



"Thou Art Come ... for Such a Time as This"
Show Notes & Transcripts

Podcast General Description:

followHIM: A *Come, Follow Me* Podcast with Hank Smith & John Bytheway

Do you ever feel that preparing for your weekly *Come, Follow Me* lesson falls short? Join hosts Hank Smith and John Bytheway as they interview experts to make your study for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints' *Come, Follow Me* course not only enjoyable but original and educational. If you are looking for resources to make your study fresh, faithful, and fun--no matter your age--then join us every Wednesday.

Podcast Episode Descriptions

Part 1:

What was Vashti's "no" protecting and what does it teach us about the difference between patriarchal order and patriarchy? Dr. Barbara Morgan Gardner explores the book of Esther, unpacking divine timing, covenant-based leadership, and how a father's example shapes the way his daughters come to know God.

Part 2:

Dr. Barbara Morgan Gardner continues exploring pride versus humility, divine timing in the king's sleepless night, and Esther's courage, drawing modern parallels to covenant identity.

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Part 1 -

- 0:00 - Part 1 - Dr. Barbara Morgan Gardner
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Part 2 -

- 0:00 Part 2 - Dr. Barbara Morgan Gardner
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- 51:39 Joy replaces mourning
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- 57:49 Covenant Keeper, not marital status
- 58:42 End of Part 2 – Dr. Barbara Morgan Gardner

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Biographical Information:



Barbara Morgan Gardner is a Professor of Church History and Doctrine at Brigham Young University. Her research interests focus primarily on women in religious leadership, international education (most specifically Latin America), and religious pedagogy. She is the author of the book *The Priesthood Power of Women in the Temple, Church, and Family*. Barbara received her PhD in instructional psychology. Her master's degree is in educational leadership and foundations with an emphasis in international education development. She completed postdoctoral work at Harvard University in higher education administration. She served as institute director for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Boston, which included her assignment as the chaplain at both Harvard and MIT. She continues to serve as the chaplain-at-large in higher education for the LDS Church. She also serves on the BYU Interfaith Outreach Council. She was born and raised in Salem, Oregon and resides in Highland, Utah. Barbara is married to Dustin Gardner, and they are the parents of two children. She enjoys her wonderful family, learning, teaching, traveling, people, the great outdoors, and life!

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Hank Smith: 00:00:00 Coming up in this episode on followHIM.

Dr. Barbara Morgan Gardner: 00:00:02 Car of young men started following us and they followed us all the way across the Willamette River and down to this little place and we were so afraid there's no way we could bring any of them home. So we parked, we pulled into the only church parking lot in the area, which was the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints parking lot because that was our safe place, I guess, and thinking that they would leave us alone. But they followed us into that church parking lot. It was a few miles from our own home. They rolled down the window, they got out and they asked us on a date. And we were so excited. We just had turned 16. These boys that we didn't know were cruising the gut. It was midnight and they had asked us on a date.

Hank Smith: 00:00:40 Hello, my friends. Welcome to another episode of followHIM. My name is Hank Smith. I'm your host. I'm here with John Bytheway. John, I was reading the very last chapter of Esther. It said words like power, might, the declaration of greatness. I mean this is great among his people, accepted among the multitude of his brethren, speaking peace. John, as I was reading about Mordecai, Esther's uncle, I thought that's how I would describe John Bytheway right there.

John Bytheway: 00:01:13 That's not how I would describe him, nor anybody that knows me except for you.

Hank Smith: 00:01:18 John, you need to accept these compliments that I'm giving you because they are right on every one of them. That is Uncle Mordecai. So we'll call you Uncle John.

John Bytheway: 00:01:27 Oh, I like Uncle John. I'm an uncle.

Hank Smith: 00:01:31 We are privileged to be joined today by our friend, Dr. Barbara Morgan Gardner. Barb, welcome back to followHIM. We've missed you.

Dr. Barbara Morgan Gardner: 00:01:39 I just love you guys. Thanks for having me on the show. This makes me happy to be with you. I get to learn from you and hang out with you.

Hank Smith: 00:01:47 You are wonderful. And I wish everyone could have been here for the last, what, hour as we didn't hit record. We just chatted, shared stories. It's good to have you back.

Dr. Barbara Morgan Gardner: 00:01:56 Thank you, friend.

Hank Smith: 00:01:58 John, when you think of the book of Esther, what comes to mind?

John Bytheway: 00:02:00 Almost everyone when you Google or whatever says, "This book doesn't mention God." I just think this has got to be deliberate because God is everywhere in the story. I love to see the 3D chess game going on in the story of Esther. That's what I love about it.

Hank Smith: 00:02:17 The Lord is moving the pieces. The phrase that comes to my mind is from Mordecai. How do you know that you aren't come to the kingdom for this exact time? Who's doing that? That's the Lord moving those pieces into place. Barb, what are we going to do today? What are you looking forward to?

Dr. Barbara Morgan Gardner: 00:02:34 Being with you and being in the scriptures, seeing what the Spirit's going to teach, also what he already has taught. As John says, finding the Lord and letting him guide us just like he was guiding Esther. You mentioned right at the beginning about not having God mentioned in this book. I think it's fascinating right off the top that we see Esther, the name of Esther, in Hebrew Esther means hidden or concealed. I want to talk about Esther actually as a prototype of Christ and what we can learn about Christ through this incredible woman. I'm excited to talk about patriarchal priesthood and the difference between patriarchal and patriarchy and how we confuse patriarchy with patriarchal and how one is so sacred and one is so mortal and confusing. I'm excited to talk about leadership, excited to talk about timing. There's so many. Identity. This book is so full of incredible principles and truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ. It's full of relationships. It's full of guiding us unto the Lord and helping us overcome weakness and fear. And I love it.

Hank Smith: 00:03:38 John, I am excited already to learn from Barb. We always learn a lot when Barb is here, and it's fun to combine a wonderful teacher with a wonderful book and see what happens. Now, John, it has been a while since we've had Barb on the show.

There might be a new listener who says, wait, I've heard this name before. Who is this again? What do we know about Barb? Why is her name so long? Dr. Barbara Morgan Gardner. There's a lot of syllables there.

Dr. Barbara Morgan Gardner: 00:04:02 Okay, listen, before John jumps in, I'm actually going to tell you that because we're talking about women and priesthood and things like this, this may be personal for me, but my patriarchal blessing says, as I use my family name, I will bring honor to my parents. I am careful to go by Barbara Morgan Gardner because I want to recognize my parents in raising me and how important that is. So it's who I am. My parents named me with the Barbara Morgan, and I got married to wonderful Dustin, and so I take all those names and names matter.

Hank Smith: 00:04:31 It flows beautifully. Barbara Morgan Gardner.

Dr. Barbara Morgan Gardner: 00:04:34 Thank you.

Hank Smith: 00:04:34 My name's Hank. It's more of a dog name than a people name.

Dr. Barbara Morgan Gardner: 00:04:37 Hank is a nice name.

Hank Smith: 00:04:38 It's a nice name.

Dr. Barbara Morgan Gardner: 00:04:40 My name means strange, just so you know, Barb. Que barbaridad. Yeah, strange. The strange one. I know it hurts me.

Hank Smith: 00:04:46 The strange one. Well, speaking of strange ones, John, tell us about Barbara.

John Bytheway: 00:04:52 [Barbara](#) loves teaching in religious education at BYU. She teaches the Doctrine and Covenants, the Eternal Family, Teachings of the Living Prophets, and her research interests focus primarily on women in religious leadership, international education, and religious pedagogy. She's the author of the book, I have it right here, [The Priesthood Power of Women](#). Hank, I was noticing that her first chapter is called For Such a Time as This, which is a phrase right out of Esther. Completed postdoctoral work at Harvard. She served as institute director in Boston, including her assignments as a chaplain at Harvard and MIT. Oh my goodness. She was born and raised in Salem, Oregon. Served a Spanish-speaking mission in the Los Angeles Temple Visitor Center. Lives in Highland, Utah, married to Dustin Gardner, parents of two children. I want to ask you about this new nonprofit you have of Women of Covenant Leadership.

Tell us about that, because I suspect a lot of our listeners will be interested. Women of Covenant Leadership.

Dr. Barbara Morgan Gardner: 00:05:58 We have had prophets asking us for years, and there's one specifically, [Joseph F. Smith](#), who's been quoted by so many, who says to the women of the church, "We need you to lead the world, especially the women of the world, not be led by the world." We've heard that so many times. We've had so many pleas from [President Nelson](#) and [President Oaks](#) asking the women of the church to be leaders. And my personal philosophy is that any [woman](#) and any man who makes and keeps their sacred covenants is a leader. By who they are, they are leaders. Our hope is that we can ignite the [women](#) that are already so strong in the gospel of Jesus Christ and help them see their important role in their homes and in their neighborhoods and in the schools and in the world. Speak up and speak out, know the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ, that they're confident.

00:06:45 Then really make a difference. Make a difference wherever the Lord would have them be, whether it's, again, in their homes or communities in any way. We started this nonprofit. We tried to really help with teaching fundamental doctrines and principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We have gatherings. We take people on wonderful church history trips together. In each one, we are trying to do all we can to empower righteous women to change the world as has been prophesied, to prepare the world for the Second Coming, gather Israel, and establish Zion. We're all in, we're running and having a great time. Love to have anyone join us. We're just one step at a time climbing this mountain and hoping to fulfill and answer the pleas of a prophet.

John Bytheway: 00:07:25 How would people find out about it? How would they get involved?

Dr. Barbara Morgan Gardner: 00:07:28 There's a website that we have just created, womenofcovenantleadership.org. We have a podcast called [Grounded in the Gospel of Jesus Christ](#). That's more of a formal podcast. It comes out weekly. It's Come, Follow Me manual. We only have women on the podcast. And again, these are women that are grounded in the gospel of Jesus Christ who are aligned with the prophets, seers and revelators. They come to my home, sit at the table, and we discuss the doctrines and principles in each of the chapters of the Old Testament or whatever we're studying that year together. Just as sisters. Yeah, it's fun. It's a great experience.

John Bytheway: 00:08:04 So good.

Hank Smith: 00:08:05 Wonderful. We'll call it a sister podcast of followHIM.

Dr. Barbara Morgan Gardner: 00:08:09 Thank you. Love it.

Hank Smith: 00:08:10 It's a sibling of ours.

John Bytheway: 00:08:11 That's right.

Dr. Barbara Morgan Gardner: 00:08:11 Yes, we love each other.

John Bytheway: 00:08:13 All in the family.

Dr. Barbara Morgan Gardner: 00:08:14 And big thanks to you guys for helping us think through and get started with it. Your help has helped us a lot, so thank you.

Hank Smith: 00:08:20 Yeah. Barb is good friends with our wonderful teammate, Lisa Spice.

Dr. Barbara Morgan Gardner: 00:08:26 Okay. If you have not had the opportunity to watch Judges just came before this podcast, you can go back. Lisa does a phenomenal job. We got her on the show. She came on a little bit screaming and acting like she didn't know a lot, but let's be honest, that woman is brilliant and so fun. Yes, we had her on our show. I'm so grateful. So thank you, Lisa, for coming.

Hank Smith: 00:08:47 Oh, that's so fun. People could get a double dose because we did Judges with [Lori Denning](#), who is Lisa Spice's

Dr. Barbara Morgan Gardner: 00:08:54 Stop it.

Hank Smith: 00:08:54 twin sister. You could get both of them from our show and yours. I think everybody needs to go do that.

Dr. Barbara Morgan Gardner: 00:09:01 Okay. I am going to do that myself. That's going to be a great experience. Those Denning sisters, they know what they're doing.

Hank Smith: 00:09:07 And their laugh is so similar. When you listen, you'll go, oh, wow. Those are twin sisters. They're not a lot alike. They've gotten older. They're definitely two different people, but the laugh? Still the same. All right. Let's start with the [Come, Follow Me manual](#). The title of the lesson this week, Thou Art Come For Such a Time as This. "Many events in the book of Esther might seem like luck or coincidence. How else do you explain how an orphan Jewish girl became the queen of Persia at just the right

time to save her people from slaughter? What are the chances that Esther's cousin, Mordecai, would happen to overhear a plot to assassinate the king? Were these coincidences or were they part of a divine plan? [Elder Rasband](#) noted, What may appear to be a random chance is in fact overseen by a loving father in heaven. The Lord is in the small details of our lives. We might not always recognize the Lord's influence in these small details, but we learn from Esther's experience that he can guide our path and prepare us for such a time when we can be instruments in his hands to fulfill his purposes." Beautiful. All right, Barb, you have a lot prepared. You're excited about it. Where do you want to start?

Dr. Barbara Morgan Gardner: 00:10:13 I want to start right where you just started. God is making himself known. The question is, are we seeing it? Are we observing and noticing the majesty of the moment? And I think that the book of Esther is really bringing us there. I'll just share a quick story. This happened just this morning to me. I'm just going to tie this in just because it's on my mind. A majesty of the moment moment. I have a nephew who I was just speaking with, and he's given me permission to share this. He is so tender. I just love this young man so much. He's been serving a mission in Sierra Leone. He's coming home a little bit earlier than he had planned. He loves his mission. He loves serving. He loves the people. He loves everything. He's coming home to make some important decisions in his life. As I was talking to him, the Spirit confirmed to me so strongly, be pleased with him and happy for him.

00:10:58 This is, in this case, the right thing to do. That's up to him. I just felt that. But on the phone, he had said to me that he didn't know what his travel plans were, but he's probably going to be coming home this week. And I said, I really wish I could be there, but we're actually leaving. We're flying out to Europe this week. I'm so sad that I won't be able to meet you at the airport to throw my arms around you and tell you how much I love you, et cetera, because it's going to be hard to come home. As I said that, we said, yeah, that would be great. And I wish we could see each other, but we understand I'll be home in a week and a half. Long story short, he received his travel plans to come home. He's coming from Sierra Leone.

00:11:34 He told me about his travel plans before. He sent me the travel plans. I looked at the travel plans and I just thought, wow, that's so interesting. You're going through Amsterdam. And I looked at my flight plans, and I saw that we were also going through Amsterdam. Then I looked at the time that he was flying in to Amsterdam. If you can think of all the flights going out

throughout the entire world on all these different airlines, I looked at the time he's flying in. He's going to be in Amsterdam at 6:45 AM with a three-hour layover. I hadn't even paid attention to my own flight plans to this point. I pulled up my flight plans just to see. We land in Amsterdam at 6:50 for a two and a half hour layover, a few gates down from him. Genuinely, what are the chances of this young man that I love dearly and wish terribly that I could be at the airport with?

00:12:27 For the Lord to put us both. I mean, it was to the point where I thought, maybe I should just cancel my trip. I'm going out to speak to a number of young adult women in Europe. Maybe I should just cancel this trip because being there for my nephew when he comes home from his mission is extremely important to me that he feels loved and cared for and we're all behind him. But instead, the Lord fixed it. And instead of me canceling my trip that I felt I shouldn't cancel, he made it so my husband and myself and my wonderful nephew are all going to be at the Amsterdam airport for two hours. And as I said to him, I said, look, the likelihood of our flights changing and something happening and us not being able to land at the same time or something could be high.

00:13:06 I don't know. We may miss each other. But what is very clear is the Lord knows this nephew. He knows his heart. He cares about him. He knows him by name, and that matters. I just share that with the story of Esther as you mentioned that you can't make this stuff up. God is making himself known. God didn't sign his travel plans and he didn't sign my travel plans like love, Heavenly Father, that wasn't on there. You don't need it. You have the signature. God has made himself known. There have been so many experiences like that in my life, and I hope that we recognize that God is in the details of the details as we've been told. He just makes himself known if we were able to watch that.

Hank Smith: 00:13:41 That's a beautiful story. [Elder Bednar](#), April 2005. You both know it. "Some may count these experiences as simply nice coincidences, but I testify that the tender mercies of the Lord are real. They do not occur randomly or merely by coincidence. Often it is the Lord's timing of his tender mercies, which helps us both discern and acknowledge them." Thanks, Barb.

Dr. Barbara Morgan Gardner: 00:14:09 I just think of [President Oaks](#) and his wonderful talk. If you haven't looked at that recently, his BYU devotional on timing is so good. And for those, especially who may be single or wondering about the timing of the Lord, I love the part because I was single when I was listening to this and I continued to be

for a number of years, and he shares an experience with his wife being single as well. He talks about timing. He talks about the importance of understanding that when we have faith in the Lord, as [Elder Maxwell](#) says, we have faith in the Lord's timing. We have to be careful to judge other people according to our timetable and understanding our own selves according to our timetable. But if we put our trust in the Lord. President Oaks says this, he says the first principle of the gospel is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

00:14:50 Faith means trust. Trust in God's will, trust in His way of doing things, and trust in His timetable. We should not try to impose our timetable on His. And I would add, we should not try to impose our timetable on others. People may wonder why this is happening at this time. Why was [Esther](#) in this position at this time? Why was Mordecai at this position at this time? Why Vashti? Why King Ahasuerus? Why are all these things happening? I don't know, but what I do know is that the Lord is making himself known through His timing. Having faith in the Lord is having faith in His timing, and we see that very clearly in this. I hope that everyone listening recognizes that God is in the details of their lives, and there is timing for everything. Trust in His timing. Get to know the Savior so that you can have trust in His timing. It's much easier to trust in God's timing when you can trust in the Savior. Know the Savior. Learn to trust Him. Then place your timing on the altar so that He can take over. He can run with you.

John Bytheway: 00:15:46 Beautiful. [Elder Lund](#) called them divine signatures. Tender mercies, divine signatures. And I'll bet a lot of listeners are out there nodding and thinking of a time when they saw it too. Write those down and stack them up and see how God is involved in our lives and how he really does, really does arrange things for us sometimes, like this story too.

Hank Smith: 00:16:07 There's this moment in John 21 where the Lord says, "Throw your net on the other side. And you will find." John looks at Peter and says, "It's the Lord." It's a personalized blessing. Only four of them would recognize it. The others would say, "Wow, what a miracle." But they would say, "No, no, no. That's an individualized blessing. That was meant just for me, just for us." And then you were right, John, he jumps into the water. I got to go to him. I would say Barb is helping us get to know the Lord. We want to get to know about him, obviously, but we get to know him as a person, and his timing seems to be such a important part of his personality.

- Dr. Barbara Morgan Gardner: 00:16:47 I guess I'm waxing personal here, but John, just to your point with my wonderful nephew today, I said, please, make sure you write this down. Because even though this seems crazy, this will be something that you really do need to share with future generations and your friends, and maybe most importantly, for yourself. As we've been taught so carefully by Moroni, remember the things that the Lord has done for the children of men since the beginning of Adam. We saw that with Moses. He's asking the people, even in the book of Deuteronomy, remember these things. We were putting stones with Joshua as they're crossing. Put these there so when your children ask, you can tell them. In our day, we have so many ways to record. Find a way to record it so you and other people will be reminded of the hand of the Lord constantly and consistently. In fact, one of the things that [Elder Scott](#) says is one of the ways we show God that we love Him is by recording our sacred experiences. We can remember Him better if we record our experiences. It's hard to sometimes remember. Prove that you care by writing it down or by recording it in some way.
- Hank Smith: 00:17:47 You don't need to be intimidated by saying, oh, I've got to write every detail. Even just making a note of a few sentences will keep that on your mind. I have a note just on my phone.
- John Bytheway: 00:17:58 Or you could even make a voice memo and say, this happened to me today. Just say it if you don't want to write it, just say it. Today with the voice memo thing, I think you hit those little quotation marks and it transfers it to text, like speech to text.
- Hank Smith: 00:18:12 And you can actually upload that audio to your family search. There's so many ways to keep these things.
- Dr. Barbara Morgan Gardner: 00:18:18 The key is to remember. That's the principle, right? Remember the hand of the Lord in all things.
- Hank Smith: 00:18:22 How wonderful.
- Dr. Barbara Morgan Gardner: 00:18:24 If you will indulge me, everyone, I have some pretty strong feelings about the book of Esther. Chapter one starts it off. It's a woman's book in some ways. When I look at the book of Esther, I see influence of women at a very, very high level. I believe that Esther today would be answering the plea of the prophet. And there are a number of things we could talk about. But before we even get into Esther, I want to get into Vashti. I actually have in my scriptures, I love Vashti. But I will say this is a woman who wasn't willing to put up with being treated and demeaned. And I love that about her. We start out with this King Ahasuerus. We

see that he is having this incredible feast. This is in chapter one, verse three. He's having this feast unto all his princes.

00:19:02 He wants to show all of these people the riches it says in verse four, and his glorious kingdom and the honor of his excellent majesty. He's throwing this huge feast. He's inviting all of these people, very high level people. And he wants to really show them how incredible he is. It says in verse six, "The blue hangings fastened with chords." And so you see this sign of real royalty. He's making a very serious point here. They gave them drink in the vessels of gold. I mean, they're drinking out of gold vessels and it's royal wine. I mean, he is going all out in this meeting with these men. And his drinking was according to the law. It says, "None did compel for so the king had appointed to all the officers of his house that they should do according to every man's pleasure." While the king is having his big party with all of these men, we see in verse nine that Vashti, the queen, is also having a royal feast.

00:19:53 She's there with all of her women friends. They are there. They are having this dinner together. They're enjoying each other's company, I would imagine. In the middle of Vashti's dinner that she's having with the women, she is going to be called by her husband, the king, who is, as it says in verse 10, merry with drink or merry with wine. He is going to have his servants go to Vashti and her dinner party and command her to come to him. It says in verse 11, "To bring Vashti, the queen, before the king with the crown royal, to show the people and the princes her beauty for she was fair to look upon." Why is he bringing her? Not to sit down with her, not to hold her hand, not to praise her and appreciate her comfort and her relationship with him. He's bringing her to show off.

00:20:44 He's bringing her to show off just like he's shown off, it seems, with all of these other things. He's showing off the wine. He's showing off the grapes. He's showing off the food. He's showing off everything. It's very clear that that's what he's doing at the beginning. And in verse 12, you see, "But the queen Vashti refused to come at the king's commandment. By his chamberlains, therefore was the king very wroth and his anger burned in him." If we look at it from Vashti's perspective, I so appreciate her here. This is an example, I would say, of patriarchy and why it's very different than the patriarchal order. So I'm going to go back. And we see Adam and Eve, especially as we started the Old Testament this year together, and especially I think we see it mostly in the Pearl of Great Price. We see a couple who is working together so that they can fulfill God's laws and fulfill God's commitments to each other.

- 00:21:33 The amount of times in the Book of Moses where we learn about Adam and Eve and the word they, chapter five of Moses, Adam and his wife called upon the name of the Lord and they heard the voice of the Lord. Verse five, "And he gave unto them commandments that they should worship their Lord their God, and should offer the firstlings of their flocks for an offering." If you go through from the very beginning with Adam and Eve, we see a couple who is working together to fulfill righteousness and to bring each other and their families back into the presence of the Lord and to become like them. Then we go from Adam and Eve and we jump perhaps to Sarah and Abraham. I love Sarah and Abraham. This is the patriarchal order. So we understand Adam and Eve entered into, as President Benson taught us so well, and [President Nelson](#) has taught us so well more recently, that they said that Adam and Eve together entered into the patriarchal order of the priesthood.
- 00:22:28 Together as a spouse, you can't enter into the patriarchal order of the priesthood without each other. Adam and Eve entered into this order together and it allowed them to work together and to serve together. I always think it's fascinating, especially with the story where Abraham is asking Sarah to say that they aren't married, that they're cousins. Abraham asks Sarah. He doesn't command Sarah. That's patriarchal order. They are working together for a righteous and good cause. And Abraham is respecting Sarah by asking her, not demanding. But then you get to the time of Moses and continue to go through the Old Testament. What happens with Moses? We know the story. We've all just read it recently. Moses is going to go up to this mountain and he is coming down. And if you are careful and read the Joseph Smith translation in the book of Exodus, you'll see that what does Moses lose?
- 00:23:19 Or what do the people lose because of it? They lose the new and everlasting covenant. They lose the highest order of the Melchizedek priesthood, which is the patriarchal order. Why does this all matter in bringing us to Esther? Because when the patriarchal order of the priesthood is lost, they lose respect for families because they cannot enter into this order. When we lose respect for families, women become demeaned. When women become demeaned, men become demeaned. It hurts the entire culture and then children can't rise to their privileges. That turns into patriarchy. That is what we don't want. Patriarchal order is a husband and wife. [President Benson](#) says that it's a family order where a husband and a wife are working together as equal partners. Patriarchal order is a family order. Patriarchal order is about temple covenants. It's about eternal

marriage. It's about partnership between men and women and relationships that are ordered under God.

00:24:12 That's patriarchal order. Patriarchal order emphasizes covenants. It emphasizes women and men being yoked together. It emphasizes being rooted in the temple and the principles and ordinances of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Patriarchal order emphasizes being service-oriented and covenant and consecrated. It emphasizes women being eternal and eternal life is only possible through women and men working together in this synergistic relationship. It emphasizes sacred responsibility. But the patriarchy, this is important because people, if Satan wants to use a word to really hurt people, he's going to destroy the things that are most sacred. I know we know this. The patriarchal order is among the most sacred topics in the gospel of Jesus Christ. What is he going to do? He's going to confuse people and turn patriarchal into patriarchy. What is patriarchy? Patriarchy is control. Patriarchy is men over women. Patriarchy is rooted in social systems instead of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

00:25:10 It's power oriented. It's over instead of through. It diminishes the life of women and it focuses on hierarchy and pride. The gospel of Jesus Christ and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is not based on patriarchy. To make this very clear, it's patriarchal. Moses loses this order during his time. You can very clearly see that we're not too far into this time period, and then now how women are being treated. Vashti is being asked to dance in front of a bunch of men. She does not want it. I do not believe Abraham would ever ask Sarah to do that. I do not believe that Isaac would ever ask Rebecca to do that. I do not believe that Hank and John, I don't believe you would do that. You are righteous, good, solid men. My husband would not ask me to do that.

00:25:54 Men who understand God and his order will not demean their wives. I am extremely grateful and blessed by the incredible men in my life who understand what it means to make and keep sacred covenants. And those who do treat women with the greatest of respect. I have experienced mostly respect, kindness, meekness, love unfeigned from the men in my life who have made and kept sacred covenants. That's part of keeping the covenant. That for me is important. We haven't seen that yet in King Ahasuerus. But to be very clear, I think we're going to see it. The influence of Esther is going to change the way that the king acts. I love the king. I don't like to run him under the bus at all. I think he is part of the society at that time. He has men that are around him that are helping him through

temptations and through peer pressure to treat a woman in a way they shouldn't be treated. But with Esther's influence and Esther's help throughout the next few chapters of this book, we're going to see a king that treats Esther very differently than at the beginning of the book.

Hank Smith: 00:27:00

Hmm. I love it. The objectification of women is obviously a plague. Today, it's everywhere. Used to be across town or in a different place. Now it's at our fingertips. Vashti is one who refuses to be treated as an object.

Dr. Barbara Morgan Gardner: 00:27:19

I remember being in a stake. It was the same stake as President Monson. I remember a woman who was asked to come up to the stand and bear her testimony and she was a much older woman. She was walking, had a difficult time walking. She was slowly walking up to the stand at a stake conference. And who got up to help this woman climb the steps? President Monson, who was also in his 80s, struggling with diabetes, had a hard time standing. But what does that say? The most Christlike people are reaching out to the women. I think about a time when Elder Scott was speaking at a meeting that I was in, and I was the only woman in the entire meeting. I remember Elder Scott saying, "We're so grateful for all of you, wonderful brethren who are here, and thank you, dear sister." And he just pointed out that I was there and I appreciated that I wasn't just another man. It was so kind of him. That is where I see my brothers. I see my husband. I see you two. I see other wonderful men in this church. I appreciate the men who are really trying. But I do want to make that point right here very clearly. This is not okay. The treatment of this woman is not okay. It's going to change. But I feel for Vashti.

John Bytheway: 00:28:26

I love that distinction. Patriarchy versus patriarchal order. I love what you've done there. Oh, I hope everybody goes, oh, okay. I can see where that is such an important difference. Starting with the same sounding word, but that's such an important difference. I wanted to read something from the Old Testament student manual. "The guests had been allowed to drink the king's wine in any quantity they wished instead of the law where you only drink when the king does." I think that's what that law thing means. They're just drinking like crazy. The student manual says, "After seven days of heavy drinking, the guests were probably quite inebriated. She, Vashti, may have considered it beneath the dignity of the queen to parade before such a lot, simply to display her beauty. Our friend [Camille Fronk Olson](#) said too, Queen Vashti was not merely a trophy wife. She showed moxie. When the king summoned her to

parade her beauty in front of his inebriated guests, she flatly refused."

Dr. Barbara Morgan Gardner: 00:29:26 There's a reason why chapter one is in here, I believe. I think it's important that we recognize what's going on here with Vashti, because Esther's going to be stepping into this position. This is a very difficult area for women, especially we're seeing this, and we're seeing also who this king is surrounding himself with. This is very telling. We have this king as we see in verse 15. He says, "What shall we do unto the queen Vashti, according to the law? Because she had not performed the commandment of King Ahasuerus by the chamberlains. And Memucan answered before the king and the princes, Vashti the queen hath not done wrong to the king only, but also to all the princes and to all the people that are in the provinces of King Ahasuerus. For this deed of the queen shall come abroad unto all women so that they should despise their husbands in their eyes when it shall be reported.

00:30:13 The king Ahasuerus commanded Vashti, the queen, to be brought in before him, but she came not. What are they concerned about? They're concerned about other people also not obeying their husbands. They're concerned about other people also not following suit and the problems that that could entail, and that's sad. They're concerned again for themselves. This is an issue of pride. This is them saying, "Well, if we don't do this, then other women are also going to think it's not okay." In verse 22, if we continue on with this, let's go to verse 20. "When the king's decree, which he shall make, shall be published throughout all of his empire for it is great, all the wives shall give to their husband's honor, both to great and small." In other words, all women should be bowing down to their husbands. Again, that is not the patriarchal order.

00:30:57 That is not the family proclamation. That is not what our current prophets and apostles are teaching us today. Then continuing, And the saying pleased the king. Well, of course, he wants everyone to bow down to him. He cares a lot about money. He cares about pride. He cares about what he looks like. It's a natural man issue. Yeah, he's having people surrounding him that are going to give him exactly what he wants, which is a whole nother issue of leadership. Then verse 22, "For he sent letters unto all the king's provinces and to every province, according to the writing thereof, and to every people after their language, that every man should bear rule in his own house and that it should be published according to the language of every people." I recognize that word rule. We saw this in the book of Genesis as well with Adam and Eve.

- 00:31:38 I love what [President Hinckley](#) says about rule. He says, "My interpretation of that sentence, speaking very specifically about rule, is that the husband shall have a governing responsibility to provide for, to protect, to strengthen, and to shield." It's not rule over. The husband, as it says in the Family Proclamation, this is a different kind of rule. This is he has a responsibility. He has a responsibility to protect his wife, to provide for his family, to strengthen and shield other people. That's what righteous men do. That's what my experience with men has been most of my entire life. There have been a few exceptions. When I see those exceptions, I think to myself, Section 121 of the Doctrine and Covenants. I'll read the scripture so it's not coming from me, but it's coming from the Lord to Joseph.
- 00:32:26 Behold, there are many called but few are chosen and why are they not chosen? Because their hearts are set so much upon the things of this world, King Ahasuerus right now. And aspire to the honors of men, King Ahasuerus, that they do not learn this one lesson. That the rights of the priesthood are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven and that the powers of heaven cannot be controlled nor handled only by principles of righteousness. That they may be conferred upon us is true, but when we undertake to cover our sins, which he was doing, or to gratify our pride, which he was doing, or vain ambition, which he was doing, or exercise control, or dominion or compulsion upon the souls of the children of men, which he was doing, and any degree of unrighteousness, behold, the heavens withdraw themselves, the spirit of the Lord is grieved, and when it is withdrawn, amen to the priesthood or the authority of that man.
- 00:33:09 But on the opposite side, verse 41, no power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the priesthood only by persuasion, by longsuffering, by gentleness, by meekness, by love unfeigned, by kindness and pure knowledge, which shall greatly enlarge the soul without hypocrisy, without guile, reproving betimes with sharpness when moved upon by the Holy Ghost, and then showing forth afterwards an increase of love towards him whom thou hast reproved. Lest they esteem him to be his enemy. And let thy bowels be full of charity. That's how righteous, wonderful men are and recognizing that they're not perfect. And I will also throw in, that's the same with women. If women are controlling, if women have their hearts upon the things of the world, if women are acting in pride or vain ambitions or exercising control or dominion over people, their husband or their children, amen to the priesthood power that they have been endowed with in the temple.

- 00:33:56 Amen to the authority that they have received as they have made temple covenants and they have been called and set apart in callings. Amen to it for women too. Women and men who are covenant-keeping people are building people to come unto Christ and be like him. Anything less than that is not of God. To be clear again, it's not of God. If women or men are treating each other in a negative way, Vashti's experiencing that. And Esther is not going to be putting up with that. Vashi didn't put up with it, and Esther's not going to put up with it. But Esther's righteousness, I believe, is really going to help this king.
- John Bytheway: 00:34:27 Hey, how many times have we mentioned Section 121? I love it of not only just how to deal with people, but that idea that, okay, you may have had the priesthood conferred upon you, but you act like that. You don't have the priesthood.
- Dr. Barbara Morgan Gardner: 00:34:41 I remember my dad one time, I came home from a volleyball trip. I was in high school. My parents had 13 children. I walked in. My mom had forgotten to pick me up, which I was, frankly, I was used to. I am like, I got forgotten at church. I walked home all the time from everywhere again, and I was number 12. And who remembers the 12th child? Like no one. They lost me in Disneyland, for heaven's sakes. I spent the entire day in the lost and found in Disneyland when I was six. Granted, my mother wasn't there, but I was just kind of used to getting lost. And I remember walking in after walking home from high school. It was a few miles to get home. And I walked in, my mom was doing dishes. I remember going up to her and just letting her have it.
- 00:35:23 I was mean. I was cruel. I was not keeping my covenants. I just couldn't deal with the fact that I had been left again by this wicked woman. It was so stupid as I look at it like she's doing dishes. I remember her standing there and just looking at me and the look in her eye was so hurt. Then my dad walked around the corner and I thought he was at work because I would never have done that to my mom if my dad were home, to be very frank. He walked up to me and he put his finger in my face. And he just said a very short phrase, "That is my wife." And I ran. I ran. I can genuinely say I trusted my dad completely. My dad was a person that we're describing here as one who understands the patriarchal order and how to treat people well.
- 00:36:16 I ran from him because I knew I had hurt him and I knew I'd hurt my mom. I wasn't running from him because I was scared. I was running from him because of my love for them. And I couldn't believe that I had done that. Shortly after, as it says in Doctrine

and Covenants 121, he came downstairs, knocked on the door, sat by me on the bed and just simply said, "Barb, I am disappointed. I love you and I love your mother. I do not want to see you hurting each other. Your mother has done nothing to deserve this, but has given you her entire life. Please do not hurt yourself or our family by acting in such a manner." And I knew that my dad would do that. I knew that he was that kind of person because he is a man of covenant. I want to make it clear.

00:36:59 I recognize that every person has different understandings and we're all struggling with different things, and especially anger sometimes can be very real. And that's one of the things that the king is struggling with here too, it looks like. But try to lift and build each other. I appreciate that my dad didn't get mad at me and scream or anything. He just owned it. Then at the very end, reprove betimes with sharpness when led by the Holy Ghost. But then go forth. Make sure that they understand that you still love them and there's not some hatred behind you and there's not some wedge that's going to ruin your relationship because we care about each other. And that's what the priesthood is. The purpose of the priesthood is to save souls. It's to save families. We get over ourselves, we put ourselves in the hands of the Lord, and we act as Christlike as we can.

00:37:41 Again, we're not perfect. We're all trying to climb our own mountains. Grace for grace, as it says in section 93, following Jesus Christ. Back to Vashti and the idea of the king listening to his friends and feeling like, well, because of his friends, he's going to treat Vashti in a certain way. That's just sad that he doesn't have his own backbone. I wonder if he kicked himself. You do see this in chapter two. I'll go there for a second. He says, "After these things, when the wrath of King Ahasuerus was appeased, he remembered Vashti." So he's no longer mad. I could be seeing this wrong, but the way I see this, for some reason, I've learned to love this king in a funny way because he's so mortal. After the anger had passed, he sits there and he remembers Vashti. And what she had done and what was decreed against her.

00:38:23 Then said the king's servants that administered unto him, let there be a fair young virgin sought for the king. I don't know if that's even what he wanted. I wonder if maybe he just wanted her back. Maybe he realized that he had made a huge mistake. He was really angry, and maybe he just wanted her back. He's just thinking on Vashti. But the people he's surrounding himself with tell him, well, let's go find you a virgin to make you happy. I don't know. Maybe that is what he wanted. It doesn't feel like

that to me when I read this. Then you see in verse three, And let the king appoint officers in all the provinces of his kingdom, that they may gather together all the fair young virgins unto Shushan, the palace, to the house of the women, unto the custody of Hege and the King's chamberlains, keeper of the women, et cetera. So the king agrees to this.

00:39:05 My personal opinion, there's nothing more than that, is I think the king was recognizing already that he had made a mistake and he's thinking on her. It doesn't say that he's mad at her. I think he's thinking on her. And now the reality is though, there's a stage that's been set. Vashti is gone. The king would like another wife. What they did back then culturally to find another wife for the king, which gets us to this next part where we start now, we're going to be introduced to Esther.

Hank Smith: 00:39:32 Barb, I like that you are so good to the king. It just tells me about who you are. You want to see the good in him. He is so influenced. It seems all throughout the book, it's almost like he can't be his own person at times. That someone sends something and he says, "Well, yeah, okay, let's do that." I'm glad that you see such goodness in him. That is just like you. We have women with backbone in this story. Is there going to be a man with a backbone here? And good thing Mordecai is here.

John Bytheway: 00:40:03 I wrote in my margin, he remembered Vashti and I put sober? Because maybe he was now sober.

Hank Smith: 00:40:11 He's like, "Where'd she go?"

John Bytheway: 00:40:12 What have I done? Yeah, what have I done? And then like you said, instead of solving it himself, a servant shows up, hey, I have an idea. Yeah, okay, we'll do that.

Dr. Barbara Morgan Gardner: 00:40:21 There is a reality of what have I done? I think that that's why I give the king the benefit of the doubt, because we do see the king changing. To be clear, all of us make mistakes. Who of us has not said, "What have I done?" Whether it was because we were drinking and we wake up in the morning or because we were in a fit of anger and we wake up in the morning, or it was because we were fearful and we wake up in the morning. We were judgmental and we wake up in the morning. Every one of us, and that's part of mortality, is we ask ourselves, "Oh my goodness, what have I done?" I think, to your point, Hank, on this one, you say, "Why doesn't he get a backbone?" Well, I think that there may be an answer again in section 121, because he doesn't have confidence.

00:40:57 He's lacking confidence. And why is he lacking confidence? Because he is not full of virtue, so it seems, and he's not full of charity. And if you're lacking virtue and you're lacking charity, you're lacking confidence. And you're more likely to be swayed by the evil influences in the world. In my life, the people I see that are the least confident are the people, they may have a fake confidence. The most confident people are the ones who are most Christlike. The more Christlike we are, the more confidence. And often it's a quiet confidence. It's a diligent confidence, but it's a backbone confidence. You can push somebody so far, but a person who is a son of God or a daughter of God who is confident before the Lord is not going to play the game.

Hank Smith: 00:41:34 I remember, John, you'll remember [President Hinckley](#) in the priesthood session of General Conference. We don't have that anymore, but you would sit there and you know he's going to call on men to do better. I remember sitting there and it was like, okay. President Hinckley, here's 2006. With this priesthood comes a great obligation to be worthy of it. We cannot indulge in unclean thoughts. We must not partake of pornography. We must never be guilty of abuse of any kind. We must rise above such things. Rise up, O men of God, and put these things behind you. And the Lord will be your guide and stay.

Dr. Barbara Morgan Gardner: 00:42:09 I've had students over the years say, why are the prophets so hard on the men? And they don't do anything to the women. The brethren are speaking to the women just as strongly, but they do it in a different way like you just said, John. How many times have we had a [President Monson](#) that says to the women, you need to clean your windows so you're not judging the other woman in the house next door. Her clothes are actually pretty clean. It's your windows that are dirty. They're saying it to us. Joseph Smith said that, actually the early Relief Society minutes where Joseph Smith is speaking to those women. It's very similar to Section 121 of the Doctrine and Covenants. Instead of using some of those same words, although some words are similar, but he's saying to them, hold your tongue. Be careful lest you talk negatively about another woman.

00:42:51 Be careful with the way you express. Be careful with judgment. They're saying things and they're correcting and helping women be better. We see that from President Nelson. We've seen that from President Oaks, but [Elder Bednar](#) just came and spoke to the women and he asked the women to arise. Arise. Do more. Be better. We're both hearing it, but I do think that there may be a different way that women are often spoken to than men are. I think if women are prescient and really paying attention

to what's being said, that they will also recognize the loving, rising that the Lord is providing for his daughters. As you said, Hank, the Lord loves whom he chastens. I also will throw out in this case that often for women, if I may, maybe it's the same case with men. I'd leave that to you guys to tell us, although you're not all men, but you may, you may be, and I'm definitely not all women, but I would say sometimes I think women believe that the Lord is chastening them when in reality it's the adversary putting them down.

00:43:44 The Lord doesn't chasten through demeaning, just as we talked about patriarchal order. The Lord doesn't chasten through making you feel bad. It's the Elder Maxwell, it's the divine discontent that the Lord provides. It's not that demeaning, demonic, "I'm horrible. My life's not worth..." That's not coming from the Lord. That's also important for women just to understand how the Lord does speak to his daughters and his sons. It's always going to be a lifting and building experience. Again, patriarchal order never is demeaning, and God is the head of the patriarchal order.

John Bytheway: 00:44:12 Hmm. Barbara, what you shared right at first, [Joseph F. Smith](#), lead the world. Don't be led by the world. That shows confidence right there. Lead the world. That he has confidence in you. What a beautiful way to say it. This is in you. You have the potential, the power to do it. Lead the world. Don't be led by the world. I'll remember that.

Dr. Barbara Morgan Gardner: 00:44:34 John, if it's okay, this is the actual quote. I just looked it up. He says this. Speaking to the women in the church, he said, "It is not for you to be led by the women of the world. It is for you to lead the world, especially the women of the world. And everything that is praiseworthy, everything that is God-like, everything that is uplifting, and everything that is purifying to the children of men. Lead the world." It was [Sister \[Nadault\]](#), I believe, who talks about how we have enough women who are harsh and enough women who are mean or their temper and things like that. But we need women who are following Christ, who are gentle, who are using their spiritual gifts to lift and to build. That's my interpretation. But we need those kinds of women. There's a difference in power. The world, again, that's another word that the adversary just loves to use.

00:45:15 Power is an extremely important word. The Lord uses it consistently throughout the scriptures. Satan does not like that word. Somehow it just becomes sometimes a negative word. But power used in righteousness is God's power. It's priesthood. And with women, and for men, love is power. Love is very

powerful. Charity is very powerful. So if we could really understand how God uses his power, how God uses his love, it would change the way we understand priesthood and presiding. I get asked often what is presiding? And there are a number of, numbers, so many quotes about presiding. Those that I love talk about how presiding is service and what it means to preside in righteousness. I'll give you maybe a couple. I love this one.

00:45:58 This one is from [Elder L. Tom Perry](#). Remember, brethren, that in your role as a leader in your family, your wife is your companion. Since the beginning, God has instructed mankind that marriage should unite husband and wife together in unity. Therefore, there is not a president or a vice president in a family. The couple works together eternally for the good of the family. They are united together in word, in deed, and in action as they lead, guide, and direct their family unit. They are on equal footing. They plan and organize the affairs of the family jointly and unanimously as they move forward. In recent years, we've had [Elder Soares](#) talking about what that means to have this patriarchal order and to enter into this everlasting covenant of the priesthood. Elder Holland has a great quote where he's talking about, I don't have a problem with any man understanding presiding when, because when they understand it, they're going to serve and love and build each other.

00:46:46 [Elder Rasband](#) says, "Preside does not mean dominate. Nurture does not mean a secondary role. God has given men and women different, but equal and essential roles that compliment each other." Presiding, if you ask me what it is, it's to love. It's to serve. It's to protect. It's to build. I have seen people say, "What is it? When you see it, you know it. When you experience it, you know it. It is a man who will lay down his life for his friend. A man who will lay down his life for his wife. Presiding is not being in control. Presiding is serving. Which I think that's why it's Christlike leadership is service leadership. I've experienced that. Sometimes I recognize that some haven't. I have experienced it and I appreciate it so much.

Hank Smith: 00:47:28 Let's do a little ping pong then. We've gone back and forth between men and women. John, you want to hear one from [Elder Christofferson](#)? President Christofferson, but then Elder Christofferson. You ready for this?

John Bytheway: 00:47:39 Mm-hmm.

Hank Smith: 00:47:40 "As men of the priesthood, we have an essential role to play in society, at home and in the church. But we must be men that women can trust, that children can trust, and that God can

trust. In the church and in the kingdom of God in these latter days, we cannot afford to have boys and men who are drifting. We cannot afford young men who lack self-discipline and live only to be entertained. We cannot afford young adult men who are going nowhere in life, who are not serious about forming families and making real contribution in this world. We cannot afford husbands and fathers who fail to provide spiritual leadership in the home. We cannot afford to have those who exercise the Holy Priesthood after the order of the Son of God, waste their strength in pornography or spend their lives in cyberspace, ironically being of the world while not being in the world. Brethren, we have a work to do."

00:48:34 Then he does exactly a little bit later in the talk what Barb said to do. "Brethren, we have a work to do. Thank you for the sacrifices you make and the good you do. Keep going. And the Lord will help you." He follows up. You can feel the love. He says, "At times, you may not know quite what to do or what to say. Move forward. Begin to act, and the Lord assures that an effectual door will be open for you. It is true that we are, in many ways, ordinary and imperfect, but we have a perfect master who wrought a perfect atonement and we have call upon his grace and his priesthood. As we repent and purge our souls, we are promised that we will be taught and endowed with power from on high."

00:49:19 It's exactly what Barb said. Oh, listen to this. "The church and the world and women are crying for men. Men who are developing their capacity and talents, who are willing to work and make sacrifices, who will help others achieve happiness and salvation. They are crying rise up, oh men of God. God, help us do it." I love this Barb, we're getting pep talks on both sides of the aisle.

Dr. Barbara Morgan Gardner: 00:49:46 We all have so much work to do. So I share this story. And Dustin, my husband and I got married when we were both 40. You get kind of set in your ways. I remember after we were married and I would leave like I normally would and just go do a bunch of stuff, head to the library, go shopping, go to dinner, whatever, call my friends. And I remember one day, it was not too long after we were married, Dustin called and it was probably 10:30 at night. And he was like, "Barb, are, are you okay?" I was like, "Well, yeah. It's what I do. I always stay out late and then I come home when I want to." And he was so kind about it, just like, "Okay, just checking in." For me, it was just normal. For him, it wasn't normal.

- 00:50:20 So it went on that way for a little while. And one day he was getting a little bit bugged by it. And I was like, "Dustin, I am my own person." I wasn't trying. It was just more the personality of me and him. I just wasn't used to having to check in. Why would I check in? Right. After that, the next morning, he just said, "I'm so sorry." And I said, "Well, why are you sorry?" He said, "I just want to make sure that you're loved." What does it do to me as a wife? Makes me want to be a better wife. Oh. He's just good. But is he perfect? No, but he's just a good guy trying to do what's right. He'll be a man, he'll step forward. It causes me to say to myself as a woman, I need to step up to the plate because I need to make sure in our home we are having peace.
- 00:51:07 I need to be the lioness at that gate for him and for my children. Yes, a man protects, but also a woman. And I want to be at that gate, and I want to make sure nothing bad is coming in, and I want to make sure that the cell phones are off or the TV, whatever it is. That's what synergy is. The patriarchal order of the priesthood, it's energy. It lives and builds. I want to be a better wife because he is a better husband. I want to be a better mom because he's an incredible dad. Hopefully, we're doing it because we love the Lord. But when you work and build together, and that's the beauty of the priesthood, when everybody is working to save souls, there's a natural love and respect that comes when you see another person sacrificing for righteous purposes. To me, this is important in the book of Esther in chapter two.
- 00:51:47 To remember that Esther was an orphan. Her parents, for whatever reason, have died. It could have been battle. It could have been a variety of circumstances. We don't know. Esther, as it says in here, verse seven, and he brought up Hadassah, that is Esther, his uncle's daughter, which, if I understand right, that would make them cousins if we see it that way. For she had neither father nor mother, and the maid was fair and beautiful, whom Mordecai, when her father and mother were dead, took for his own daughter. We see in chapter one, a relationship between a husband and a wife. Now we're being introduced to a relationship between a father and a daughter. I think this relationship between fathers and daughters is critical. I've spoken already of my own father and the influence of my father on my life. This is a different kind of presiding.
- 00:52:33 Presiding with a wife and a husband and a family relationship is different than a relationship between a father and a daughter. I would imagine that's extremely obvious. In fact, I believe it was [Elaine Dalton](#) who made the comment, "A best thing a father can do for his daughter is to love her mother." This may become

maybe a little bit more personal to me because I have two adopted, if I were to use the words, although I don't like to use it often, I have two orphan children that had no parents for a while. One of the things that we recognize right off the bat is we have to be different parents than what they may have experienced very young in their lives. We need to set the stage of what parenting looks like and very strongly teach and have a relationship, especially, and I'll throw this out for me, especially for my husband.

00:53:22 Because you see with Mordecai, the relationship between a father and a daughter is extremely important. We know that fathers often will become that first glimpse of what God is like, is how they perceive their father. Before a daughter or a son understands doctrine, before they understand covenants, before they understand truth, before they understand Jesus Christ, before they understand scriptures, what they understand is their environment. They understand the true nature of God by who they are associating with and who is in their presence. They're going to learn how God loves them, how God protects them, how God corrects them, how God disciplines, how God helps them belong. They're going to learn their own identity by their mother, but especially for girls by their father. That relationship that we're seeing here with Mordecai and Esther is very clearly, I think, important in here. What does Mordecai teach Esther about herself?

00:54:19 He clearly is mentoring her. He's clearly loving her. To me, this relationship, as he sees it, there's this position. You see in verse seven that it says that he took her as his own daughter. For a man in this stage to take a woman, we're talking the lowest of low. She's an orphan in exile with no parents, which means she has no money. She has no birthright. She has no purpose. I was at a conference in November of this last year where I was in Jordan. Part of the purpose of this conference, the discussion was among major leaders of the countries in that area. And orphan daughters are not adopted. They're not allowed to be adopted because it's a birthright issue. That's one of the reasons. So you have lots and lots of orphans. They're not allowed to be adopted by their people in their own country.

00:55:07 I went to this conference not knowing that that was the case and the conference was on family and they asked me about the adoption of my own daughters. It caused some major contention, some concerns among people. How could you adopt these girls and take away their birthright? One of the things very plainly that I learned in that moment, it was a spiritual guidance was because of the gospel of Jesus Christ, we

understand that they actually received their birthright because they were adopted and sealed as if they had been born in the covenant. This is what Mordecai, I believe, is presenting this opportunity. Not that it's necessarily born in the covenant, but he's providing a safe place for her. He's providing her a life that she could not have. That is the responsibility of this father. Regardless of what happened as an orphan, we have a very loving father who was able to help a young girl who literally in that time, in that place, had no hope according to what the world would see.

00:56:00 He's doing this. To me, this Mordecai is a very selfless individual in what he is providing here. Putting her in a position to take the possibility of being a queen. I don't have all the answers here, but it seems as if he's taking advantage of this moment. He recognizes the possibilities that could be presented. I feel like he's probably following the Spirit. And for such a time as this, here he has this beautiful girl who is in a position that he actually believes could be very helpful for the Jewish people and for his family and especially I think for Esther. It's interesting in verse 10 that Esther had not shown her people nor her kindred for Mordecai had charged her that she should not show it. Well, in other words, I think it's interesting here that we still have a father-daughter relationship. This isn't a husband-wife relationship that we're seeing here.

00:56:44 Mordecai charged her. He's the dad. At this point, he is helping, he is mentoring, he is guiding, he is leading his daughter, trying to help her position herself in the best place. It's a daughter-father relationship that's very different than a father-wife relationship. You see this as he's guiding her through this possibility of her doing this and putting in a position. But later on, we're going to see how this father-daughter relationship turns where she is the one providing him opportunities. Now we see the synergy. We saw the synergy already that could be between a husband and a wife and we'll continue to see that. Now we're seeing the synergy that happens between a father and a daughter. It's beginning. He's providing her opportunities right now. He's mentoring. He's guiding her. He's putting her in a position that she can go forward until we get to the point where it says the king delighted in her and that she were called by name.

00:57:30 She's put in position now. She has been purified for 12 months. The king does like her. He does want her to be his wife. She is now going to be called into a position where she is going to have serious influence in the kingdom. So you see in verse 17, "The king loved Esther above all the women and she obtained

grace and favor in his sight more than all the virgins so that he set the royal crown upon her head and made her queen instead of Vashti." There's always a part of me that thinks, uh, poor Vashti again. Like get Vashti back, right? Get Vashti back. Just say you're sorry. It's just, it's still kind of frustrating there, but I have to let that go to let Esther come in. Then you see verse 18, "Then the king made a great feast unto all the princes and his servants, even Esther's feast, which I think is interesting that it's called Esther's feast.

00:58:19 He made a release to the provinces and gave gifts according to the state of the king. When the virgins were gathered together the second time, that Mordecai sat in the gate." Now what we don't see here, and I'm not saying it didn't happen because it doesn't say that, but I think it's interesting. We don't see a bunch of wine being drunk. We don't see all of the pride that was happening. We don't see that story that happened with Vashti. What we see is a king, seemingly this king who calls his feast, or it seems to be called after the name of Esther. There's a level of respect that was happening with Esther that did not happen with Vashti. I think the king's beginning to change. Now you see all these virgins that are gathered together the second time. Mordecai now is sitting outside of the gate.

00:58:56 We see Esther had not shown her kindred nor her people as Mordecai had charged her because she was told by him not to. For Esther did the commandment of Mordecai like as when she was brought up with him. In other words, to me, this is a young girl who is now growing older and she has learned to trust her father. She has great respect for him. She knows that he is a selfless individual. He's trying to help her. She is obedient to his guidance. It's a level of trust. He's not forcing her to. She can make the decision by herself. She's the queen. But she is so respectful of him that she sees the wisdom in what he's done and she is going to respect his desires and she's going to follow through with it. I think that's powerful, the influence that he has had on her. Had she made herself known as a Jewish person prior to this, the likelihood of her becoming the queen is probably much lower. So I think she was wise in following through with this. She followed his guidance and became the queen.

Hank Smith: 00:59:47 I think she's entering a world she probably doesn't quite understand of politics and enemies. And Mordecai saying, I'm going to help you navigate this very difficult place that you're going to be in.

Dr. Barbara Morgan Gardner: 01:00:01 I'm going to give a very basic, pragmatic, maybe throw out word of advice. Daughters, listen to your dads. Your dads love you. Your moms love you. Listen, recognize there's no one in the world who loves you more than your mom and your dad. Even if you completely disagree, just give it some time to listen. Let the dads give some advice. If the dad's saying something that's frustrating to you, maybe be frustrated for a moment, but go into your room and think on it for a bit. Maybe you'll find out that he was maybe right, even though you don't want him to be. I think of the many times the wisdom of a father in my own life, and if we're too quick to disagree or too quick to not want to be guided, we could be hurting ourselves in whatever it is. And whether it's choosing a spouse or going to college or what we wear or what we focus our time on or anything else, listen to the people who love you most, even if you don't want to. In this case, I think father's wisdom to their daughters is extremely important. So I love that Mordecai is carefully mentoring her and walking beside her. And I love this relationship between a father and a daughter.

Hank Smith: 01:01:10 John, we'll call that our young adult moment of this podcast. Everyone take note of the timestamp and send that to your young adult. Your teenager or your young adult child. Say, "Go to this point on this podcast and listen to this part." Because young single adults, even young married adults, they don't have a lot of time to listen to the show, so we talk to their parents to send them the clip.

Dr. Barbara Morgan Gardner: 01:01:35 I can't tell you the number of times serving as a chaplain, especially at Harvard and MIT where I would have a young adult, especially the young women would come in and they would tell me these decisions in their lives. And sometimes they were kind of interesting to say the least. Like, huh, interesting. And I would ask them, "What does your dad think about this? What does your mom think about this?" They would often, they would hesitate like, "Well, I, my parents don't agree and they, they think that, but they're old." And they would just go on and I would just kind of pause. So what do they think about this? How do you think about the guidance that they're giving you? Often I could see that they saw the wisdom of what their parents were saying. They wanted to be free, and I get, and I totally get that. But there's a reason we have parents. There just is, especially for young adults. Listen, you don't have to follow it, but be humble enough to listen to the people who love you on this earth. No one loves you more than your parents. It's just true.

- Hank Smith: 01:02:31 I remember I had a conversation with one of my students. Her name was Sydney Fry. I said, "What do your parents think?" "Well, they don't like," you know, and it saved her life, going to her parents. Saved her future. Whenever I see her, she still talks about it. Thank you for sending me to my parents. It was this close to, I think, a tragic trajectory.
- Dr. Barbara Morgan Gardner: 01:02:57 It's so good, John and Hank. Speaking to you guys as dads too, just from a daughter's perspective, your daughters love you and they look up to you a lot. I know you know that it may sometimes not feel that way for all you fathers out there, but I promise you, there is a connection and there is a level of respect. They do see God through you. And how you treat your daughters is a direct connection, a direct link to how they are perceiving their father in heaven. I have witnessed that on multiple occasions through multiple people. When they talk to me about their fathers, it's very much how they feel about God. Just a shout out to all you wonderful dads as well. And maybe a word of thank you and also a word of being wise in relationships with them.
- John Bytheway: 01:03:43 Have you ever had someone come to you and tell you, "Man, I learned this thing at seminary. I learned this thing at church and it's something you have said to them before?" You just, yeah, wow, what, what a, what a novel thought. So I'm thankful for those other people out there too that can repeat some of the same things they've been told by their mom and dad.
- Dr. Barbara Morgan Gardner: 01:04:08 There's a great talk that [President Nelson](#) gave, and he was talking to the women. I believe it's in the talk, Women's Responsibility in the Gathering of Israel or something of that nature. And he talks about a mom who took the cell phone away from her son. It was hard for her to do it because of the culture and society and everything else, but the son came back later and thanked the mom for helping him. And I think about back a hundred years ago when I was a kid, I remember my dad on multiple occasions, I remember I was reading a book. Sounds funny to say this, but I was reading the Gulag Archipelago. It was a concentration camp I was totally into it. I was in the eighth grade. And I remember my dad, again, asking me if he could see my book.
- 01:04:48 I gave it to him and thumbing through it for a while and he just said to me, "Barb, I appreciate how much time and care that you have for World War II and Nazis and camps and things, but this book is hurting you. It's changing your nature. It's, you have put yourself so deeply into this that you're becoming depressed by it. I am going to encourage you to not read these books, and

in fact, you cannot read this book anymore." And I remember him taking it. And I remember how bugged I was, like, "I am into this. Like, I love this stuff. I'm going to save all these people," right? I just so appreciate that he was so perceptive of how, again, with all these kids, that he was perceptive of the need of number 12 enough to take the book away. I'm just grateful that he did.

01:05:34 I can think of many experiences where he, as you both have said, where he had a backbone. He was not afraid of being the dad. By the dad, a very loving, kind dad, but he was very wise. My mom too, there was just no fear in raising children, right? Like, they just. I hope that dad's able to turn off the television or take away the phone or shut the computer down or say no to a sleepover. Whatever it is, those are all applications. Every dad, every mom's going to have the spirit teach them something in a different way on how to raise their own children. But I can't tell you how many times my dad would say to me, "I just don't feel good about it." And he would tick me off. I'd be so upset. But how grateful I am for a dad who said, "I don't feel good about it and so, no."

01:06:17 That's it. I just don't feel good about it. That had to be good enough. No reason, no explanation. He was just dad. And we trusted him enough to say, "Okay." Not always was it kindly okay, but enough to say. I'm just grateful that he didn't have to have an excuse for it. He didn't have to bow down to anybody. He was dad and he was saving his kids and protecting us. And I'm very, very grateful for that. I hope the dads can be dads in the homes, and moms can be moms in the homes.

Hank Smith: 01:06:42 He had built that relationship.

Dr. Barbara Morgan Gardner: 01:06:44 Absolutely. But you can imagine how I felt about a heavenly father. I also knew that he loved me enough to say no, or enough to take away a book, or, you know, I got that through them. So.

John Bytheway: 01:06:55 I love the idea that heavenly Father has different ways of saying, "I love you." One of them is, "I love you." One of them is three different words, thou shalt not. But they communicate the same thing. I'm going to save you so much hurt, heartache, and sorrow that maybe you don't even see right now. If you'll just trust me, thou shalt not do this. That's a, boundaries are love.

Dr. Barbara Morgan Gardner: 01:07:20 I remember one time I was - I had just turned 16 and my girlfriends at the time, we all had turned 16 within, like, a couple of months of each other. And we decided to cruise the

gut. I don't know if that exists anywhere else, but in Oregon, in Salem, where I was from, we were driving down the street. Of course, our parents didn't know about it. We were all that. And after cruising the gut for a period of time, this car of young men started following us, and they followed us all the way across the Willamette River and down to this little place. And we were so afraid there's no way we could bring any of them home. So we parked, we pulled into, the only church parking lot in the area, which was the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints parking lot, because that was our safe place, I guess, and thinking that they would leave us alone.

01:07:59 But they followed us into that church parking lot. It was a few miles from our own home. They rolled down the window, they got out, and they asked us on a date. And we were so excited. It was, we just turned 16. These boys that we didn't know were cruising the gut. It was midnight, and they had asked us on a date. Of course, we said yes. We were just giddy about it. We drove home each to our own areas. And then I announced to my parents that I was so excited that I'd been asked on a date by these guys that were in this truck. Didn't give them all the details of driving down the street and things, but of course, I'm doing this and my parents are looking at me like, "You are the most interesting child." We'll just say it that way.

01:08:38 I remember my dad saying, "It's so great that you and your friends were all asked on a date, what's your plan?" And I told them, like, "Well, I don't know yet. They're going to pick us up and they're going to take us somewhere." And my dad said, "That is such an interesting idea." This is my memory. "That is such an interesting idea. I am fine with you guys going on a date with these young men, but you will not be going just anywhere. You'll be going to the backyard, and your brother David will be sitting on the trampoline with you. And you will not leave the trampoline with those young men until they are gone. And you will have a wonderful date. All six of you and your brother, David, will sit on the trampoline and have your date." You know what? It was horrible. Those guys were not worth our time, and it was a total joke.

01:09:25 I was so embarrassed as they came to the house and came back on the back of that trampoline. Clearly, their intentions were not what I had thought as a 16-year-old. And I'm so grateful for the protection of my father who made sure that we all had a great date on the trampoline with my five year older brother who just got home from his mission and just loved those boys to death with me. And kindly escorted them out of the area after a few minutes of sitting on that trampoline together. There are

various ways. I guess the point here is just be the dad. It's okay. You can say no. You can put your kids on the trampoline together and give them some agency, but at the same time, make sure that they're safe as much as you can.

John Bytheway: 01:10:08 If your kids want to cruise the gut, then and you get a gut feeling, then you know what to do.

Hank Smith: 01:10:16 This is [Marvin J. Ashton](#), 1985. Many years ago, I heard a story that impressed me. A beautiful little blind girl was being held by her father in a crowded compartment on a train. A friend was nearby and said to the father, "Let me give you a little rest." And he reached over and took the little girl and held her. A few moments later, the father said to her, "Do you know who is holding you?" "No," the little girl replied. "But you do." She was at peace because she knew and trusted her father.

Dr. Barbara Morgan Gardner: 01:10:50 Amen. Exactly. Exactly. Such a great story.



- John Bytheway: 00:01 Welcome to part two of Esther with Dr. Barbara Morgan Gardner.
- Dr. Barbara Morgan Gardner: 00:05 Let's jump into chapter three. It's actually pretty fun because now we get a new character. His name is Haman. I just encourage you to compare Haman with Mordecai. These are two different men, and there's going to be some clear distinctions in leadership, I believe, between Haman and Mordecai. Starting in verse one, "After these things did King Ahasuerus promote Haman, the son of Hammedatha, the Agagite." We know a little bit about him. We see that Haman is an Agagite. So this is a different country, different ruling. We don't know why Haman has been promoted though. I wish we knew. I don't know if he had something to do with saving the king here. Somehow he was involved. We just don't know. We just know that he was promoted. We know that he's advanced. And it says, "And set his seat above all the princes that were with him." Something that Ahasuerus is seeing with Haman causes him to promote him, and now he's in this very serious position of leadership, second only to the king.
- 01:04 We see in verse two, "And all the king servants that were in the king's gate bowed and revered Haman." Now we're starting to see we have this man. He has just received a new responsibility. It's back to section 121. I'll just say this as a foreshadow. This man just got a whole level of authority and power. Let's see what happens to him.
- John Bytheway: 01:23 Oh, boy.
- Dr. Barbara Morgan Gardner: 01:24 Oh, boy. So for the king had so commanded concerning him, but Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence. We have this person, Mordecai, we can see he has a backbone and everybody else is going to be bowing down to Haman. Mordecai refuses to bow. Then the king's servants, which were in the king's gate, said to Mordecai, why transgressest thou the king's commandment? Now, it came to pass that when they spake

daily unto him and he hearkened not unto them. It didn't matter how many times they tried to get him down from the mountain, he wasn't coming down from the mountain. It didn't matter how many times they asked him to bow, he would not bow. He's keeping to his guns. He knows the principles that he's basing his life on, and he's not going to budge and compromise his principle. They told Haman to see whether Mordecai's matters would stand, for he had told them that he was a Jew.

02:10 Which brings in another, a whole nother element. Up to this point, Esther hasn't said anything about being a Jew, but we know that Mordecai has. Mordecai has made that known. Esther has not made that known. And when Haman saw that Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence, Haman was full of wrath. Verse six, and he thought scorn to lay hands on Mordecai alone. It's beginning to bug him so bad that he's thinking about, what can I do to this guy? How can I get him alone? How can I hurt him? But they had showed him the people of Mordecai, wherefore Haman sought to destroy all the Jews that were throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus, even the people of Mordecai. This is what people are warned of over and over and over again in the scriptures, especially in the Doctrine & Covenants, and especially when it comes to leadership and power and authority.

02:52 He's not just bugged at one person. He's going to destroy the whole Jewish, I mean, talk about going to extremes, right? This guy's not going to bow to me, so I hate everyone that has anything to do with this. This is racism at its finest. This is what [President Nelson](#) and [President Oaks](#) have taught us so recently. Root out racism. And what's interesting about Haman is he does have a wife, but he doesn't have the right kind of wife. Apparently, again, I don't want to judge his wife, but what you see in chapter six, you're mentioning wife here. And Haman told Zeresh his wife and all his friends everything that had befallen him. We'll have to go back to this to see what his wife says. Then said his wise men and Zeresh his wife unto him, if Mordecai be of the seed of the Jews before whom thou hast begun to fall, thou shalt not prevail against him.

03:36 Zeresh, his wife, is going to become pretty obnoxious. She's actually going to say, yeah, go ahead. Let's kill Mordecai. Let's put him up and hang him. Who are you surrounding yourself with? Who are you marrying? Who is lifting and building? And these two, the husband and wife here, this is not a good couple. This is a couple who is prideful together. And that he goes back to his wife and tells them this story and she eggs him on in a negative way. They're trying to decide what are they going to

do? They go back to the king. We're seeing this ugly flattery. There's so much flattery that is associated with pride, but watch the flattery here. And Haman said into King Ahasuerus. There is a certain people. Notice he doesn't even mention who the people are. "There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of thy kingdom, and their laws are diverse from all people.

04:24

Neither keep they the king's laws. Therefore, it is not for the king to profit to suffer them. If it please the king, let it be written that they may be destroyed." It's so frustrating. Haman has one person that will not bow down to him, and instead of acknowledging to the king that there's a man who won't bow down to me, he's putting that on the king and saying there are a number of people who are not being obedient to you. This is so destructive. He has convinced the king that people are against him, and in reality, no one is against the king. We're going to see this for the next few chapters with Haman. His anger and his pride literally overtake his entire personality because one person will not bow down. He can't let one person go.

Hank Smith:

05:03

And he doesn't realize it. And this is a bit of a spoiler, but he has just sealed his own fate as he continues down this path. He thinks he's winning.

Dr. Barbara Morgan Gardner: 05:12

Yeah. Then we see that the king's caught up in this, what? There's somebody who's not bowing down to me? Well, we already know how the king treats people who don't bow down to him. He was just convinced by all these people that he was going to let his wife go. He's delegating his power to someone else without actually understanding the situation, without finding out more on his own authority. And it says the king said into Haman, the silver is given to thee, so yes, go ahead. You have my permission. Then the king scribes wrote down basically this law. And if you jump over to the end of verse 12, he is able to write in the language in the name of King Ahasuerus was it written and sealed with the king's ring. The letters were sent by the posts into all the king's provinces to destroy, to kill, and to cause perish all the Jews, both young and old, little children and women in one day." That's just sick.

05:59

This is leadership at its worst. This is the opposite of peacemaking. [President Hinckley](#) has a great talk where he talks about how anger really can destroy a person, how anger causes people to end up in jail and in prison. The anger is not only taking away the agency of the people who are going to be killed or who are in line to be killed, but very clearly the anger is

taking the agency of Haman. He cannot control himself right now. It's changing him as a man.

Hank Smith: 06:25

The king is so disappointing here too. He's the most powerful man in the kingdom and he has, you feel like he has zero control.

Dr. Barbara Morgan Gardner: 06:34

It's an extremely important point when it comes to leadership, especially with the church and families. We have to know our own power. We have to recognize our own authority. We have to recognize when a prophet is speaking or a bishop is speaking or a stake president or a Relief Society president or a father or a mother, it's going to take different weight depending upon the power they've been given. A mission president can make a statement that will affect a missionary for good or bad for the rest of your life because of the trust level between the missionary and the mission president. The mission president learns, I need to be careful with how I use my words and how I guide and counsel.

Hank Smith: 07:12

He makes zero decisions for himself. The only decision I see him making is in chapter one when he wants Vashti to come parade out. When she doesn't do that, he's just really angry. But other than that, everyone else is telling him what decisions to make.

Dr. Barbara Morgan Gardner: 07:29

To me, it seems that he has not based his leadership on principle. This is from [President Kimball](#), and this is a very important point when it comes to leadership, Christlike leadership, covenant leadership. He says this, "Jesus operated from a base of fixed principles or truths rather than making up the rules as he went along. Thus, his leadership style was not only correct, but also constant. Jesus said several times, come, follow me. His was a program of do what I do rather than do what I say. His innate brilliance would have permitted him to put on a dazzling display, but that would have left his followers far behind. He walked and worked with those he was to serve. He was not a long-distance leadership. His was not a long-distance leadership. He was not afraid of close friendships. He was not afraid that proximity to him would disappoint his followers." He's a true leader. Jesus Christ leads based on principles. He's not changing his principles based upon what his cohorts or his colleagues or his counselors are saying. The principles stand, stay the same regardless.

Hank Smith: 08:29

You're helping me see here why Esther is so fearful to do what Mordecai asks because he is. The king is so unpredictable and so easily manipulated.

Dr. Barbara Morgan Gardner: 08:39

You see this next part. Mordecai rents his clothes. He recognizes what's happening. Sackcloth with ashes, we're in chapter four now, went out in the midst of the city and cried with a loud and bitter cry. Mordecai, not only will he not bow down to Haman, but he is going to make a stir. It says, "And came even before the king's gate, for none might enter into the king's gate clothed with sackcloth." He's not sitting in a corner trying to save himself. He is going into the most public place in an area where he is going to be noticed. He's in sackcloth and ashes. He's making a scene, but he's making a scene to save his people. Then it says in verse three, "And in every province, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, there was a great mourning among the Jews and fasting and weeping and wailing and many lay in sackcloth and ashes." This is the scene that we have set up now.

09:26

All the Jewish people are going to be killed. They have the date. They have the paper. Mordecai knows about it. He is going to do everything in his power, which isn't much. He doesn't have a ring. He doesn't have a say, but he does have a daughter. He's going to take advantage of this moment putting himself in a position, fasting and praying, having other people help, but he's going to use the person, not use in a negative way. He's going to take advantage righteously of a person he has trusted and he has raised and he has loved and cared for so that he can save his entire people. Which then takes us into verse four. Verse four, we're seeing Esther's maids and her chamberlains came and told her. Then was the queen exceedingly grieved. Of course, Esther and Mordecai aren't having a conversation. She just, she doesn't even know what's happening.

10:12

It doesn't seem like she knows of this mandate that all of her family and friends and father are going to be killed, and frankly, even herself. She sent raiment to clothe Mordecai. It's like he's out there crying and fasting and wailing. He's rent these clothes and now he's wearing sackcloth and ashes. But she doesn't know why. So she's like, somebody take these clothes and go dress him. And it says, and to take away his sackcloth from him, but he received it not. So it seems like at this point, there's something that's going on. Esther's starting to recognize there's something seriously happening. Mordecai is making it very clear. There's no way Esther cannot see that there's a problem here. She needs to know and Mordecai needs her to know. Now there's this critical relationship between a father and a daughter. These two are going to work together to save souls.

10:54

Then called Esther for Hatach, one of the king's chamberlains, whom he had appointed to attend upon her and gave him a

commandment to Mordecai to know what it was and why it was. She's asking what is going on? Hatach went forth to Mordecai into the street of the city, which was before the king's gate. And Mordecai told him all that had happened unto him and of the sum of money that Haman had promised to pay to the king's treasures for the Jews to destroy them. You can see, oh my goodness, Esther is hearing this. Also, he gave him the copy of the writings of the decree that was given to Sushan to destroy them. Not only is she hearing it, he is giving her proof. Esther, everyone is going to be killed because of Haman. To show it unto Esther and to declare it unto her and to charge her, that she should go in unto the king to make supplication unto him and to make requests before him for her people.

11:41 Now, this is getting scary. There's only one person that can change the mind of the king, and it is going to be Esther, his wife. And Hatach came in and told Esther these words of Mordecai, and Esther spake unto Hatach and gave him commandment unto Mordecai. So you can see, she has just been given a bombshell. Everything is happening. All of my people, everything that I have ever loved is about ready to be destroyed. But she recognizes, as you were just saying, this is a big deal. You don't just walk into the king. He's already deposed of his last wife. He's not kidding. And he really does have power to destroy, and he has shown that he will.

12:16 This is what [Esther](#) sends back. All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces do know that whosoever, whether man or woman, shall come unto the king into the inner court who is not called. There is one law of his to put him to death, except such to whom the king shall hold out the golden scepter, that he may live. But I have not been called to come in unto the king these 30 days. This is the letter that's being sent. Mordecai, dad, do you understand that if I do what you ask me to do, the likelihood of me being killed is, like, close to 100%. You're asking a lot. I just want you to know that there have been other virgins that have been killed on altars before. The last queen has been disposed of. We don't even know what happens to her. We've seen the king acting in ways that are pretty scary, and he has a lot of men around him, and he's very easily swayed. If any of these men sway the king in any way, I just want you to know, dad, I will die.

13:14 But here's your letter. And they told Mordecai Esther's words. Now we have this letter that's being passed. I almost want to wait during this passing of the letter time. Sometimes I wondered if this servant would actually read the letter. I mean, I'm sure he's a trusted person, but there's this waiting time

now. This is not text message. This is not a quick email to somebody. There's this period of time where they're both recognizing that literally their lives are on the line. They're just now what? And I would imagine there's this period of pondering. There's a period of praying. There's a period of understanding. There's deep contemplation. Like President Oaks has just said, this is real for them. This is real.

Hank Smith: 13:55 Courage is not the absence of fear. It is feeling great fear and

John Bytheway: 14:00 doing it anyway.

Hank Smith: 14:01 Yeah. Having great resolve. Wow.

Dr. Barbara Morgan Gardner: 14:04 I think of Esther like, really? What do you do? It's very scary. It's Daniel and the lion's den. I mean, do you keep praying out loud? Or do you stop?

Hank Smith: 14:15 Also, Barb, the amount of money that's involved, I know that seems like, oh, that's not a big deal. But to a king, to Haman, money changes people. It can cause you to do some things you maybe would never do. She probably knows who Haman is and the power that he has. This doesn't sound like a guy you get in his way.

Dr. Barbara Morgan Gardner: 14:35 If Haman's sitting there and he says to King Ahasuerus, yeah, don't let her talk. Well, she's done. Because he falls for everything. It seems that whatever they can do to make the king prideful and make him worship himself, he's going to do. Whatever benefits the king, it seems he's going to do. And it's so wise what Esther's going to do in the future. But to get back to the story, then Mordecai commanded to answer Esther, think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in that king's house more than all the Jews. Esther, they're going to know you're a Jew. By not saying anything, you're not going to save yourself. You will die too. Regardless of what you choose, if you say nothing, you're going to die. If you say something, you might die. I mean, there's this risk that's involved. The best risk really for her to take and the courage for her to take is to choose to go to him because she will die otherwise, and all of her family will die because she is a Jew.

15:27 I think it's very tender when he says, "Think not thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house more than all the Jews. For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time then shall their enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jew from another place. But thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed. Who

		knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" Esther, everyone's counting on you now. Everyone, including me, and I love you dearly, and please help us. Clearly she has come to the kingdom for such a time as this.
Hank Smith:	15:58	I see Mordecai. He's a fantastic mentor. Teaching, helping, shaping. But then the moment comes. And he's, you can do this.
John Bytheway:	16:10	It's an interesting situation when there's this law, as we read in verse 11, and she has seen it happen before. Others get killed just for approaching the king without permission.
Dr. Barbara Morgan Gardner:	16:24	Oh, yeah. For most of us, we don't ever have to go through this kind of extreme situation. But that very simple principle, who knows whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this. I hope we don't go over that too quickly because there is a reason everyone was born on the earth when we were born on the earth. The families that we were born into, et cetera. If we all really thought about it, there is a reason why every single person, you who are listening, you are born for such a time as this. This is a make it or break it moment for such a time as this. There comes a time when you have to say, I'm either all in or I'm not all in.
	17:02	I love this quote by Sharon Larsen . She says, "If we are going to lead in righteousness, there can't be any question where we stand. Educating our desires so our standards are the Lord's standards sends a clear message that in the Lord's kingdom, there are no double standards. We have made covenants with the Lord and leading often tests the level of our commitment to those covenants." I love that phrase. Leading often tests the level of our commitment to those covenants. We're put in a position to make a decision. Then we understand how in we really are. Are we really going to follow through with this? Are we really going to follow the Spirit? This is her position right now.
Hank Smith:	17:43	President Nelson was a modern day Mordecai, don't you think? Listen to this from the talk, The Hope of Israel. "If you choose to, if you want to, you can be part of it. You can be a big part of something big, something grand, something majestic." He says, "Participating in the gathering of Israel will require some sacrifice on your part. It may even require some changes in your life. It will definitely take some of your time and energy and your God given talents. Are you interested?" Very much a, this is your moment.

John Bytheway:	18:18	This recent high school graduation, I started seeing these pictures circulate of all of the young men and young women, seniors who had received mission calls, taking these huge pictures in front of the school, in front of the temple, I think, my daughter's in one of them. And it's like, wow, look at this. Look at how many of them. And I was marveling and my wife said, oh, a lot of schools are doing that. And they started showing all these pictures. Thinking of President Nelson's talk, as you mentioned, this hastening the work. It is all happening. And I love the phrase, "You were sent for such a time as this." The mission age being lowered for the sisters. Wow, look at them go at this time.
Hank Smith:	19:06	Back to President Nelson here. John, you're right on. "This gathering should mean everything to you. This is the mission for which you were sent to earth." That's Mordecai in our day.
Dr. Barbara Morgan Gardner:	19:17	If this is their mission, then what is the mission of their leaders? What's the mission of the fathers and mothers? What's the mission of the seminary teachers and the young men and young women leaders? We are the ones, the grandparents, we're the ones who have been called to train them on how to do this. If they're the ones that are doing it, and I hope that we're the ones that are preparing them to do that. And preparation is a huge element of this story. Esther had to be prepared. It doesn't say, who knows whether thou art come to the kingdom for such time as this, yes, she has come to the kingdom for such a time as this. There's a lot of preparation that's being done by Mordecai to get her to this point and by the Lord and by others to get her here. The question is, will she actually do it?
	19:55	I think that that's the question for so many. There's a quote that I found by Lorenzo Snow that I think actually really hones this in for me. He says this, "In many instances of a similar nature where the destruction of the people of God seemed eminent and there appeared no way of escape, suddenly there arose something or other that had been prepared for their salvation to avert the impending destruction. We find this in the case of the Israelites when led by Moses. When they came to the Red Sea and the Egyptian army in their rear threatened their destruction, there seems no way of escape. But at the very moment when deliverance was required, behold, it appeared and they were delivered. So it has been and so it ever will be with us. Notwithstanding our difficulties may appear very great, yet there will be means provided for our escape if we ourselves perform the duties incumbent upon us as the children of God.

20:43 But it may become necessary in the future. And this is the point I wish to make," he says, "For some of the saints to act the part of Esther, the queen, and be willing to sacrifice anything and everything that is required at their hands for the purpose of working out the deliverance of the Latter-day Saints." I heard a wonderful story of a dear friend of mine recently who was offered an extremely lucrative position in her field. So much so that she actually called many people to give her feedback on whether or not she should take it. Many people wanted her to take it because it would put her in a leadership position that would be extremely influential and people wouldn't even recognize her name in the church. It would be good for the church, so she thought. So she took it to the Lord. And her response was interesting that she felt the inspiration of the Spirit just saying, you can, but if you do, you will not be able to be a temple ordinance worker because you won't have enough time. Which it sounds like a very random response, but she wasn't a temple ordinance worker.

21:46 What she recognized was the Lord was saying to her, I think you ought to be a temple ordinance worker instead. She chose the temple. For such a time as this. The key is to follow the Spirit and do what is right with the Lord. For such a time as this is going to be different for every person. This is an interesting and extremely important point too for us. We said this at the beginning. What's right for one person is not right for another person. You need to know what it is that the Lord wants you to do and what mission he has for you at this time in your life. Stay close to him and ask for such a time as this, because everybody has for such a time as this in their life. But don't base it on what everybody else is doing. This has to be a vertical decision. This is you and the Lord.

Hank Smith: 22:29 If I perish, I perish. She's grown up in a hurry.

Dr. Barbara Morgan Gardner: 22:35 If I perish, I perish. If they kill me, they kill me. It's Joseph Smith going into Carthage Jail. I go like a lamb to the slaughter. He's expecting that he'll be killed. For all we know, Esther was expecting to be killed. She's just putting her life on the line. No different than of Joseph Smith was putting his life on the line. She is giving it all to the Lord, putting her entire soul on the altar and leaving it in his hands. For such a time as this for her, and she's just going to see, what is the Lord going to do about it? For Abraham, the Lord saved him. But for those three virgins in the days of Abraham that Abraham was a witness to, they put their life on the altar and they died. But if not, I'm just going to trust the Lord. This is an Abinadi moment.

	23:12	This is a Joan of Arc moment. These are those moments of who am I really? If they hate me, they hate me. If they mock me, they mock me. It's all those things that we may be afraid of. If I no longer have friends, if I'm poor, I'm poor. If I lose my job, I lose my job. It's the Elder Scott when he was being called as a mission president and he says, I'm being called on this assignment by the Quorum of the 12, and I want to take this job. And his boss says, well, you can take the job, but if you do, you're not going to be hired when you get back. You have no job. What does he do? He makes a statement. You choose the right and let the consequence follow. If I perish, I perish. We could take that little phrase. If I do this, then I do this and let the lot fall as it may. But I will put the Lord first no matter what.
Hank Smith:	23:57	When you really get into this story, your heart starts beating. You're like, okay. Even though I know what's going to happen, I'm still, oof, this is intense.
Dr. Barbara Morgan Gardner:	24:05	We're bringing into chapter five that says when it came to pass on the third day that Esther put on her royal apparel. She is not going in there just slamming her hands and yelling at people and saying it's not fair. She's not trying to tell somebody what to do. She's not telling anybody off. She is very composed. She's dignified. She has a plan. We have to go back to verse 16. Go gather all the Jews that are present in Shushan and fast ye for me. And neither eat nor drink three days, night or day. I mean, this is a big request, but their lives are on the line. I also, and my maidens will fast likewise, so I will go into the king, which is not according to the law. And if I perish, I perish. What is it going to do to the hearts and minds of all of these women, children, men, individuals when they come as united, unified body of covenant people fasting together?
	24:57	What is going to be the result when either she dies or she lives, but what does that do to the unity? Regardless of what happens to Esther, Esther has just provided an opportunity for everyone to experience the atonement of Jesus Christ and receive personal revelation and put their faith into action. I love that about Esther. She could have just said, don't tell anyone. You and I are going to figure this out. We'll just take it to the Lord. But she doesn't do that. She does the opposite. Tell everyone to fast and to pray. Get the faith of every person you possibly can. I will do the same, and I will tell these women who are likely not Jewish people to also fast and pray for us. Then let's turn it to the Lord. She needs a miracle. He needs a miracle. And fasting often does provide miracles.

25:41 I can testify that till I'm blue in the face. Fasting works. It's another level of commitment, and it's showing the Lord that you're consecrated and putting it all on the altar. You're fasting. It came to pass on the third day that Esther put on her royal apparel, stood in the inner court of the king's house, over against the king's house, and the king sat upon his royal throne in the royal house over against the gate of the house. I mean, you can just see the royalty, the pomp and circumstance of this whole thing. And Esther is just coming in as confident as she can. And it was so when the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court that she obtained favor in his sight. Like, ugh, thank goodness. And the king held out to Esther the golden scepter that was in his hand.

26:17 So Esther drew near and touched the top of the scepter. And then said the king unto her, what wilt thou Queen Esther? And what is thy request? It shall be even given to thee, the half of the kingdom. Esther, ask me anything you want and I will give you half the kingdom. Clearly now to see this change in King Ahasuerus. I hope we get the sense that there is a deep level of respect that the king does have for Queen Esther at this point. He is willing to put the scepter up to her. She has gained his trust in some way. She has gained his love. Esther answered, "If it seem good unto the king, let the king and Haman come this day unto the banquet that I have prepared for him." She doesn't even just say right then, this is what I want. This is what you need to give me. This is what's happening with the Jewish people. She has a plan. She has thought through this very carefully. She is not going to go throw it all at him right now. There is wisdom. There is planning. There is a level of thoughtfulness that's going into this. And I think that fasting and praying is what's honestly helping her to think through this. She's receiving revelation. I think she's being guided by the Lord very carefully. She is careful. Very, very careful.

Hank Smith: 27:28 She's been given this insight, it seems, into the personality of the king, the personality of Haman saying, if I do this right here, it's not going to go well. I've got to get this in my home court. Got to control the environment.

Dr. Barbara Morgan Gardner: 27:42 I think she is calling upon her spiritual gifts. I think that she has one that is obviously that she's a beautiful woman. She also seems to have a spiritual gift to calm the situation. She seems to be able to do that. She seems to be a peacemaker by her nature. She also seems to have this gift of discernment. She can see clearly what's happening that may be coming because of the fasting of the people. But she recognizes that she's doing a lot of observing in her life, so it appears. On a funny note,

maybe, but I also think this is real. She seems to have a gift to be a very good cook or to be able to put together a very nice banquet. And I actually mean that in seriousness. She's trying to get the heart of her husband. That sounds so weird to say that.

28:24 But it seems that he likes food, and it seems that he's liked wine in the past, and he likes big banquets. So she's playing to him saying, how do I love him? How do I show him that this is so important to me, that I will provide for him whatever it takes so that he can see that this is real? This is serious. I am paying a very heavy price. It may not be what she wanted, but she's trying to prepare his heart and she's trying to prepare his mind because he is about ready to make a decision that's going to make the difference in the entire people. I do believe that these are part of her spiritual gifts that she has for such a time as this. All of us have spiritual gifts and they need to be used at these moments. She's going to use hers.

29:01 The Lord clearly knew who she was and what gifts she had and what she was able to do. Then you see verse six, "And the king said unto Esther at the banquet of wine, what is thy petition? and it shall be granted thee: and what is thy request? even to half of the kingdom?" We see this again, shall be performed. Then answered Esther and said, my petition and my request is. Now again, you see her. She's not just going to say her request again. She is going to double down and really make sure she is going to pinpoint it like nobody's business. Rather than having that, she says, I have found favor in thy sight of the king, and if it pleases the king to grant my petition and to perform my request, let the king and Haman. This is a level of wisdom. This is a level of reading the scene and understanding who the king is and what he wants.

29:48 Bring Haman with you to the banquet that I shall prepare for them and I will do to morrow as the king hath said. Then went Haman, and this is the irony of the whole situation is we can continue to see this irony. Then went Haman forth that day, joyful with a glad heart, but when Haman saw Mordecai in the king's gate, he stood not up nor moved for him. He was full of indignation against Mordecai. Haman was just invited to be at dinner alone with the queen and the king. This is a huge privilege. This is beyond anyone's imagination. Who gets invited to have a personal dinner with the king and the queen? But he cannot keep that in his head long enough to walk by and see a man not bow down to him. That's how base this is. It's how demeaning his pride has become in his own heart.

- 30:35 He cannot look past Mordecai's unwillingness to bow down to him and be grateful for the opportunity to have dinner. Do you see this wickedness here, this pride that has just destroyed, it's poison. Nevertheless, Haman refrained himself. He didn't say anything to him, but it's just building up inside of him. When he came home, he sent and called for his friends and Zeresh his wife. This is the part that we were talking about before where I just want to say to Haman and Zeresh. Now, the distinct difference between Zeresh and Esther becomes very clear here. Haman told them of the glory of his riches, the multitude of his children, and all the things wherein the king had promoted him, and how he had advanced him above the princes and the servants of the king. I mean, he's just so boastful. And Haman said moreover, yea Esther the queen did let no man come in with the king unto the banquet that she had prepared but myself.
- 31:22 And to morrow, am I invited unto her also with the king. Yet all this, and this is the ugliest verse, all of this availeth me nothing so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate. Talk about the poison of pride. It's so ugly here. It is every warning that President Benson, and we've had other prophets that give this as well. Here's your [President Benson](#) quote. Fear of men's judgment manifests itself in the competition for men's approval. He cannot get him to bow. He wants his approval. The proud love the praise of men more than the praise of God. Our motives for the things we do are where the sin is manifest. Jesus said he did always the thing that pleased God. Would we not do well to have the pleasing of God as our motive rather than try to elevate ourselves above our brother and outdo another?
- 32:13 Some prideful people are not so concerned as to whether their wages meet their needs as they are that their wages are more than someone else's. Their reward is being a cut above the rest. This is the enmity of pride. When pride has hold on our hearts, we lose our independence of the world and deliver our freedom to the bondage of men's judgment. This is what he's lost. He's lost his independence. The world shouts louder than the whisperings of the Holy Ghost. The reasoning of men overrides the revelations of God and the proud let go of the iron rod. This is Haman. He cares more about one man that will not bow down to him than he does about his entire relationship with the king and the queen. He cares more about it than his wife. He cares more about it than his men. All he wants is one person to bow down to him.

32:56 Because of this, he's going to lose everything. Pride. Pride cometh before the fall. It's the scripture that we know. It's President Benson, and we are watching it happen in real time with Haman right here. Then if I may, this part is so buggy, verse 14. Then said Zeresh his wife. I mean, it's his wife. Come on, just say to him, you're being so prideful, Haman. Call him on the carpet. Like Haman, grow up. Haman, maybe think of somebody else beside yourself. There's so many things that she could say here. Haman, as Sister Nelson did, are you done crying yet? Okay, now go back to work. She doesn't. She feeds it. Then says Zeresh his wife and all his friends. And I would put friends in quotes because clearly they're not much of friends. Let a gallows be made of 50 cubits high and to morrow, speak thou unto the king that Mordecai may be hanged thereon. Then go thou in merrily with the king unto the banquet. And the thing pleased Haman and he caused the gallows to be made. Yes, dear sweet Haman, go build the gallows and kill Mordecai. He's done nothing wrong, but just kill him. What kind of wife is doing this? It's so yucky.

Hank Smith: 33:54 Yeah, they're helping him destroy himself. They don't know it. He doesn't know it, but he's building his own death.

Dr. Barbara Morgan Gardner: 34:00 What is sad here is, again, this is a relationship between a couple. At some point, you have to get over yourself. At some point, you have to care more about the other person than you do about yourself. And Zeresh hasn't learned that lesson either. She's also not willing to put him in his place. She has a little level of pride or fear. I don't know what it is. But she's not helping. We know what happens. This is where the whole paradox comes in. This is like a Shakespeare play. We're just watching the ridiculousness of this story. But this part I just think is so fun. Chapter six, the people are fasting. The Jews are fasting. Esther is fasting. Mordecai is fasting. The children are fasting. Women, even the handmaids are fasting. And while they're fasting, this is so profound. On that night, could not the king sleep.

34:46 And he commanded to bring the book of records, the chronicles, and they were read before the king. And it was found written that Mordecai had told of Bigthana, again, we have big, and Teresh two of the king's chamberlains, the keeper of the door, who sought to lay hand on the king Ahasuerus. To me, that is an absolute answer to their fasting and to their prayers. What else could have happened in order to make the king recognize that there is some Mordecai that needs to be saved out there? The only way that this could happen is the Lord, because he's not listening to anyone else. Mordecai can

only be saved if the Lord steps in. This is the parting of the Red Sea for Mordecai and the Jewish people. It's just as strong. The king now is going to think to himself, whatever happened to this guy?

35:31 Well, why is he thinking this? Because the Spirit is guiding him to this. What does the king do? Of course, he wants to honor this Mordecai because he saved his life. I mean, the timing of this, too. Then said the king's servants that ministered unto him, there is nothing that's been done for him. Like, whatever happened to Mordecai, remember that guy that saved my life? Whatever happened to him? Well, nothing ever happened to him. Nobody gave him anything. He hears some noise down below, and he recognizes that Haman is there. So he calls Haman in, and then there's the play again. He says to Haman, verse six, the king said unto him, What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honor? Now, Haman is so prideful again. He thinks it's him. Haman thought in his heart, to whom would the king delight to honor more than me?

John Bytheway: 36:14 Who could this possibly be? It's got to be me.

Dr. Barbara Morgan Gardner: 36:17 I'm the greatest of all. Yeah. Of course, what is Haman going to do? He's going to say, give him the royal apparel, verse eight, which the king useth to wear, and the horse that the king rideth upon, and the crown royal which is set upon his head. I mean, these aren't even okay things. Give him everything. Let this apparel and the horse be delivered to the hand of the one of the king's most noble princes that they may array the man with all of whom the king delighteth to honor. And bring him on horseback to the street of the city and proclaim before him. Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honor.

Hank Smith: 36:47 This isn't the tender mercies of the Lord. This is the bitter ironies of the Lord right away. Can you imagine that moment where he says, okay, go get Mordecai and do that. What?

Dr. Barbara Morgan Gardner: 37:00 Yes. I mean, it's so sickly, sadly funny. It's the irony of the situation. The king said to Haman, Make haste and take the apparel and the horse, as thou hast said, and you're just waiting for this next, take haste and go do all these things to Mordecai. Boom, boom, boom. You just feel it's like, what? I just see him like Haman just fall like, wait, to who? Mordecai? This man who won't bow to me? It's almost like you want Haman to respond, but Haman stays silent. What do you say to the king who his best person, this one, it's not him. His worst enemy just got his job. He's been fighting this man, and the man that he could not

stand more than anyone else on the entire earth was just given everything that he thought he deserved. Then took Haman, the apparel and the horse and arrayed Mordecai. To be a fly on the wall when Haman is giving the apparel of the king to Mordecai.

37:52 I mean, he's putting, it says Haman does this and brought him on horseback through the street of the city and proclaimed before him, thus shall it be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honor. At this moment, I can't help but think of the premortal realm. How mad Satan was when God cast him out and gave the honor to Jesus Christ and gave the authority to Jesus Christ and how mad and angry Satan was that he just wanted to destroy everyone. If you want to see somebody mad, see Haman put a robe on Mordecai. Turn that authority over to somebody else. I'm sure he is absolutely boiling right now. I'm also assuming he's absolutely full of fear. I think that that's one of the reasons why Satan is the way he is, is because he's full of fear and he's full of anger. When we put that combination of fear and anger together, it is an ugly, ugly situation.

38:40 He's full of fear because he's seeing that Mordecai, the person he hates, is now taking some lead, and it's ugly. Mordecai came again to the king's gate, but Haman hastened to his house mourning and having his head covered. Mourning is an understatement. Haman told Zeresh, his wife, and all his friends everything that had befallen him then said his wife, and we looked at this before, and the wise men Zeresh his wife unto him, if Mordecai be of the seed of the Jews. Now, finally, his wife is making a little bit of sense. Well, Haman, if Mordecai be of the Jews, guess what? You're not going to prevail against him. Because God is the God of the Jews and you are nothing. Good luck, sweetie. Yeah, you're right. You're dead meat. And Mordecai, you are something else as this humble leader. And Haman, you're in trouble.

39:29 While they are yet talking with him came the king's chamberlains and hastened to bring Haman unto the banquet that Esther had prepared. Now the plot thickens. Chapter seven, the king and Haman came to the banquet with Esther the queen. Now, Esther has been praying and fasting. Does Esther know that Mordecai has been just given this great award? Does she know how much Haman hates Mordecai? We have some idea that there is a hatred between the two and Haman with this, but we don't know enough here. It seems like it's a quick, I mean, this is happening in a period of hours, it seems. And the king said again unto Esther on the second day at the banquet of wine, What is thy petition, Queen Esther? I think that that's a

tender phrase. Esther, what do you want? How can I serve you? I'll give you anything.

40:14 I've already told you I'd give you half of the kingdom. Here you have us together. Clearly, you're doing all you can. What do you want, Esther? How can I help? It shall be granted unto thee. What is thy request? And it shall be performed. Again, he says, even to the half of the kingdom. And Esther the queen answered and said, now here, you could just see the praying in her mind at this moment. I am sure she is just pleading. Heavenly Father, please. God is not written here, but he is clearly seen. If I have found favor in thy sight, O king, I have done everything I can. King, I have served you. I've come dressed nicely. I have given you dinner. I have waited. I've been patient. I've done everything I can. If it please the king, let my life be given me at my petition and my people at my request.

40:59 For we are sold, I and my people to be destroyed, to be slain and to perish. But if we had been sold for bondmen and bondwomen, I had held my tongue. If we had been just slaves or if we had been sold to somebody, I wouldn't even say anything. I don't want to put you in a position. I'm not trying to use you. I'm not trying to abuse my power. If it were just slavery, I wouldn't come to you. But we're being destroyed. And then she says, "Although the enemy could not countervail the king's damage. Then king Ahasuerus answered and said unto Esther the queen, and you can see he is just completely confused right now. This is taking him totally off guard, but he has enough composure to sit there and say to her, "Who is he? Where is he that durst presume in his heart to do so?" Esther said, "The adversary and enemy is the wicked Haman. Then Haman was afraid before the king and the queen."

41:49 That moment, to be a fly on the wall to see Haman's face, to see King Ahasuerus' face, to see Esther's face. And there's this recognition, these three people, intimate relationship. I mean, this is to be very clear, this is the king's right-hand man. As far as the king is concerned, this is his most trusted counselor. This is someone that he trusts. This is someone he's given his ring to in times past. This is someone that he has brought into and has allowed to be in his most intimate quarters. When he comes into the place, the king invites him to be exactly where he is. There's no other person that we're seeing the king doing this. So he has the two people that are the most trusted. His wife, it seems, and Haman. He is seeing the accusation of his wife against Haman. Now, in the past, he would've gone with Haman.

- 42:34 But there's something that Esther has done that is causing him to believe Esther instead of Haman. In the story of Joseph in Egypt, Potiphar doesn't believe Joseph, or it seems that he doesn't. For whatever reason, he still is going to side with his wife. He's going to side in a sense with the enemy. But somehow, King Ahasuerus is not listening to his right-hand man. This is the first time we've seen the change. There's something that has happened. It's the fasting and praying. It's the Spirit. It's something has caused him to change his mind here. Then Haman was afraid before the king and the queen, which again says a lot that he's afraid of the queen. And the king arising from the banquet of wine in his wrath went into the palace garden. I love that the king. Again, talk about two different personalities.
- 43:20 The king now, different than he did at the very beginning. Rather than making a judgment, rather than losing it right there, he steps away from the situation. I think this is an important leadership principle. He doesn't just get mad and make a decision and cut off people's heads. He gets up and he walks away into the palace garden. In other words, it seems like he's pondering. He's thinking. He's taking control of himself and he's by himself. He's not listening to Haman anymore. Haman stood up to make requests for his life to the Queen Esther. This is ugly. For he saw that there was evil determined against him by the king. The king returned out of the palace garden. Seems like he is now there. He went back into the banquet and Haman was fallen upon the bed whereon Esther was. Then said the king, will he force the queen also before me in the house?
- 44:05 It seems as if it's an accident. It seems as if Haman, like, falls on the bed. We don't know for sure, but what we do know is it sets the king off, which it should have set the king off. He's already seen this man that has been accused of killing his wife and his, and her people. And now he's seeing this man in a position where it is a position only he should have as the king. He is in this very private circumstance. Why Haman would be in the bedroom of the queen? That's a whole different question. But the king sees it and he is very, very angry. So it says the people came in and covered Haman's face. For a moment, we pause. I have to just say, we recognize the hand of the Lord in this story and see very clearly the divine signature of God.
- 44:49 As he has absolutely taken the people that were about to perish, change the whole story. The king has a dream. Esther is able to go in and enter into this area and the tail has completely flipped on its head. And the only way that could really happen is God allowed it to happen. I don't want to say made it happen

because it's difficult to put that into God, but he allowed it to happen. Then Harbonah, one of the chamberlains said before the king, behold also the gallows 50 cubits high, which Haman had for Mordecai, who had spoken good for the king, standeth in the house of Haman. Then the king said, hang him there. Haman's been building this gallow to kill Mordecai, as we know. What is the king going to do with him? He's digging his own grave. Like literally he has just dug his own grave. They hang Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then was the king's wrath pacified. It's really a sad, sad, sad story. It's the story we hear so often, especially with anger. Anger is poison. As we do with anger, we drink the poison that we intend for somebody else.

John Bytheway: 45:50

What you just said about anger reminds me of a [Stephen Covey](#) example. He talked about a rattlesnake that bit somebody. And this guy picked up a stick or something and started chasing the snake. And he said it wasn't the bite that killed him. It was him chasing the snake and circulating that venom throughout his body because he was angry. It's just an analogy, I think. But the idea of the anger was what got him. Not the poison of the snake. Maybe if he seeks attention right away, it wouldn't happen. I don't know if medically that's exactly right, but just an analogy that the anger is what got him. You had said something about Esther being a type of Christ, and I wanted to go back to that. This, I perish, I perish, but I'm going to save the people. Is that what you were talking about? Because I see Haman is actually called the adversary. Esther, chapter seven, verse six.

Dr. Barbara Morgan Gardner: 46:47

As I was listening to it, I couldn't help myself. Esther is coming out of nowhere. She's an orphan. She is being raised in a family and in a situation that is impoverished. She has, so it seems, been put to the lowest of low. You can't be much lower than a girl, parentless, as we mentioned before, in a country that doesn't respect or have anything given to a child in this nature. This would be very similar to Jesus Christ. He is then like Esther for a number of years. Not that people didn't know he was a Jew, but they didn't know he was the Savior. Esther keeps it to herself that she's a Jew. And it's not until it's necessary does she actually show the world, the people in her world, who she really is. Then we get to this point where Christ himself is going into this sacred garden of Gethsemane.

47:43

Father, thy will be done. And take this cup from me. If I perish, I perish. He's put it all on the line. Esther's in a similar way. She's going to, in this case, please take this cup from me. Take this bitterness from me. My people are all going to be killed. And Christ is in a position where he is going to save the entire

human race. And Esther is in a position that she can save her entire population of people. And they both have to completely put their lives on the altar and turn it completely over to someone else. Esther's case, she turns herself to the king and he makes a decision. In Christ's case, of course, he turns it to the king, his father. I wonder about Vashti and her role in this. Vashti comes before Esther and provides the way, just as there is a John the Baptist coming before the Savior and he is providing the way.

48:37 As we know, he has the last supper. He has a meal with these people. He has a meal with those he loves the best, including the person who was going to kill him. Esther has a meal with her people, the king and the man who was trying to kill her. Esther was willing to put her life on the line just as the Savior was willing to put his life on the line. Yes, I think that there is a serious connection as a type of Christ here. We don't see women as types of Christ, as I said, very much, but to me, as I, the more I read this, I just think, wow, this is Esther. She is a covenant woman. She is called of God for such a time as this, as the Savior was to perform and save an entire group of humanity.

49:12 And the only way she could do it was to put her life on the line. To me, this is a very sacred moment. Who is it that puts Mordecai in this position? It's Esther. Esther's the one that crowns Mordecai. Esther's the one that makes it so he becomes the new ruler. I think it's very fascinating in this relationship that it's the woman who puts the man in position here. And the man rules seemingly in righteousness to fulfill the purposes. It's a father-daughter, but it's a very sacred moment what is given. The authority that Esther is given by the king for other people is not only symbolic, but extremely sacred.

Hank Smith: 49:49 Hmm. I was thinking about Haman. And do you both remember the verse in Isaiah where Isaiah says, don't fight against Zion. You'll be like a person who is dreaming. And in their dream, they are eating, but then they wake up and they are starving.

Dr. Barbara Morgan Gardner: 50:06 Yes, exactly. Yes. It's so bad.

Hank Smith: 50:09 Through the whole story, it looks like Haman's going to win. And then at the last moment, it's completely swapped. In our world today sometimes it looks like the adversary's going to win. But hold on. The story flips.

Dr. Barbara Morgan Gardner: 50:23 Yeah. The story flips. God will always fulfill his covenants with his people. Period. Isn't it great? Isn't this such a great book?

- Hank Smith: 50:33 That was a lot of fun. Yeah, you had me on the edge of my seat and I knew what would happen. That moment where she goes in, I can't imagine that deep breath of, okay.
- Dr. Barbara Morgan Gardner: 50:47 I really do believe that as we continue to read the scriptures, even if we've read the same verse a thousand times, the Lord will teach us something different depending on our state in life. For me, that's been the case with studying again Esther. So I appreciate this opportunity because I've learned a lot from my own personal life and how to grow and lead and how to be careful and wise and patient and temperate. As [Elder Soares](#) recently talked about those important things. Chapter eight, verse 11, wherein the king granted the Jews, which were in every city, to gather themselves together and to stand for their life. I love that they're standing for their life. He's not asking them to bow down to him. He's saying, you Jews, you have a right to stand up for your life, to destroy, to slay, and to cause to perish all the power of the people and province that would assault them, both little ones and women, and to take the spoil of them for a prey. And then upon one day, the provinces of King Ahasuerus, namely upon the 13th day.
- 51:39 So this was what they were allowed to do. They don't do it exactly like that. They don't take the prey there. There's a whole nother story behind that. I love also in verse 15, "And Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal apparel." This is the prototype. "In royal apparel of blue and white and with a great crown of gold. And with the garment of fine linen and purple, and the city of Shushan rejoiced and was glad. And the Jews had light and gladness and joy and honor." I love that verse. The Jews had light, gladness, joy, and honor. I mean, talk about a flip. They went from fear, they went from death, they went from all these things they fasted and prayed. And now, again, the flip. Joy, light, honor. In every province and in every city, whether it's wherever the king's commandments and his decrees came, the Jews had a joy and a gladness and a feast and a good day.
- 52:28 And many of the people of the land became Jews for the fear of the Jews fell upon them. I don't think that they're afraid of the Jews. I think that it's, again, it's that fear. It's that recognition. It's that respect of the Jews came upon them. Then we have, this last part, which I think is very, very powerful. It's this feast of [Purim](#). It's this, to this day, as we know, the Jewish people still celebrate this incredible day when they were free because of Esther.

John Bytheway: 52:51

Hank, Barbara, I'm looking in my kids' application Bible that's written just for guys my age. Hey, I got a senior discount at Great Clips, but it has this little thing about Esther. It says, How to defend those who need help. And then it gives three steps. Pump up, step up, and speak up. Step one, decide to help, then pray and get yourself ready. Step two, when the king held out his scepter, she approached and touched it, the tip. Don't hide in your room when the time comes for action. That's step up. Step three, God is just as willing to give you the right words at the right time. Don't worry about how people will respond to your words. That's between them and God. Speak up. So I like that. Pump up, step up, speak up. That's what Esther did.

Dr. Barbara Morgan Gardner: 53:37

It is, John, the quote from [President Kimball](#) that was quoted by [President Nelson](#). 1979, President Kimball, and then President Nelson adds to it. And we've heard this so many times, but I cannot help but go back to this because this is Esther, and this is what the women of the church are being asked to do. But I think it's important that we also see the men of the church being asked to do this. He says, "Much of the major growth that is coming to the church in the last days will come because many of the good women of the world will be drawn to the church in large numbers. This will happen to the degree that the women of the church reflect righteousness and articulateness in their lives, and to the degree that the women of the church are seen as distinct and different in happy ways from the women of the world." But then President Nelson says, "My dear sisters," speaking to us today, "you who are our vital associates during this winding up scene, the day that President Kimball foresaw is today.

54:25

You are the women he foresaw. Your virtue, light, love, knowledge, courage, character, faith, and righteous lives will draw good women of the world along with their families, their husbands and children to the church in unprecedented numbers. We, your brethren, need your strength, your conversion, your conviction, your ability to lead, your wisdom and your voices. The kingdom of God is not and cannot be complete without women who make sacred covenants and then keep them, women who can speak with the power and authority of God. We need women who are organized, women who can organize, women with executive ability who can plan and direct and administer. Women who can teach. Women who can speak out. We need women with the gift of discernment who can view the trends in the world and detect those that, however popular, are shallow or dangerous." And then he says, "Today, let me add that we need women who know how to make important things happen by their faith and who are

courageous defenders of morality and families in a sinsick world." I mean, this is Esther, and this is what he's saying. Be Esthers.

55:27 "We need women who are devoted to shepherding God's children along the covenant path towards exaltation. Women who know how to receive personal revelation, who understand the power and peace of the temple endowment. Women who know to call upon the powers of heaven to protect their and strengthen their children and their families. Women who teach fearlessly." You think of what he's trying to say to the women of the church today, and lest any woman thinks, well, yeah, that's Esther, not me. No, it's you. This is President Nelson talking to women of the church today. President Oaks is very similar. President Oaks is a man who has called upon the women of the church to speak up and speak out. He says it is his own mother that he learned this from. And talking about that relationship with those leaders, whether it's a husband or a leader in the church's government structure, he says this, and back to Vashti and King Ahasuerus.

56:13 "My dear sisters, whatever your calling, whatever your circumstance, we need your impressions, your insights, your inspiration. We need you to speak up and speak out" to what you were just saying, John. "In ward and stake councils, we need each married sister to speak as a contributing and full partner as you unite with your husband in governing your family. Married or single, you sisters possess distinctive capabilities and special intuition that you have received as gifts from God." Again, back to spiritual gifts. "We brethren cannot duplicate your unique influence." I just throw that out to all of our women and all of our men that we understand that about each other. That there are unique gifts, unique talents. We need each other. We have to be converted to the gospel of Jesus Christ, and in our day, it just doesn't work to sit behind and hope things happen.

56:58 If Esther would've sat behind and just decided that it was just too hard or uncomfortable or she was afraid or whatever excuse she could have come up with, I think it is absolutely critical in this story that we see that Esther's righteousness and covenant keeping is not tied to marital status or gender or age. What it is tied to is covenants. It's tied to her relationship with God. There are single women in this church who are saving families and saving the world by being aunts, by being sisters, by being Relief Society leaders, by being teachers, by being good neighbors. We're talking about Esther as not a mother and as a single woman going into this experience, now married, but

it's not the marital status that matters. What matters is, as we have been taught, [Sister Joy Jones](#) talked about this, it is that you are a [covenant keeper](#).

57:49

If you want to give somebody a compliment, call them a covenant keeper. That's what this is. She's not important because she's married and she's not not important because she's married. She's not important because she does or doesn't have children here. Her identity with God is what matters. And the way we understand our identity is by making and keeping sacred covenants with God. It is critical to me that this is a story, not necessarily just about her as having children, but she is a mother. Regardless of children as we know. She is a mother, she is a covenant keeper, she's a mother because she's a woman and she's a covenant keeper. That makes her a mother. That makes her a nurturer. That makes her a powerful instrument in God's hands. Thank you, friends. Thank you for being these wonderful people.

Hank Smith:

58:32

We love being with you. I knew today would be fantastic, but I didn't know it'd be this fantastic. I have run out of places to write in this book. I don't know if I, how I'm going to ever study it again. I have nowhere else to write anything. So much to think about. Thank you, Barb. This has been a wonderful day. With that, we want to thank Dr. Barbara Morgan Gardner for being with us today. We want to thank our executive producer, Shannon Sorensen, our sponsors, David and Verla Sorensen. And every episode, we remember our founder, Steve Sorensen. We hope you'll join us next week. We're not even close to done with the Old Testament on followHIM.

followHIM Favorites



Hank Smith:

00:02

Welcome to followHIM Favorites. This is where John and I share a single story to go with each week's Come, Follow Me lesson. John, we are in the book of Esther this week. There is a part of this story where Esther gets a letter from her uncle Mordecai asking her to do something impossible. She says to him, do you realize what you're asking me to do? I could easily die if this goes sideways. I thought of a story about a pioneer girl. Her name is Agnes Caldwell. She joins the church in Scotland with her family, sails to America. In 1856, she's nine years old. She boards the ship called the Thornton. They joined the James G. Willie Handcart Company. If you know about the Willie Handcart Company, you know that they're headed into a very difficult place. As they start west, they're running out of food and the storms are hitting.

01:03

Things are getting really bad. Many people are going to end up dying. One incident took place shortly before they got to the valley. This is what she says. "Just before we crossed the mountains, relief wagons reached us, and it certainly was a relief. The infirm and aged were allowed to ride. All able-bodied had to continue to walk. When the wagons started out, a number of us children decided to see how long we could keep up with the wagons," so they're going to run after them. "In hopes that someone would give us a ride. At least that's what my great hope was. One by one, the other children gave up until I was the last one remaining. I was determined that I was going to get a ride. After what seemed like the longest run I ever made, the driver, William Henry Kimball, called to me. Say, do you want a ride?"

01:54

I can see her. She's just looking at him. "I answered in my very best manner. Yes, sir. At this, he reached over, taking my hand, and then clucking to his horses to make me run more with legs that seemed they could run no farther. On we went to what seemed like miles. What went through my head at the time was that this was the meanest man that ever lived or that I had ever heard of. And other things that would not be a credit, nor would it look well coming out of one so young. Just at what seemed to

be my breaking point, he stopped. Then taking a blanket, he wrapped me up and lay me in the wagon, warm and comfortable. Here, I had time to change my mind, as I surely did, knowing full well by doing this, he saved me from freezing when taken into the wagon."

02:47 The long run he made her do, the further running he made her do, got her blood flowing, and when he put her in the wagon, she had all that blood in her limbs. Now she could be warm and saved her from freezing. She ends up in the Salt Lake Valley, marries, has 13 children. She moved to Brigham City, Utah, died on September 11th, 1924. She lived a long time. I thought of that when you see Mordecai saying to Esther, I'm going to ask you to do something very hard. But in doing so, he saves her life and many others. When the Lord asks us, old or young, to do really hard things, you never know that that thing might end up being the very thing that saves you.

John Bytheway: 03:37 Just exactly what you need. That's a trust in the Lord story and in this case the wagon guy.

Hank Smith: 03:44 Yep, very wise. We hope you'll join us on our full podcast. It's called followHIM. You can get it wherever you get your podcast. We are with Dr. Barbara Morgan Gardner this week as she walks through the book of Esther. If you've ever heard Barbara teach, she is wonderful. You're going to love it. Then come back here next week. We'll do another followHIM Favorites.