

Title: "Esther: Courageous in Duty"

Focal Scripture: Esther 4:14

Date: May 13, 2012 – Mother's Day

Place: DCOG

Theme: "Honor Begins At Home"

Big Idea: Duty is a personal responsibility that cannot be ignored.

I. CONFESSION: "I would like to pass difficult decisions and arduous tasks on to others."

- Some of you remember the old Popeye cartoons. They were based on unique characters consistent from cartoon to cartoon. Popeye was the hero, Olive Oyl was the damsel in distress, and Bluto/Brutus was the villain.

There was another character that was present in each episode that took little to no responsibility and had little to do with the successful outcome of each story. I'm talking about Wimpy, the short heavy-set man whose standard line was; "I'll gladly pay you Tuesday for a hamburger today."

What do you think? Is Wimpy the character that most visibly pictures your role with Christ?

* Martin Lindstrom, a former market research expert and author of [Brandwashed](#), argues that advertisers know something that human beings have in common with birds and termites. Without even thinking about it, we're often controlled by peer pressure. For instance, Lindstrom notes how many bird species "rise from a field in complete synchrony, as though doing a choreographed dance." Scientists will say that the birds are "acting as if they shared one collective brain." Termites also act like one enormous termite brain. "In other words," Lindstrom writes, "only by

observing and mimicking the behavior of its neighbors can a termite figure out what it should be doing."

Lindstrom observes that as consumers human beings act in much the same way. He writes:

Just like those birds and termites, we, too, are wired with a collective consciousness in that we size up what those around us are doing and modify our actions and behaviors accordingly. In a 2008 experiment conducted by researchers at Leeds University, groups of people were instructed to walk aimlessly around a large hall, without conversing with one another. But first the researchers gave just a few of the people detailed instructions on where, precisely, they should walk. When [the researchers] observed the resulting behavior, they found that no matter how large or small the group, everyone in it blindly followed that handful of people who appeared to have some idea where they were going.

As [one of the researchers] put it, "The research suggests that humans flock like sheep and birds, subconsciously following a minority of individuals," and that it takes a mere 5 percent of "informed individuals" to influence the direction of a crowd of up to two hundred people. The other 95 percent trail along without even being aware of it.

There is ample research to show that we instinctively look to the behaviors of others to inform the decisions we make—everything from which way we should walk, to what music we should listen to, to which kind of car we should drive. It seems, in short, that we instinctively believe that others know more about what we want than we ourselves do.

Psychologists have a name for this phenomenon. It's called peer pressure [And] this implicit peer pressure is a far more insidious kind, and companies and marketers are taking advantage of its persuasive powers in ways you couldn't even imagine.

Christians...Mothers...Women, is the culture dictating our behavior and thus determining where our families will walk?

II. QUESTION: “Do you ever wonder whether you fulfill your duty before God?”

Have you ever felt this way?

- My kids don't behave like everyone else's children

* I have heard of pastors being called on the carpet on account of the behavior of their children.

One was asked, “Why do your children misbehave so often?”

The pastor's wife answered, “Because they play with your children.”

Do you ever feel like a failure as a parent?

- My children don't seem to have a driving passion for the things of God

* A good question to ask ourselves here is: Do I have a driving passion for the things of God?

- I always seem to be making the wrong choices

* We would like to place the blame for this on someone or something else. The reason I am an alcoholic is that my mom was an alcoholic or the reason I don't go to church much now is because my parents made me go when I was a kid.

The truth is that we are responsible for the choices we make. It doesn't matter what the circumstances, I still must take responsibility for my choice.

- I don't want to make a commitment that is going to ask more of me than I am willing to give

Let's turn to the Bible and hear the story of Esther.

III. CONNECTION: *Esther 4:14*

Esther 4:14

For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?"

* The book of Esther recounts the story of a Jewish girl, Esther, who becomes a queen of Persia. Through her courage and position she is able to avert a plot by Haman to exterminate the Jews throughout the Persian Empire

A. Early on we find Xerxes seeking a new Queen for his empire, and he chooses Haddasah, Esther.

B. Mordecai, Esther's uncle, who has raised her, helps the Xerxes discover a plot against the kingdom and Xerxes is indebted to him.

C. Haman is a corrupt government official who is self-serving and, who by a series of events comes to detest Mordecai.

D. Haman has kingly authority so he plans to destroy Mordecai and his people group, the Jews. (Little did he know that the new Queen was a member of that people group)

E. Mordecai asks Esther to help save her people.

- At first, Esther is afraid that she might put her new role and even her life in jeopardy.
- She seeks an answer through fasting and prayer.
- Accepting her duty, she confronts the king and ultimately saves her and her people.

IV. APPLICATION: How can I become courageous in duty.

- Bonnie Watkins is a little woman with a big heart. She may be slight of build but she made sure that her daughters knew about a great big God. She did her duty.
- Robin Egly had twins that were born pre-maturely and for months practically lived in the NICU unit at the hospital. She didn't give up. She understood her duty. And today Luke and Zoe are a vital part of our children's ministry.
- It is important that we understand and accept our role/duty. Therefore as women and mothers we resolve:

I DO solemnly resolve before God to embrace my current season of life and live with a spirit of contentment.

I WILL champion God's model for womanhood and teach it to my children.

I WILL celebrate my God-given uniqueness and the distinctions He has placed in others.

I WILL live as a woman answerable to God and faithfully committed to His Word.

I WILL seek to devote the best of myself to the primary roles God has entrusted to me.

I WILL be quick to listen, slow to speak, and esteem others more highly than myself.

I WILL forgive those who have wronged me and reconcile with those I have wronged.

I WILL not tolerate evil influences in myself or my home but will embrace a life of purity.

I WILL pursue justice, love mercy, and extend compassion toward others.

I WILL be faithful to my husband and honor him in my conduct and in my conversation, and will aspire to be a suitable partner for him to help him reach his God-given potential.

I WILL teach my children to love God, respect authority, and live responsibly.

I WILL cultivate a peaceful home where God's presence is sensed,

I WILL make today's decisions with tomorrow's impact in mind and consider my current choices in light of future generations.

I WILL courageously work with the strength God provides to fulfill this resolution for the rest of my life and for His glory.

“As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”
(Joshua 24:15 NASB)

The Resolution For Women by Priscilla Shirer