money and people are given to you to do with as you see fit." ¹² The royal scribes were summoned on the thirteenth day of the first month, and the order was written exactly as Haman commanded. It was intended for the royal satraps, the governors of each of the provinces, and the officials of each ethnic group and written for each province in its own script and to each ethnic group in its own language. It was written in the name of King Ahasuerus and sealed with the royal signet ring. ¹³ Letters were sent by couriers to each of the royal provinces telling the officials to destroy, kill, and annihilate all the Jewish people - young and old, women and children - and plunder their possessions on a single day, the thirteenth day of Adar, the twelfth month. ¹⁴ A copy of the text, issued as law throughout every province, was distributed to all the peoples so that they

might get ready for that day. ¹⁵ The couriers left, spurred on by royal command, and the law was issued in the fortress of Susa. The king and Haman sat down to drink, while the city of Susa was in confusion.

1. SOMETIMES YOU DON'T HAVE TO TELL _____ YOU KNOW vv 2:19-20

- Both Mordecai and Esther did not _____ their Jewish nationality.
- They were not _____; they just weren't revealing.
- You must be "wise as serpents, harmless as doves."

Matthew 10:16 (HCSB)

"Look, I'm sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as serpents and as harmless as doves."

James 1:5 (HCSB)

Now if any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives to all generously and without criticizing, and it will be given to him.

2. SOMETIMES YOU _____ WHAT YOU KNOW RIGHT AWAY vv 2:21-23

- Mordecai learned of an assassination plot to kill the king and warned Queen Esther.
- Esther was used to _____ the king.
- Godly wisdom allows Him to use us in the most unlikely circumstances.

3. EACH PERSON MUST HAVE THE _____ TO TAKE A STAND vv 3:1-4

- The kingdom was asked to bow down and worship the king's right-hand man.
- Mordecai _____ to bow down to Haman.
- All of us must _____ where we will take a stand.

4. EXPECT _____ WHEN YOU TAKE A STAND vv 3:5-15

- Haman _____ the king to persecute the Jews and the king didn't even know it.
- A plot to destroy all the Jews in the land was set into play.
- _____ means we are willing to sacrifice to serve God.

The Next Step: When God reveals where you are to take a stand, find to courage to stand.