

Esther: The Making of a Wise Appeal

by Mary L. Dubler

Why are appeals necessary?

The person in authority over us (husband, parents, boss) may not have all the information needed to make a wise decision. He may be blinded to problems and God is using you to be helpmeet for your husband, or a good counselor to your boss. In addition, there may be situations where you may want to do something (this is particularly true of children in relationship to their parents) and need to appeal to your authority to get permission.

Three critical points to consider:

- 1) Are you the proper person to make the appeal?
- 2) Have you fulfilled all your responsibilities? Example: appealing to have husband clean his desk when the kitchen is a mess.
- 3) Appeals should be infrequent to be effective.

Read Chapters 4 through 7 of Esther

How did Esther make her appeal and why was it so effective?

I. She prepared herself first.

She sought the Lord for wisdom by fasting and praying. She did not ask a bunch of people or even her uncle for advice on how to do the appeal. She sought the Lord's counsel. She listened to the Lord and did not ignore what she heard.

The Lord is faithful to give counsel when we ask. The Holy Spirit may reveal that counsel through the reading of the Word, through times of prayer, or even during very common events of the day.

Psalm 32:8

*I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go;
I will counsel you with My eye upon you.*

James 1:5

But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

Because her appeal was so effective, Esther probably also made sure she was in right standing with God, having a clear conscience and not resisting authority.

1 John 1:9

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Romans 13:1-2

Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. Therefore he who resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves.

Finally, she made sure there was no wrong motive (e.g. selfishness) in her heart—she was even willing to risk her life to save her people.

Esther 4:16

*"Go, assemble all the Jews who are found in Susa, and fast for me; do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maidens also will fast in the same way. And thus I will go in to the king, which is not according to the law; **and if I perish, I perish.**"*

II. Prayer support.

She wisely included specific people in prayer support. It is not necessary or wise in all cases to include others. Widening the circle may cause problems, as it opens up the possibility for misunderstandings, betrayed confidences, unwise counsel, etc. Wives, please be especially careful who you share things with regarding your husband; you will really risk wounding him if you share information without his permission. Frankly, most issues should probably be kept between husband and wife.

III. Attitude.

She acted with confidence and boldness. Through her uncle's encouragement she realized that God had placed her there for a purpose and she had faith in what she knew of His power and presence.

Esther 5:2

And it happened when the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court, she obtained favor in his sight; and the king extended to Esther the golden scepter which was in his hand. So Esther came near and touched the top of the scepter.

I can imagine that she did not cower at the door to the court of the king, but stood in a regal and stately manner as befit a queen. Her heart was probably pounding and she waited for the king to respond, and what relief as he extended the scepter! But, as the work was just beginning she needed to maintain her cool confidence.

IV. Resources.

She used all the resources at her disposal—beauty, hospitality, intrigue, talent, love, wisdom, touch, well-chosen words, good timing—to set the stage for her appeal.

V. She gained the full attention of her husband.

If the person being appealed to is distracted, this will not work. [Try talking to your husband when he is doing something else!] She also used the things he liked—beauty, banquets with food and drink—to gain his attention. Knowing what things will gain the attention of your authority takes good observation skills and learning over time.

VI. Waiting is sometimes part of the process.

Esther patiently waited to give the appeal and hosted a second banquet. She knew this would arouse curiosity in the king and it may have been needed to gain his full attention. It also allowed other things to transpire with the king, Haman and Mordecai. She was sensitive to the Lord's leading, realizing that waiting is sometimes necessary even in the midst of an appeal.

VII. She extended honor & respect to her husband.

Except in the matter regarding appearing before the king without being called (she left that to the Lord), she followed the “rules of behavior” in Persia. She used very respectful language that let the king know he was still in charge, had high standing, and she made it clear that she was not telling him what to do, but that the decision was his. She also did not mislead him or go against her word.

Esther 5:4

And Esther said, "If it please the king, [emphasis mine] may the king and Haman come this day to the banquet that I have prepared for him."

Esther 5:8

...if I have found favor in the sight of the king, and if it please the king to grant my petition and do what I request, may the king and Haman come to the banquet which I shall prepare for them, and tomorrow I will do as the king says."

Esther 7:3-4

Then Queen Esther answered and said, "If I have found favor in your sight, O king, and if it please the king, let my life be given me as my petition, and my people as my request; [4] for we have been sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be killed and to be annihilated. Now if we had only been sold as slaves, men and women, I would have remained silent, for the trouble would not be commensurate with the annoyance to the king."

Esther 8:5

Then she said, "If it pleases the king and if I have found favor before him and the matter seems proper to the king and I am pleasing in his sight, let it be written to revoke the letters devised by Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, which he wrote to destroy the Jews who are in all the king's provinces.

VIII. She made a clear expression of the appeal.

Esther 7:3-6

Then Queen Esther answered and said, "If I have found favor in your sight, O king, and if it please the king, let my life be given me as my petition, and my people as my request; for we have been sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be killed and to be annihilated. Now if we had only been sold as slaves, men and women, I would have remained silent, for the trouble would not be commensurate with the annoyance to the king." Then King Ahasuerus asked Queen Esther, "Who is he, and where is he, who would presume to do thus?" And Esther said, "A foe and an enemy, is this wicked Haman!" Then Haman became terrified before the king and queen.

Esther 8:1-6

On that day King Ahasuerus gave the house of Haman, the enemy of the Jews, to Queen Esther; and Mordecai came before the king, for Esther had disclosed what he was to her. And the king took off his signet ring which he had taken away from Haman, and gave it to Mordecai. And Esther set Mordecai over the house of Haman. Then Esther spoke again to the king, fell at his feet, wept, and implored him to avert the evil scheme of Haman the Agagite and his plot which he had devised against the Jews. And the king extended the golden scepter to Esther. So Esther arose and stood before the king. Then she said, "If it pleases the king and if I have found favor before him and the matter seems proper to the king and I am pleasing in his sight, let it be written to revoke the letters devised by Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, which he wrote to destroy the Jews who are in all the king's provinces. "For how can I endure to see the calamity which shall befall my people, and how can I endure to see the destruction of my kindred?"

Ask the Lord to give you the right words to say and He will do it.

Notice as Esther begins to talk to her husband about revoking the letters devised by Haman that she weeps. I feel this is a natural reaction to the gravity of the situation. However, ladies, don't use tears as a weapon. Most men are upset and baffled by tears, and most issues and situations probably aren't of significance to warrant tears. This principle is tough for people like I who seem to be a tear factory even when we don't want to be. I would suspect that Esther was alone with the king when she cried and fell at his feet because self-control was very important for her to exhibit in front of other people. This was especially true as Esther spoke to her husband in front of Haman. Strength and dignity, not crying, were important for her to show Haman and her husband at that time. It is also important to note that Esther did not get angry with Haman. Extremes of emotion usually make matters worse in the making of an appeal. So for example, crying in front of your boss would, in most cases, not be a good idea.

Leave the results of an appeal to God.

Positive outcome—Great! But don't become proud and thinking you did this all on your own strength. Thank the Lord.

Negative outcome—Disappointing, but don't be angry with God or allow yourself to become bitter. In addition, you must allow the consequences of the decision to come about. You, your children, or others may suffer from the consequences as well. Resist the temptation to say, "I told you so." God can turn the heart of the king, but He also will allow the choice to teach the king (e.g. David).

In both cases, whether the outcome is positive or negative, you must support your husband, boss, parents, or others in authority to succeed. This is especially important for wives; your husband needs to know you are with him even when he makes a mistake.

Don't give up.

If in making an appeal it didn't turn out how you wanted, don't give up on making other appeals when they are warranted. Also, do not lose faith in God's ability to intervene in the affairs of men. God's name is not mentioned in the book of Esther, and yet His hand is very apparent.

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