



A Winsome Character  
Esther 2:8-15

**Winsome = generally pleasing and engaging often because of a childlike charm and innocence**

- Bright, cheerful, sunny, upbeat
- Opposite would be gloomy, sullen, brooding, morose (sullen and ill-tempered)
- What word would best describe you when you are someplace you don't want to be doing something you don't want to do?

**Dr. Viktor Frankl, author of the book "Man's Search for Meaning," was imprisoned by the Nazis in W.W.II because he was a Jew.**

- His wife, his children, and his parents were all killed in the holocaust. The Gestapo made him strip. He stood there totally naked.

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- As they cut away His wedding ring Viktor said to himself, *"You can take my wife, you can take away my children, you can strip me of my clothes and my freedom, but there is one thing no person can ever take away from me--and that is my freedom to choose how I will react to what happens to me!"*

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- Even under the most difficult of circumstances, happiness is a choice which transforms our tragedies into triumph.

## That was the attitude of Esther

- **Esther 2:2-4 NIV** 2 Then the king's personal attendants proposed, "Let a search be made for beautiful young virgins for the king. 3 Let the king appoint commissioners in every province of his realm to bring all these beautiful young women into the harem at the citadel of Susa. Let them be placed under the care of Hegai, the king's eunuch, who is in charge of the women; and let beauty treatments be given to them.

## That was the attitude of Esther

- **Esther 2:2-4 NIV** 4 Then let the young woman who pleases the king be queen instead of Vashti.” This advice appealed to the king, and he followed it.

## That was the attitude of Esther

- **Esther 2:7 NLT** This man had a very beautiful and lovely young cousin, Hadassah, who was also called Esther. When her father and mother died, Mordecai adopted her into his family and raised her as his own daughter.
  - Lovely = Grace and kindness



## That was the attitude of Esther

- **Esther 2:17 NIV** Now the king was attracted to Esther more than to any of the other women, and she won his favor and approval more than any of the other virgins. So he set a royal crown on her head and made her queen instead of Vashti.

## That was the attitude of Esther

- Verses 8-15 answers a couple of questions
  - Why did God choose Esther?
  - How did Esther cooperate with God's plan to accomplish His will, not hers?
- **Esther 2:8-15**

**vs. 8** notice the difference between the words brought and taken

- Josephus, the Jewish historian, tells us as many as 400 women participated in the event
- Every providence would send their loveliest young girls
- They all had only one thing on their mind, become the queen, that was their ultimate goal
- It was all or nothing, second place had no meaning, no participate award

**vs. 8** notice the difference between the words brought and taken

- They would become a part of the king's concubine for the rest of their lives if they lost
  - Concubine = a concubine is a marital companion of inferior status to a wife
- **vs. 12** there was 12 months of beauty treatment and training to be a presentable candidate for the position of queen

**vs. 8** notice the difference between the words brought and taken

- Can you imagine the competitive spirit, envy, pride, complaining, petty fighting, jealousy during this 12-months?
- It's into this mix God places a young, God fearing, Jewish girl

**vs. 8** notice the difference between the words brought and taken

- Talk about a fish out of water
- We must remember Esther was in the minority
- She and her people came to this land as the spoils of war
- She was living an obscure life in a sheltered God fearing home

**vs. 8** notice the difference between the words brought and taken

- She was not caught up in the hub-bub of the beauty event
- I think we would be safe to say she was a reluctant participant

**vs. 8** notice the difference between the words brought and taken

- Why would a young Jewish girl want to get involved in a plan that would force her to leave the only family she had under the guardianship of one she respected and loved?
- Why would she want to spend a year shut away in a harem, culminating in a night with a heathen king that might result in the possibility of intermarriage outside her race?



**We find in a place where anything she wanted or needed would have been provided, Esther lets none of that change her character**

- James Hastings, “For the beauty of Esther’s character is this, that she was not spoiled by her great elevation. The splendor of her career is seen in this very fact, that she does not succumb to the luxury of her surroundings.”
- We find in these verses 6 queenlike traits of inner strength and godly dignity

## Esther exhibited a grace-filled charm and elegance

- **vs. 9** the young lady pleased him and found favor with him
  - Literal translation is “She lifted up grace before his face.”
- Though she was brought to the harem to participate in the things reluctantly, Esther did not display a sour attitude

## **Esther exhibited a grace-filled charm and elegance**

- I think she saw God's hand in this event, even if she really did not want to be there
- What else would explain how she was there
- Finding herself unable to say no, Esther modeled grace before the face of the king's servant

## **Esther exhibited a grace-filled charm and elegance**

- Her inner qualities could not be ignored
- While all the other women were cultivating techniques to win the heart of the king, Esther simply kept “lifting up grace”

## Esther exhibited an unusual restraint and control

- **vs. 10** She did not make known her people for Mordecai instructed her not to
- She did not tell anyone she was Jewish. Why?
- Simply because Mordecai told her not to
- Not even the head-spinning heights of the harem could tempt her to break covenant with Mordecai

## **Esther exhibited an unusual restraint and control**

- Verbal restraint is fast becoming a forgotten virtue
- Restrain and control always work in your favor
- Learn to keep confidences, especially confidences of your husband, your family and your friends
- It's a mark of strength and dignity

## Esther sustained a continually teachable spirit

- **vs. 20 NIV** But Esther had kept secret her family background and nationality just as Mordecai had told her to do, for she continued to follow Mordecai's instructions as she had done when he was bringing her up.
- **vs. 15 NIV** she asked for nothing other than what Hegai, the king's eunuch who was in charge of the harem, suggested.

## **Esther sustained a continually teachable spirit**

- She is queen now in verse 20 and still kept an open spirit to the counsel of her uncle
- This lovely, dignified, wise woman was still willing to listen and learn
- As you have aged has something changed your teachability?



## **Esther sustained a continually teachable spirit**

- We must maintain an acute need to cultivate a willingness to learn and to remain teachable
- Learning from our children, friends, even our enemies
- How beautiful it is to find a servant-hearted, teachable spirit among those who occupy positions of authority

## Esther exhibited an unselfish modesty and authenticity

- **vs. 13** anything was given to her to take with her to win over the king
- Can you imagine what the women looked like to entice the king
- What they would do, how they would talk, what they would offer

## **Esther exhibited an unselfish modesty and authenticity**

- Esther did not fall for the temptations around her
- I believe Esther went in to the king without fear because she had no driving ambition to be queen
- Her life did not revolve around her physical appearance to make the king happy

## **Esther exhibited an unselfish modesty and authenticity**

- She was there for only one reason: because she knew the hand of God was on her life and she was brought to this place for a reason
- She was authentic
- She knew where she was coming from
- She knew who she was

## **Esther exhibited an unselfish modesty and authenticity**

- She knew what she believed
- She knew God's hand was upon her life
- If it was His pleasure she was here, if it was part of His plan, then she was willing to accept it

## Esther modeled a kind of winsomeness, regardless of her surroundings

- **vs. 15b NIV** And Esther won the favor of everyone who saw her.
- **vs. 17a NIV** Now the king was attracted to Esther more than to any of the other women, and she won his favor and approval more than any of the other virgins.

## **Esther modeled a kind of winsomeness, regardless of her surroundings**

- Esther has something about her that caused everyone to “favor” her
- Winsomeness = being pleasant, delightful, attractive in a sweet, engaging way
- A winsome person draws you to him or her
- We are intrigued by that person’s charming and gracious spirit

## **Esther displayed a humble respect for authority**

- We have seen several times where Esther followed Mordecai's instructions
- This is going to be really important when she need to reveal who she is to the king
- Esther, even in becoming the queen of the land, remembered the wisdom of her guardian and willingly considered his counsel



## **The qualities found in Esther seem to be unattainable**

- In/of yourself or the world, they are
- You will only become defeated and frustrated
- God does not mock us with things He includes in His Word without providing a way to become what His Word says

## **The qualities found in Esther seem to be unattainable**

- You, as an individual, have your own pressures, your own difficulties, your own unique circumstances, but God offers ways to become His special person. How?

## **The qualities found in Esther seem to be unattainable**

- Ask God to cultivate this character within you
  - Ask Him to give you a discontent for the superficial and a deeper desire for the spiritual
  - Make yourself available to His strengths, His reproofs

## **The qualities found in Esther seem to be unattainable**

- Ask God to cultivate this character within you
  - Seek His counsel and allow Him to help you set reasonable goals
  - Ask God to help you place more emphasis on what's happening deep within your heart and less emphasis on the external, the temporary

## **The qualities found in Esther seem to be unattainable**

- Trust Him to control the circumstances around you
  - Don't wait for your circumstances to be perfect
  - Be completely dependent on Him for eternal life, for forgiveness, for character, for security

## **The qualities found in Esther seem to be unattainable**

- Trust Him to control the circumstances around you
  - His light in our life gives us a growing disgust for things that merely satisfy the flesh
  - He alone can give grace and winsomeness and keep us from becoming squint-eyed, cranky Christians



A Winsome Character  
Esther 2:8-15