

YOU WERE MEANT FOR

THIS

LESSON 2

PLACE

Last week we began by talking about God's very specific call on your life, a role to play or a job to do or a task to accomplish that only *you* can do. It isn't just *something* or *a* thing to be done, but rather a very specific thing you are called to do in **THIS** time, **THIS** place, with **THIS** group of people, for **THIS** reason. You weren't meant for just *any* thing. You were meant for **THIS**.

Last week we talked about time, the specific time in history in which you were born. There are things about you that you have no control over that make you who you are, and God can and will use those for your "THIS." We also began exploring the story of Esther in the Bible to help us understand these concepts. If you read two chapters each week, you'll be prepared to dive into the questions below as your **THIS** begins to unfold. Let's start with a fun question...

Question 1: What's your favorite place you ever lived? If you could live anywhere else in the world, where would it be? And what is your favorite thing about the community in which you live now?

Read Chapters 3 and 4 from the book of Esther in the Bible. (Again, if you're working through this in a group, the reading can be homework. Maybe we *will* have a quiz? Get reading! It's a great story.)

Esther is Queen of Persia. It's a rags to riches story that even Disney would be proud of. And they lived happily ever after, right? (Nope, 'cuz if they did, we wouldn't have 3 more weeks to this study.) In chapter 3, we meet Haman. Haman has been promoted to the highest position of King Xerxes' officials

and has had a run-in with Mordecai. To retaliate, he hatches a plot to kill all the Jews in Persia. (A bit of an overreaction, I feel.) But hoping to save his people, Mordecai goes to Esther to ask for her help to save her people. She replies,

¹⁶ “Go and gather together all the Jews of Susa and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will do the same. And then, though it is against the law, I will go in to see the king. If I must die, I must die.” ¹⁷ So Mordecai went away and did everything as Esther had ordered him. (Esther 4:16-17 NLT)

Influence. No matter who you are, and how significant or insignificant you think your impact is, you *absolutely* have influence in the world around you. Unless you are a hermit living in a secluded cabin in the Ozarks who never comes into contact with another human being, you have influence. (And if you are indeed that hermit, sorry, and we have an awesome community of faith you need to come join.) Whether it's your own home with family and friends, the park at your kids' soccer games, or the person who runs the check out at Target, you have the ability and opportunity to have an impact in the places you find yourself. Esther understood this. She had a place in her cousin's home. She had a place in Susa as an Israelite. She had a place in the palace as Queen. In the Scripture we just read, she made use of all those places for influence to achieve a purpose. God was going to use her in this specific *place*.

Location, location, location! It's a prime rule in business, and a valuable rule for discovering your "THIS." Every geographic location you frequent is a potential place where you can have an impact. God is going to use the specific locations in which you find yourself for a very specific purpose, just as God did for Esther.

Question 2: Esther could have taken out a map and circled the places where God wanted her to use her influence. You can, too! In fact, let's do that very thing. Print out or take a screen shot of a map of your community. Then take a marker (digital or otherwise, trust me, your phone does this now), and circle the places you find yourself most often. Circle your home. Circle your place of business or office. Circle your favorite restaurants and stores. Circle your kids' school or parks or fitness centers. (If you haven't gone to Planet Fitness in six months even though you still pay for the membership, does that count? Asking for a friend.) Circle the geographic locations where you have impact. Ready? Go! When you're done, look over your list. What surprises you? (If you're in a group, share with others all the places you circled.)

Esther chose to take advantage of her various spheres of influence, even if it meant her death. To go in front of the King without permission was just that, a death sentence. But, because she knew her THIS, she was willing to try. The *time* was now. The *place* was the King's court. She knew what she must do.

Question 3: Esther knew the risks, but acted anyway. What fears might be keeping you from using your influence in the places you find yourself? Are you overlooking the influence you have? How

might God be asking you to impact the places you wrote down in Question 2 for a specific purpose? (If you're following this guide on your own, write them down. If you're in a group, share with the others.)

Esther not only found herself at a specific time in her people's history where she would be used by God, but also in a very specific place, in order to fulfill the very specific call on her life. God has the same thing in mind for you. You have the ability and opportunity to make a difference in the locations you find yourself. This week, look for ways to use your influence in those *places*, as God continues to unfold your THIS.