

Note from Kathy

I wish everyone had at least one really good friend. Not just a person who would say what they think you want to hear, but someone who longs to see you do well in life; someone who knows you and likes you in spite of your short comings. My best friend is Dorothy; she does not always say what she thinks I want to hear; she tries to point me to truth. We have grown our bond of friendship over the past 30+ years. I trust her, and she trusts me. This chapter ends with Haman suffering the consequences of heeding bad advice from family and friends.

Observation

1. Where does the Scripture say King Xerxes and Haman were when the chapter began?

2. King Xerxes was not a man you wanted for an enemy. What are some factors that might have led to him being easily angered. What had they been doing?

3. The king was eager to hear Queen Esther's request. After all, what could be so important that she would host two banquets for the king and his right hand man. Fill in the blanks with his words.
 - a. How does the king ask and assure her of his desire to help?

 - b. He asked again what this request could be and again he reassured her that nothing was too great a request:

4. Queen Esther shared her request and her fears with the king. Notice how humbly she expressed the need she shared. Finish Queen Esther's statements below.
 - a. If I have _____
 - b. If it _____
 - c. _____ this is my request.
 - d. For I and my people _____
 - e. If we had _____
 - f. I would have _____

Esther 7:5-8

"King Xerxes asked Queen Esther, 'Who is he? Where is he—the man who has dared to do such a thing?' 'Esther said, 'An adversary and enemy! This vile Haman!' Then Haman was terrified before the king and queen. ⁷The king got up in a rage, left his wine and went out into the palace garden. But Haman, realizing that the king had already decided his fate, stayed behind to beg Queen Esther for his life. ⁸Just as the king returned from the palace garden to the banquet hall, Haman was falling on the couch where Esther was reclining. The king exclaimed, 'Will he even molest the queen while she is with me in the house?'"

5. What a difference a few hours can make. What was Haman's mood just prior to being swept off to this banquet? Do you think Haman saw what was coming? Was he fearful yet? Had he put two and two together, or was he clueless to his impending doom?
6. According to Esther 7:5-8, King Xerxes was furious that someone dared to threaten his queen. He asked Queen Esther to name the man who had dared such a thing! What was Esther's reply?
7. What was Haman's emotional state at this point?
8. What is the king's emotional state?
9. If this were being acted out as a play, we would see the king exit stage right to go into the gardens for a few minutes. Now was Haman's only chance to beg for his life. What mistake did he make in this extremely emotional state?
10. We do not know how long the king was out in the garden. Perhaps Haman was begging and begging Esther to help him. He probably shared the fact that he had no idea Queen Esther was a Jew. In one final attempt to beg for mercy Haman goes over to her and throws himself down to plead for his life. At just that moment who walks back in the room? How did the king interpret what he saw?
11. The king had already called his guards and instructed them before coming back into the room. What did the guards do?
12. Harbona, one of the eunuch's that attend the king, was present and he spoke up. What was his suggestion?
13. What happened to Haman?

Genesis 16:13-14

"She gave this name to the LORD who spoke to her: 'You are the God who sees me,' for she said, 'I have not seen the One who sees me.'¹⁴That is why the well was called Beer Lahai Roi it is still there, between Kadesh and Bered."

Job 34:21-22

"For his eyes are on the ways of a man, and he sees all his steps. ²²There is no gloom or deep darkness where evildoers may hide themselves."

2 Chronicles 16:9

"For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward him."

Proverbs 15:3

"The eyes of the Lord are in every place keeping watch on the evil and the good."

1 Peter 3:10-12

For "Whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit; ¹¹let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it. ¹²For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil."

Application

1. This is an amazing story of God's miraculous deliverance. All seems lost. God seems to be absent or, even worse, uninterested in the fate of his people. But, God is neither. Like Hagar in Genesis 16:13-14, Esther can say God is El Roi, "the God who sees me." Read the verses Job 34:21-22, 2 Chronicles 16:9, Proverbs 15:3, and 1 Peter 3:10-12, and underline the words of hope and assurance in each.
2. In verse 2, we see the king question Esther for the third time. I'm sure Esther did not miss the tender love and assurance as he spoke to his queen. To what extent was he willing to help with her need? When someone comes to you with their need do you reassure them you will do all you can to help? That does not mean we can fix every problem, but we will do what we can.

Are you known for choosing your words carefully?

Are you known for your humility?
3. Even though she can speak with confidence after hearing for the third time that he is willing to grant her request in such an extravagant way, look how carefully she chooses her words. What character quality did you see her display?
4. Would you say from all you have read in these first seven chapters of Esther that this king's actions show him to be worthy of respect?
5. Is Esther blinded to his faults and shortcomings? Is she merely buttering him up or is she showing him the respect his position demands?

Are you respectful of those in positions of authority?
6. When you are making an appeal or request, how prayerful and careful are you? Do you see those in authority over you as due your respect?
7. The king demands to know who is behind this heinous crime against his queen and her people. She replies, "My adversary and my enemy is this vile Haman." Do you have an adversary and an enemy? Read 1 Peter 5:6-8 in your Bible to properly identify your adversary and enemy.

James 3:14-16

"But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice."

8. When we give way to anger, jealousy, and grief over someone else's good fortune like Haman, we are in line for God's judgment. Perhaps this would be a good place to stop and talk to the Lord about any relationships that come to mind. As it says in 1 John 1:9, *"If we confess our sin he is faithful and just to forgive our sins and cleanses from all unrighteousness."*

This does not mean that the other person does not have a part in it, but remember God deals with his children individually. We are only accountable for our own sin—but we are accountable for it. The good news is we are never more than a prayer away from his mercy. Read James 3:14-16 and 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 to identify the problem. Jot down anything that comes to mind regarding this type of behavior.

1 Corinthians 13:4-8

"Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. ⁸Love never ends."

9. In Esther 7:7, we saw the king make a wise choice. He walks out of the room and collects his thoughts before making his decision. When you are upset, what is your response?

Do you say the first thing you think?

Do you stop to pray and ask God to direct you?

Do you give yourself a moment to weigh out the matter and sort out the facts?

Think back to the last person you had a serious disagreement with, how did you handle it?

10. Scripture says the king got up in a rage. Have you ever felt completely betrayed by someone close to you? It is even more hurtful when presented with the facts that you had not seen coming. I believe we should take a few lessons from King Xerxes. Did the king beat himself up over the fact that he had not seen this coming?

Did he go in his room and bemoan the fact that he was not a better king in the past?

Did he kick himself for not asking more questions and for so completely trusting Haman?

Even though it is true, if he had chosen his right-hand man with a bit more care, and if he had seen his position as an honor and influence to be upheld with character, and if he had asked a few more questions before granting Haman carte blanche, things might have turned out differently. But that is not where he finds himself.

Proverbs 10:24

"What the wicked dreads will come upon him, but the desire of the righteous will be granted."

Proverbs 24:19-20

"Fret not yourself because of evildoers, and be not envious of the wicked, ²⁰for the evil man has no future; the lamp of the wicked will be put out."

Ephesians 4:26-27

"In your anger do not sin. Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, ²⁷and do not give the devil a foothold."

James 1:19-20

"My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, ²⁰because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires."

Proverbs 29:11

"Fools give full vent to their rage, but the wise bring calm to the end."

What did the king do?

The question we must answer is how will I handle betrayal? If you have lived very many years, you have experienced betrayal to some extent. How we handle it says much about our character and our ability to trust God and his sovereign care. It does not mean we do nothing. It means we simply do the next right thing.

11. Haman does what all evil cowards do when they are faced with the same treatment they have been dishing out. He begs for mercy. What does the *Bible* say is the outcome for these evil men in Proverbs 10:24 and Proverbs 24:19-20? You may also want to read Romans 13:1-4 in your *Bible*.

12. Haman's anger and jealousy have cost him everything. What could he have done differently and enjoyed a different outcome?

According to the three verses provided from Ephesians, James and Proverbs:

What can we do when something makes us angry?

When is the best time to deal with anger?

What can we do to defuse a situation that has stirred up anger?

13. How sad must it have been at Haman's home? His wife and friends must have known they were instrumental in fanning the flames of Haman's anger, and now he is facing the consequences. Haman was impaled on the very pole they had suggested he have built to impale Mordecai. Do you think they were sorry for suggesting this?

Have you ever given advice that fanned the flames of anger in a loved one or friend?

Perhaps you did not mean to make matters worse; you may have only thought you were siding with your friend.

What do real friends do for someone who is angry?

Consider these four verses from Proverbs when dealing with anger.

Proverbs 15:18 *"A hot-tempered person stirs up conflict, but the one who is patient calms a quarrel."*

Proverbs 14:29 *"Whoever is patient has great understanding, but one who is quick-tempered displays folly."*

Proverbs 27:5-6 *"Better is open rebuke than hidden love. Faithful are the wounds of a friend; profuse are the kisses of an enemy."*

Proverbs 27:17 *"As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend."*

14. List the lessons you have gleaned for resolving a problem as you studied Esther chapter 7. How might you handle your next important problem?