

Ladies for Such a Time as This

¹²⁵Strength and honor (dignity) are her clothing, and she shall rejoice (laughs) at the days to come. (Pr. 31:25)

When we read the Book of Esther this past Thursday night, we observed quite a modest and unpretentious beginning for a heroine. *Hadassah* (Esther) is an orphaned Jewish girl raised by her cousin Mordecai (a son of *Ya'ir*, a Benjamite) and an unknown himself. Not much else is recorded about Esther except that she was shapely and stunning. Her life is a classic example of an uneventful beginning that leads to an unbelievable ending. We should note that such are the circumstances of many Bible heroes. Seems like humble beginnings are more of a qualification than a barrier with *Adonai*. In fact, being fatherless (motherless), husbandless, enslaved, persecuted, destitute, poor (you name it), appear to be the Biblical Recipe of someone that is in line for *Adonai* to use mightily.

There is truth in the age-old maxim “*The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world.*” That hand is the strong yet tender hand of a mom, who not only bears the children but rears them as well. But as if raising a houseful of children isn't enough of a job, a married woman has at least one other demanding career – being a wife. She is there for her husband either as the wind beneath his wings or the one who lets the air out of his tires. Proverbs talks about various kinds of wives, but the ideal is the excellent wife (*Echet Chayil*) of Proverbs 31: “*Her worth is far above jewels; her husband can entrust his heart to her completely because 'she does him good and not evil all the days of her life'.*” That woman – *one who fears the Lord* – will be esteemed/praised. Esther was such a woman. Over the course of her life, Esther demonstrated four strengths more often seen in women than men: **Intuition**: the ability to see through situations, sense the unspoken, and perceive the feelings underneath the surface; **Endurance**: the ability to handle pain, stay at a task through insuperable odds, persevere; **Responsiveness**: the willingness to express feelings, respond to others, show warmth and affection; and **Vulnerability**: the courage to confess weakness, admit fear, ask for help.

In the Body of Messiah (and in *Kol Simcha* in particular) we are currently in desperate need for women of excellence to manifest. We need brave and committed **Marys** (*Myriams*, see *John 19:25*) {*Yeshua*'s mother, her sister, Mary the wife of *Clopas* and Mary Magdalene} to stand with us in bravery whatever our circumstances might be. In other words we need *Ladies for Such a Time as This*. I believe they are presently here with us. This is *Adonai*'s gift to us and what a gift that is! I want to encourage our ladies and affirm my commitment to them. We want you with us, we respect you, we need you and we honor you. What practical counsel could we give to our modern-day Esthers?

The primary application for this counsel appears to be aimed at women, but the principles run deeper than gender distinctions. They apply to all of us because the cultivation of character is a focal point in our life message. We are addressing what we are on the inside and not so much how we appear on the outside. So if you'll turn on the lights and squint in the mirror, we'll see what can be done for that hidden person of the heart to be revealed.

1. *Ask God to cultivate within you a discontent with the superficial and a desire for the spiritual. May the Outward and inner man become one.* We need to achieve a state of inner spiritual grace from which we could function to blossom as we were meant to in God's eyes.
2. *Trust God to control your circumstances.* Consider that Esther was in the midst of a competitive beauty pageant where it is difficult to preserve inner beauty. But this is precisely the soil where she blossomed.
3. *God's basic purpose in creating us is that we have fellowship with Him through Messiah Yeshua and that we experience the full potential of Messiah working in and through our bodies* (See *John 10:10; 17:3* and *Phil. 3:8*).
4. *Satan is aware of the potential that God has put within our lives, and he desires to totally destroy or at least partially diminish its potential* (“...Flee youthful lusts” *2 Tim. 2:20-22*).
5. *Satan's initial method of operation is to get us to believe that God has cheated us or will cheat us out of that which we should rightfully have* (See *Gen. 3:4,5* and *Col. 2:8-10*).

6. *Before we were born, God prescribed our unchangeable features in accordance with His plans for our lives* (See *Job 10:8-9; Ps. 119:73; Ps 139:14,16; Isa. 45:9*).
7. *God is not finished making us yet* (See *Eph. 2:10; Ps. 138:8*).
8. *There is no such thing as a “Universal Ideal” in outward appearance* (*1 Sam. 16:7; Isa. 53:2*).
9. *However, there is a universal ideal on inward character qualities – reproducing the character of Messiah Yeshua by the power of the Holy Spirit and by His grace* (which is the desire and power God gives to do his will) (See *Ro. 8:29; Gal. 4:19; Col. 2:9; Gal. 5:22-23*).
10. *Our happiness is not dependent on our outward beauty but on our ability to experience the character of Messiah Yeshua* (See *Matt. 5:3-12; 6:33; Ps. 17:15*).
11. *If necessary, God sacrifices outward beauty to develop inward qualities, since our happiness is based on having those qualities* (See *2 Cor. 4:10; 16-17; Ro. 9:20-21*).
12. *Our fulfillment in life comes by becoming a unique message on how we developed the inward qualities of the Lord Yeshua* (See *1 Pet. 2:9; 2 Cor. 3:2; Prov. 15:23*).
13. *Differences in appearance, abilities, parentage and social heritage are God’s special frames to highlight and amplify His unique message through us* (See *2 Cor. 12:9-10; 1 Cor. 1:27, 29, 31*).
14. *God’s reputation is at stake in what we do with our appearance, abilities, etc.* (*Ex. 4:11-12*).

On Purim we saw Esther's golden opportunity to revel in her newly acquired position as queen by throwing off the shackles of her humble beginnings and self-image. She resisted the temptation. She submitted to Mordecai's counsel and set herself in a course of action that would ultimately catapult her to the heights of heroism. *Kol Simcha* ladies, this is your call to greatness. I can hardly await the results. *Shabbat Shalom!*