

# ESTHER

## A WOMAN OF STRENGTH AND DIGNITY

### STUDY FIVE

## Thinking and Saying What's Right—Regardless

*Esther 4*

---

*Not until we believe one person can make a difference will we be willing to risk.*

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

**I**N a world with more than 7.5 billion people, it's easy to feel like a statistical speck of dust without much significance. But you aren't an afterthought penciled into history by God. No. You hold immense value in His eyes. He made you unique and gifted you with special qualities. You breathe for a purpose—and that purpose comes from Him.

In Esther 4, God's purpose for Queen Esther unfolds before our eyes as we discover that she alone had the best opportunity to overturn Haman's diabolical plan. Esther initially wavered against Mordecai's risky request, but she turned to God for strength and determined to do the right thing regardless of the outcome.

Often, it's not until we go through trials that we discern why God made us. Trials reveal the character God has produced in us. They open our eyes to the reason that one door opened and another door closed, the reason that circumstances that seemed so disjointed and random at the time have led us to *this place at this time*.

In the passage for this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study, Esther learned the reason she became queen, and it wasn't until a crisis struck that her calling became clear. What crisis might we face that produces a watershed moment for us? Only God knows. But in that moment, we'll learn the incredible impact one person can make . . . when we bravely step out in faith and fulfill the purpose for which we were made.



INSIGHT FOR LIVING



Scan to listen to  
Chuck's message.

The Bible-Teaching Ministry of Chuck Swindoll  
Study 5 • Page 1

SEARCHING  
THE  
SCRIPTURES  
BIBLE STUDIES

# Thinking and Saying What's Right—Regardless

*Esther 4*

---



## PREPARE YOUR HEART

As the psalmist unrolled his scroll of the Scriptures, he prayed:

*Open my eyes to see  
the wonderful truths in your instructions.* (Psalm 119:18)

Write a prayer in your own words requesting God's Spirit to increase your understanding of Him and love for Him as you open His Word.



## TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Esther 3 closed with the Jews under a dark cloud. The evil plot concocted by anti-Semitic Haman sentenced every Jew to death by King Ahasuerus' decree. Esther and her people were living on borrowed time. Before the year was out, their bodies would lie in mass graves of genocide, placed there by their gentile neighbors.

As news of the decree spread, the entire city of Susa "fell into confusion" (Esther 3:15). The Persian policy toward foreigners had been one of toleration. Was this new edict the first wave of hostility toward all races? The Jews, of course, were stunned. What had they done to deserve this fate? To whom could they turn for protection? Only the one true God.



## Observation: Seeking God in Times of Distress

Observation answers the question, *What does the text say?*<sup>1</sup> Read the verses thoughtfully, then reread them in other translations. The New Living Translation and the New American Standard Bible complement each other well, but you can also read a paraphrase, such as The Message.

# Thinking and Saying What's Right—Regardless

## *Esther 4*

---

### **Mourning and Weeping—Esther 4:1–4**

Read [Esther 4:1–4](#). How and where did Mordecai express his sorrow after learning of the king's command regarding the Jews?

Biblical authors use repetition to reveal their intent in writing. How did the author use repetition in 4:1–4?

What news did Esther's eunuchs and maids share with her, and how did she respond?

Record any additional observations you find.

Each of us has endured (and will endure) seasons of suffering without relief. In such times, turn to Jesus who overcame the most intense of sufferings. He will give you His peace, strength, perspective, and hope to make it through.

# Thinking and Saying What's Right—Regardless

## *Esther 4*

---

### **Informing and Responding—Esther 4:5–12**

Observe *Esther 4:5–12*, which chronicles the first of Esther and Mordecai's exchanges.

In Esther 4:5–9, what steps did Mordecai take to convey all the information which Esther didn't know? In what verse, and in what way, does it seem that Mordecai had insider knowledge of the inner workings of Haman's plot?

What two reasons did Esther use to evade Mordecai's command (Esther 4:11)?

*Have you noticed how suffering brings people together? It pushes us out of our homes. It forces us to grab hands and shoulders with one another and to pull together. Suffering never ruined a nation! Affluence does! But not suffering. It pushes everybody to the same level with the same goal of survival.*

—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

### **Pleading and Praying—Esther 4:13–17**

Observe *Esther 4:13–17*, the last of Esther and Mordecai's exchanges in this chapter.

In what ways did Mordecai appeal to Esther to petition the king?

# Thinking and Saying What's Right—Regardless

## *Esther 4*

---

This was Esther's watershed moment. She faced two choices—either of which could result in death. What did Esther require of Mordecai before she did what he asked?

*Mordecai follows three tracks. "First, if you do nothing, Esther, don't think you will escape death. You do, or you die. But second, don't make too much of this. God is not limited to you or me. It may be in His plan to have us removed, but His people will not die. He will use someone. And so, third, how great it would be if He would use you. Could it be that you have attained royalty for such a time as this?" —Pastor Chuck Swindoll*



### **Interpretation: God in the Crisis**

During interpretation, we answer the question, *What does the passage mean?* We want to understand the theology of the passage. To do this, we must consider the culture, language, and intent of the author as best we can because God reveals Himself through His interactions with humanity.

Esther 4 contains references to fasting. Look up in your Bible dictionary the purposes of a fast, discern which kind was used in Esther 4, and record how it informs your understanding of this section. If you don't have a Bible dictionary, you can use the online *Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology* to look up the article, "[Fast, Fasting](#)."

In [Esther 4:13–14](#), Mordecai made a subtle theological claim about the significance of God's work in and through the Jewish people. What was that claim, and what do you learn about God from it? How did God's sovereign control in a crisis balance with Esther's responsibility to act?

# Thinking and Saying What's Right—Regardless

## *Esther 4*

---

Esther demonstrated a change in attitude from her first response in [Esther 4:10–11](#) to her decision in [4:15–16](#). What was that change? How would her faith in God have produced that change?

Even wearing ripped goat skin for clothing and shedding tears at the royal gate, Mordecai couldn't get the attention of King Ahasuerus. But it didn't take long for Esther to learn of Mordecai's sorrow and, in that discovery, realize that his sorrow was also her own. From Mordecai's urging, she made up her mind to act in God's strength.



### **Correlation: Esther's Model of Faith**

Correlation answers the question, *How does it compare?* We compare our text with other biblical passages to gain a deeper understanding of the truths and principles our text teaches.

[Hebrews 11](#) contains a helpful definition of faith and gives a snapshot of the faithful and their deeds. Read and reflect on this chapter. How did Esther demonstrate the meaning of faith as defined in 11:6?

*The major issue that arises from this message is this: What does it matter if I get involved or not? It matters all the world to your character! Yes, God has other ways. He has other people. He isn't frustrated because you and I may be indifferent. But how wonderful it would be to think that we have been elevated to this position or to this generation for such an hour as this.*

—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



### **Application: One Person Can Make a Difference**

During application, we answer the question, *How should we respond to the text?* Let's look at two application principles from Esther 4.

# Thinking and Saying What's Right—Regardless

## *Esther 4*

---

First, *not until we believe that one person can make a difference will we be willing to risk*. God's power can pour through one person for the benefit of many. Take a moment to consider if you truly believe this. As the first step to either affirm or reaffirm your faith, write a prayer acknowledging to God His power and stating your willingness to be used for His purposes, even if it means taking actions that might put your comfort or convenience at risk.

Second, *only when we move from the safe harbor of theory to the world of reality do we make a difference*. Often our consistent, small actions—though seemingly insignificant—make the most difference. Take a moment to write down the action you feel the Spirit prompting you to take.

Sometimes, we're tempted to put the great ones in the Bible on a pedestal of faith which we cannot reach. But you can. Consider the apostle James' words on the power of prayer: "Elijah was as human as we are" (James 5:17). In other words, we're no different from Elijah . . . or Esther. Esther's courage came from the same kind of faith we can have. Why? Because we worship the same God.

### **Reflective Wrap-Up**

Write one sentence to *summarize* this lesson.

Write down one thing to *remember* about God.

# Thinking and Saying What's Right—Regardless

*Esther 4*

---

Write down one way you can *respond* to God's Word.



## A FINAL PRAYER

*Father, thank You for preserving the story of Esther and for the encouragement it brings Your people. Please strengthen my heart to act when I need to act and to speak when I need to speak. I know You are with me and control the outcome, so please glorify Your Son in my life. In His name, amen.*

### ENDNOTE

1. To learn more about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* Bible-study method, go to the web page, "[How Does Pastor Chuck Swindoll Study the Bible?](#)"

For the 2026 broadcasts, this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study was developed by Aaron Massey, senior vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, and revised by Bryce Klabunde, vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages. Copyright © 1989, 2018, 2026 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide. Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

[insight.org](http://insight.org)

Insight for Living  
Study 5 • Page 8



