

Follow the Favor | You Already Have It

Esther 2:13

When the young women went in to the king in this way, she was given whatever she desired to take with her from the harem to the king's palace

Esther 2:15

When the turn came for Esther ... to go in to the king, she asked for nothing except what Hegai the king's eunuch, who had charge of the women advised. Now Esther was carrying favor in the eyes of all who saw her.

When you realize what you already carry

It will change the way you carry yourself

The world says, *"Fake it til you make it"*

God says, *"Act like its fact"*

Esther 2

17 The king loved Esther more than all the women, and she carried grace and favor in his sight... so that he set the royal crown on her head and made her queen instead of Vashti. 18 To celebrate the occasion, he gave a great banquet in Esther's honor for all his nobles and officials, declaring a public holiday for the provinces and giving generous gifts to everyone

Walk in favor and know that:

1. The King loves you.
2. The King declares you are royalty
3. The King celebrates you
4. The King wants to flow blessing through you

Follow the Favor | If You Remain Silent...

Esther 3:2b

But Mordecai refused to bow

Esther 3:14

... the city of Susa fell into confusion.

Esther 4

1 When Mordecai learned about all that had been done, he tore his clothes, put on burlap and ashes, and went out into the city, crying with a loud and bitter wail. 2 He went as far as the gate of the palace, for no one was allowed to enter the palace gate while wearing clothes of mourning. 3 And as news of the king's decree reached all the provinces, there was great mourning among the Jews. They fasted, wept, and wailed, and many people lay in burlap and ashes.

*13 Mordecai sent this reply to Esther: "Don't think for a moment that because you're in the palace you will escape when all other Jews are killed. 14 **If you remain silent at a time like this, deliverance and relief for the Jews will arise from some other place, but you and your relatives will die. Who knows if perhaps you were made queen for just such a time as this?**"*

15 Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: 16 "Go and gather together all the Jews of Susa and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will do the same. And then, though it is against the law, I will go in to see the king. If I perish, I perish."

Misunderstandings that can silence the voice of Christians at the gate of government

1. Christians and churches should just focus on preaching the gospel and not worry about government
2. If you are passionate about seeing Biblical truth at the gate of government, then you must be moving into Christian nationalism

3. Jesus didn't get involved in politics
4. These are political issues

Matthew 18

1 About that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?"

2 Jesus called a little child to him and put the child among them. 3 Then he said, "I tell you the truth, unless you turn from your sins and become like little children, you will never get into the Kingdom of Heaven. 4 So anyone who becomes as humble as this little child is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven.

5 "And anyone who welcomes a little child like this on my behalf is welcoming me. 6 But if you cause one of these little ones who trusts in me to fall into sin, it would be better for you to have a large millstone tied around your neck and be drowned in the depths of the sea.

7 "What sorrow awaits the world, because it tempts people to sin. Temptations are inevitable, but what sorrow awaits the person who does the tempting. 8 So if your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It's better to enter eternal life with only one hand or one foot than to be thrown into eternal fire with both of your hands and feet. 9 And if your eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It's better to enter eternal life with only one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fire of hell."

From this passage, Jesus tells us that:

1. The degree to which we welcome, care for, and protect the innocence of children is connected to the degree that we welcome the Presence of Jesus into our lives and our communities (v. 5)
2. Jesus says if anyone causes one of these little ones harm it would be better for large millstone to be tied around their neck and drowned in the depths of the sea (v. 6)
3. Jesus is not speaking just to believers, but to the world (v. 7)
4. We are called to go to extreme measures to protect children (vv. 8-9)
5. The fires of hell await those who cause harm to children (v. 9b)

When it comes to our voice at the gate of government, we can be:

1. Silenced
2. Reckless
3. Courageous, Strategic, Wise and FOLLOW THE FAVOR

Hebrews 13

13 So let us go out to him beyond the city walls (that is, outside the interests of this world, being willing to be despised to suffer with him there, bearing his shame. 14 For this world is not our home; we are looking forward to our everlasting home in heaven.

15 With Jesus' help we will continually offer our sacrifice of praise to God by telling others of the glory of his name. 16 Don't forget to do good and to share what you have with those in need, for such sacrifices are very pleasing to him.

Isaiah 9:6-7 (NIV)

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end.

Psalms 46 (Living Bible)

1 God is our refuge and strength, a tested help in times of trouble. 2 And so we need not fear even if the world blows up and the mountains crumble into the sea. 3 Let the oceans roar and foam; let the mountains tremble!

4 There is a river of joy flowing through the city of our God—the sacred home of the God above all gods. 5 God himself is living in that city; therefore it stands unmoved despite the turmoil everywhere. He will not delay his help. 6 The nations rant and rave in anger—but when God speaks, the earth melts in submission and kingdoms totter into ruin.

7 The Commander of the armies of heaven is here among us. He, the God of Jacob, has come to rescue us.

8 Come, see the glorious things that our God does, how he brings ruin upon the world 9 and causes wars to end throughout the earth, breaking and burning every weapon. 10 “Stand silent! Know that I am God! I will be honored by every nation in the world!”

11 The Commander of the heavenly armies is here among us! He, the God of Jacob, has come to rescue us!

Follow the Favor | Haman: The Enemy of God's People

Esther 3:1-6

1 After these events, King Xerxes honored Haman son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, elevating him and giving him a seat of honor higher than that of all the other nobles. 2 All the royal officials at the king's gate knelt down and paid honor to Haman, for the king had commanded this concerning him. But Mordecai would not kneel down or pay him honor.

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 behavior would be tolerated, for he had told them he was a Jew.

5 When Haman saw that Mordecai would not kneel down or pay him honor, he was enraged. 6 Yet having learned who Mordecai's people were, he scorned the idea of killing only Mordecai. Instead Haman looked for a way to destroy all Mordecai's people, the Jews, throughout the whole kingdom of Xerxes.

Esther 5:9-14

9 Haman went out that day happy and in high spirits. But when he saw Mordecai at the king's gate and observed that he neither rose nor showed fear in his presence, he was filled with rage against Mordecai. 10 Nevertheless, Haman restrained himself and went home.

Calling together his friends and Zeresh, his wife, 11 Haman boasted to them about his vast wealth, his many sons, and all the ways the king had honored him and how he had elevated him above the other nobles and officials. 12 "And that's not all," Haman added. "I'm the only person Queen Esther invited to accompany the king to the banquet she gave. And she has invited me along with the king tomorrow. 13 But all this gives me no satisfaction as long as I see that Jew Mordecai sitting at the king's gate."

14 His wife Zeresh and all his friends said to him, "Have a pole set up, reaching to a height of fifty cubits, and ask the king in the morning to have Mordecai impaled on it. Then go with the king to the banquet and enjoy yourself." This suggestion delighted Haman, and he had the pole set up.

The Downfall of Haman:

- 1. Pride**
- 2. Bitterness**
- 3. Foolish Friends**

Four Characteristics of the Antichrist Spirit

1. Lawless One

2 Thessalonians 2:1-4

1 Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers and sisters, 2 not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by the teaching allegedly from us—whether by a prophecy or by word of mouth or by letter—asserting that the day of the Lord has already come. 3 Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction.

2. Cancel Culture

Revelation 13:11-18

11 Then I saw a second beast, coming out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb, but it spoke like a dragon. 12 It exercised all the authority of the first beast on its behalf, and made the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose fatal wound had been healed. 13 And it performed great signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to the earth in full view of the people. 14 Because of the signs it was given power to perform on behalf of the first beast, it deceived the inhabitants of the earth. It ordered them to set up an image in honor of the beast who was wounded by the sword and yet lived. 15 The second beast was given power to give breath to the image of the first beast, so that the image could speak and cause all who refused to worship the image to be killed. 16 It also forced all people, great and small, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hands or on their foreheads, 17 so that they could not buy or sell unless they had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of its name.

18 This calls for wisdom. Let the person who has insight calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man. That number is 666.

3. He will wage war against God's people.

Daniel 7:23-25

23 Then he said to me, "This fourth beast is the fourth world power that will rule the earth. It will be different from all the others. It will devour the whole world, trampling and crushing everything in its path. 24 Its ten horns are ten kings who will rule that empire. Then another king will arise, different from the other ten, who will subdue three of them. 25 He will defy the Most High and oppress the holy people of the Most High. He will try to change their sacred festivals and laws, and they will be placed under his control for a time, times, and half a time.

4. The denial of Jesus as THE Christ

2 Thess 2:4

4 He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.

1 John 4:2-3

2 This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God,

3 but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.

Follow the Favor | Following Your Birthright

You don't have to fight for favor

Follow the Favor!

Esther 2:15

Now Esther was carrying favor in the eyes of all who saw her.

How to Identify the Favor of God in Your Life:

- What is going right in your life?
- Where are the bright spots?
- Where does there seem to be a grace that God is giving you?
- What the next open door?

Esther 6

1 On that night the king could not sleep. And he gave orders to bring the book of memorable deeds, the chronicles, and they were read before the king. 2 And it was found written how Mordecai had told about two of the king's eunuchs, who guarded the threshold, and who had sought to lay hands on King Xerxes. 3 And the king said, "What honor or distinction has been bestowed on Mordecai for this?" The king's young men who attended him said, "Nothing has been done for him."

4 And the king said, "Who is in the court?" Now Haman had just entered the outer court of the king's palace to speak to the king about having Mordecai hanged on the gallows that he had prepared for him. 5 And the king's young men told him, "Haman is there, standing in the court." And the king said, "Let him come in." 6 So Haman came in, and the king said to him, "What should be done to the man whom the king delights to honor?" And Haman said to himself, "Whom would the king delight to honor more than me?" 7 And Haman said to the king, "For the man whom the king delights to honor, 8 let royal robes be brought, which the king has worn, and the horse that the king has ridden, and on whose head a royal crown is set. 9 And let the robes and the horse be handed over to one of the king's most noble officials. Let them dress the man whom the king delights to honor, and let them lead him on the horse through the square of the city, proclaiming before him: 'Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor.'" 10 Then the king said to Haman, "Hurry; take the robes and the horse, as you have

said, and do so to Mordecai the Jew, who sits at the king's gate. Leave out nothing that you have mentioned.” 11 So Haman took the robes and the horse, and he dressed Mordecai and led him through the square of the city, proclaiming before him, “Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor.”

12 Then Mordecai returned to the king's gate. But Haman hurried to his house, mourning and with his head covered.

Sometimes the test is how you respond when people plot evil against you

Sometimes the test is how you respond when you win

- When you gloat in a moment of victory, you turn your moment of victory into the peak of your victory
- When you walk humbly in moments of victory, you turn moments of victory into building blocks for ultimate victory.

Since Mordecai ... is of Jewish birth, you will never succeed in your plans against him. It will be fatal to continue to oppose him.

11 Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. 12 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done.

Follow the Favor | The New Decree

Esther 2:15

Now Esther carried favor in the eyes of all who saw her.

Esther 4:14

“You cannot remain silent at a time like this.”

“For who knows that you have been made queen for such a time as this.”

Esther 4:16

“If I perish, I perish.”

Esther 5:14

This idea pleased Haman, and he had the gallows made.

Esther 7

1 So the king and Haman went to Queen Esther’s banquet. 2 On this second occasion, while they were drinking wine, the king again said to Esther, “Tell me what you want, Queen Esther. What is your request? I will give it to you, even if it is half the kingdom!”

3 Queen Esther replied, “If I have found favor with the king, and if it pleases the king to grant my request, I ask that my life and the lives of my people will be spared. 4 For my people and I have been sold to those who would kill, slaughter, and annihilate us. If we had merely been sold as slaves, I could remain quiet, for that would be too trivial a matter to warrant disturbing the king.”

5 “Who would do such a thing?” King Xerxes demanded. “Who would be so presumptuous as to touch you?”

6 Esther replied, “This wicked Haman is our adversary and our enemy.” Haman grew pale with fright before the king and queen. 7 Then the king jumped to his feet in a rage and went out into the palace garden.

When You Follow the Favor:

1) THE WEAPON THAT WAS MEANT FOR YOUR DESTRUCTION WILL BE USED TO DESTROY THE ENEMY (7:9-10)

Esther 7

9 “Moreover, the gallows that Haman has prepared for Mordecai ... 10 The king said, ‘Hang him on that.’” So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai.

PAIN is not a SYMPTOM to be managed

PAIN is meant to GET YOUR ATTENTION so that you can DEAL WITH THE ROOT

2) YOU WILL RECEIVE AN INCREASE OF PROPERTY AND POWER (THAT YOU WOULDN’T HAVE RECEIVED OTHERWISE) (8:1-2)

Esther 8

1 On that day King Xerxes gave to Queen Esther the house of Haman. ... And Mordecai came before the king ... 2 And the king took off his signet ring, which had taken from Haman, and gave it to Mordecai.

A crucial transition!

Esther 8:3

Then Esther spoke again to the king. She fell at his feet and wept and pleaded with him to avert the evil plan of Haman and the plot he had devised against the Jews

3) YOU MOVE FROM THE FIRST DECREE TO THE SECOND DECREE

The First Decree:

Esther 3:13

Dispatches were sent by couriers to all the king's provinces with the order to destroy, kill and annihilate all the Jews—young and old, women and children—on a single day, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar, and to plunder their goods

The Second Decree:

Esther 8

9 And the king's scribes were summoned ... and a new decree was written ... to each province in its own script and to each people in their own language ... 10 And he wrote it in the name of King Xerxes and sealed it with the king's signet ring. Then he sent the letters by mounted couriers riding on swift horses, 11 saying that the king allowed the Jews who were in every city to gather and defend their lives

15 And the people of Susa celebrated the new decree. And they were filled with joy and gladness and were honored everywhere. ... 17 In every province and city, wherever the king's decree arrived, they rejoiced and had a great celebration

Follow the Favor | The Day Quite the Opposite Happens

Esther 9:1

So on March 7 the two decrees of the king were put into affect

On that day the enemies of the Jews had hoped to overpower them

But quite the opposite happened

“Whatever the devil tells you, believe the opposite.”

—Pastor Brad Hargett

John 8:44

When he lies, he speaks his native language, because he is a liar and the father of lies.

What happens on the day that “quite the opposite” happens

1. YOU’RE GOING TO OVERPOWER THE ENEMY (v. 1d)

It was the Jews who overpowered their enemies.

2. YOUR FEAR IS GOING TO BE FLIPPED (v. 2b)

But no one could make a stand against them, for everyone was afraid of them.

3. YOU HAVE FRIENDS IN HIGH PLACES (v. 3)

3 And all the nobles of the provinces, the highest officers, the governors, and the royal officials helped the Jews for fear of Mordecai.

4. YOU'RE GOING TO MOVE FROM SYMPTOM MANAGEMENT TO ROOT DESTRUCTION (part 2) (v. 5)

5 So the Jews went ahead on the appointed day and struck down their enemies with the sword. They killed and annihilated their enemies...

5. YOU'RE GOING TO MOVE FROM MOMENTS OF VICTORY TO MOMENTUM OF VICTORY (vv. 12-14)

12 But now, what more do you want? It will be granted to you; tell me and I will do it."

13 Esther responded, "If it please the king, give the Jews in Susa permission to do again tomorrow as they have done today, and let the bodies of Haman's ten sons be impaled on a pole."

14 So the king agreed, and the decree was announced in Susa.

6. YOUR SORROW WILL BE TURNED INTO GLADNESS AND YOUR MOURNING INTO JOY (vv. 20-22)

20 Mordecai recorded these events and sent letters to the Jews near and far, throughout all the provinces of King Xerxes, 21 calling on them to celebrate an annual festival on these two days. 22 He told them to celebrate these days with feasting and gladness and by giving gifts of food to each other and presents to the poor. This would commemorate a time when the Jews gained relief from their enemies, when their sorrow was turned into gladness and their mourning into joy

Follow the Favor | Second-Chair Leadership: Having Influence When You're Not in Charge

Esther 10:3

For Mordecai the Jew was second in rank to King Xerxes, and he was great among the Jews and popular with the multitude of his brothers, for he had sought the welfare of his people and spoke peace to all his people

Great 2nd Chair Leaders:

1. GIVE AWAY WHAT THEY WOULD LIKE TO HAVE (v. 3a)
2. SEEK TO HAVE THE GIFT OF SEEING THINGS IN OTHERS BEFORE THEY SEE IT IN THEMSELVES
3. HAVE 'OPEN-HAND' LEADERSHIP
4. DON'T WAIT TO GET TO WHERE THEY WANT TO GO TO BE THE PERSON THEY WANT TO BE (v. 3b)

He didn't wait until he was in a POSITION OF INFLUENCE to be a PERSON OF INFLUENCE
5. DON'T CONTINUALLY LOOK TO SERVE THE PERFECT LEADER; THEY JUST CONTINUALLY DO THE RIGHT THING
6. USE THEIR VOICE TO SPEAK PEACE, NOT PROBLEMS (v. 3c)