



# ESTHER

WEEK 4:

The Heart of God in the Hearts of His People

# God did not make good guys and bad guys....

## What Is Important to a Bad Guy?

*As we read through, underline repeated words or concepts, related words or concepts.*

After these events, King Xerxes **honored** Haman son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, **elevating** him and giving him a seat of **honor** higher than that of all the other nobles. <sup>2</sup> All the royal officials at the king's gate knelt down and paid **honor** to Haman, for the king had commanded this concerning him. But Mordecai would not kneel down or pay him **honor**. (Esther 3)

<sup>5</sup> When Haman saw that Mordecai would not kneel down or pay him **honor**, he was **enraged**. <sup>6</sup> Yet having learned who Mordecai's people were, he scorned the idea of killing only Mordecai. Instead Haman looked for a way to destroy all Mordecai's people, the Jews, throughout the whole kingdom of Xerxes. (Esther 3)

Haman conducts a master class of Manipulation and Control:

<sup>8</sup> Then Haman said to King Xerxes, "There is a certain people dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom who keep themselves separate. Their customs are different from those of all other people, and they do not obey the king's laws; it is not in the king's best interest to tolerate them. <sup>9</sup> If it pleases the king, let a decree be issued to destroy them, and I will give ten thousand talents of silver to the king's administrators for the royal treasury." Esther 3

<sup>9</sup> Haman went out that day **happy** and in **high spirits**. But when he saw Mordecai at the king's gate and observed that he neither rose nor showed fear in his presence, he was filled with **rage** against Mordecai. <sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, Haman restrained himself and went home.

Calling together his friends and Zeresh, his wife, <sup>11</sup> Haman **boasted** to them about his vast wealth, his many sons, and all the ways the king had **honored** him and how he had **elevated** him above the other nobles and officials. <sup>12</sup> "And that's not all," Haman added. "I'm the **only** person Queen Esther invited to accompany the king to the banquet she gave. And she has invited me along with the king tomorrow. <sup>13</sup> But all this gives me no **satisfaction** as long as I see that Jew Mordecai sitting at the king's gate."

<sup>14</sup> His wife Zeresh and all his friends said to him, "Have a pole set up, reaching to a height of fifty cubits, and ask the king in the morning to have Mordecai impaled on it. Then go with the king to the banquet and enjoy yourself." This suggestion **delighted** Haman, and he had the pole set up. (Esther 5)

<sup>4</sup> The king said, "Who is in the court?" Now Haman had just entered the outer court of the palace to speak to the king about impaling Mordecai on the pole he had set up for him.

<sup>5</sup> His attendants answered, “Haman is standing in the court.”

“Bring him in,” the king ordered.

<sup>6</sup> When Haman entered, the king asked him, “What should be done for the man the king delights to **honor**?”

Now Haman thought to himself, “Who is there that the king would rather **honor** than me?”<sup>7</sup> So he answered the king, “For the man the king delights to **honor**,<sup>8</sup> have them bring a royal robe the king has worn and a horse the king has ridden, one with a royal crest placed on its head.<sup>9</sup> Then let the robe and horse be entrusted to one of the king’s most noble princes. Let them robe the man the king delights to **honor**, and lead him on the horse through the city streets, proclaiming before him, ‘This is what is done for the man the king delights to **honor**!’” (Esther 6)

<sup>12</sup> Then Mordecai returned to the king’s gate. But Haman hurried to his house, **mourning** and with his **head covered**.<sup>13</sup> And Haman told his wife Zeresh and all his friends everything that had happened to him. Then his wise men and his wife Zeresh said to him, “If Mordecai, before whom you have begun to **fall**, is of the Jewish people, you will not overcome him but will surely **fall** before him.” (Esther 6)

<sup>7</sup> And the king arose in his wrath from the wine-drinking and went into the palace garden, but Haman stayed to beg for his life from Queen Esther, for he saw that harm was determined against him by the king.<sup>8</sup> And the king returned from the palace garden to the place where they were drinking wine, as Haman was falling on the couch where Esther was. And the king said, “Will he even assault the queen in my presence, in my own house?” As the word left the mouth of the king, they covered Haman’s face.<sup>9</sup> Then Harbona, one of the eunuchs in attendance on the king, said, “Moreover, the gallows that Haman has prepared for Mordecai, whose word saved the king, is standing at Haman’s house, fifty cubits high.” And the king said, “Hang him on that.”<sup>10</sup> So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the wrath of the king abated. (Esther 7)

## What Do You Want?

## The Thing that Makes You Who You Are

### The Heart

The heart in the Bible is the epicenter of our internal life. In the Bible, the heart is the distilled essence of you as a person. Whatever that unique thing is that makes you you, begins in the heart. The Bible says that the heart is the wellspring of life. Everything that makes you you is managed by, motivated by, and flows from the heart – reason, will, emotions, desires, personality, morals, and everything else that it means to be you begins in the heart. It is the control center of your whole inner life. Heart and mind are not in conflict in the Bible’s portrayal. Instead, the heart drives the mind and the mind informs the heart.

What is in your mind is stuff that you know. What is in your heart is who you are. Your mind gathers the facts, but your heart arranges them. The mind tells you what a thing is. The heart tells you why a thing is important. And this is why Paul prays that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith. What is in your heart makes you who you are. It is the wellspring of life. It is the motivational center. We think the way that we want to think because our hearts tell us how to think. The heart tells you which bits of information are most important and how information should be arranged and applied.

Jonathan Edwards, considered the greatest scholar in American history, in his work, *Religious Affections*, laid out this reality of the heart.

**“But yet it is evident, that religion consists so much in affection, as that without holy affection there is no true religion; and no light in the understanding is good, which does not produce holy affection in the heart: no habit or principle in the heart is good, which has no such exercise; and no external fruit is good, which does not proceed from such exercises.”**

**“Such is man's nature, that he is very inactive, any otherwise than he is influenced by some affection, either love or hatred, desire, hope, fear, or some other. These affections we see to be the springs that set men agoing, in all the affairs of life, and engage them in all their pursuits: these are the things that put men forward”**

This understanding did not originate with Edwards but from the Bible itself:

**Mark 7:14-23 - And he called the people to him again and said to them, “Hear me, all of you, and understand: There is nothing outside a person that by going into him can defile him, but the things that come out of a person are what defile him.” And when he had entered the house and left the people, his disciples asked him about the parable. And he said to them, “Then are you also without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile him, since it enters not his heart but his stomach, and is expelled?” (Thus he declared all foods clean.) And he said, “What comes out of a person is what defiles him. For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.”**

**Proverb 4:23 - Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.**

**Romans 10:8-10 - But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.**

In this last verse, we see an important connection between faith and the heart.

# Faith

Faith is a positive disposition of personal devotion to something outside of yourself, upon which you base your life.

Simply put, faith is being Convinced, Captivated, and Compelled.

# Idols

We use the word Idolatry to refer to the things in our hearts and lives that have a central place other than God.

**“Idolatry is not just a failure to obey God, it's a setting of the whole heart on something besides God.”** - Timothy Keller

Tim Keller – **“An idol is anything more important to you than God. Anything that absorbs your heart and imagination more than God. Anything you seek to give you what only God can give. Anything that is so central and essential to your life, that should you lose it, your life would feel hardly worth living.”**

## Charting our Idols

	WHY IT GOES UNRECOGNIZED, HOW IT LOOKS	PRICE WE'LL PAY	WORST NIGHTMARE	BIGGEST PROBLEM EMOTION	OTHERS FEEL	GOSPEL REALITY THAT IT COUNTERFEITS
COMFORT	LAIDBACK, EASYGOING	LACK OF PRODUCTIVITY	STRESS, DEMANDS	BOREDOM	HURT, NEGLECTED	PEACE IN CHRIST
APPROVAL	LIKABLE, FRIENDLY	LESS INDEPENDENCE	REJECTION	COWARDICE	SMOTHERED	GOD'S LOVE
CONTROL	COMPETENCE	LONELINESS, SPONTANEITY	UNCERTAINTY	ANXIETY	CONDEMNED, JUDGED, OFFENDED	GOD'S BLESSINGS
POWER	CONFIDENCE	BURDENED, RESPONSIBILITY	HUMILIATION	ANGER	USED, MANIPULATED, HANDLED	RIGHTEOUSNESS

# Hearts Are Revealed When Life Falls Apart

Especially when things go badly.

That moment when a Husband picks up the phone, receives bad news, and immediately reached out clumsily for the hand of his wife for comfort, strength, stability. The circumstance doesn't go away, but this person's presence gives me resources to endure and stand up under it.

John Newton - **“His people’s sufferings are not penal; there is no wrath in them; the cup He puts in their hands is very different from that which He drank for their sakes, and is only medicinal to promote their chief good.”**

**“Afflictions quicken us to prayer.”**

**“It is a pity it should be so; but experience testifies, that a long course of ease and prosperity without painful changes, has an unhappy tendency to make us cold and formal in our secret worship; but troubles rouse our spirits, and constrain us to call upon the Lord in good earnest, when we feel a need of that help which we only can have from Him.”**

**“They are useful, and in a degree necessary, to keep alive in us a conviction of the vanity and unsatisfying nature of the present world, and all its enjoyments; to remind us that this is not our rest, and to call our thoughts upwards, where our true treasure is, and where our conversation ought to be.”**

**“A child of God cannot but greatly desire a more enlarged and experimental acquaintance with His Holy Word; and this attainment is greatly promoted by our trials. The far greater part of the promises in Scripture are made and suited to a state of affliction; and though we may believe they are true, we cannot so well know their sweetness, power, and suitableness, unless we ourselves are in a state to which they refer.”**

**Mordecai**

**Esther**

**Haman**

What was Haman’s main Idol?

How did he respond when his world was falling apart?

# The Things that Shape Us

**“Much of the West’s inability to understand the East stems from the paradigmatic schism between honor-shame cultures and innocence-guilt cultures. Of course, the matter is quite complex, and elements of both paradigms are present in the East and the West, but the honor-shame spectrum is the operative paradigm that drives the East, and it is hard for Westerners to understand.”**

**“Islamic cultures tend to establish people of high status as authorities, whereas the authority in Western culture is reason itself. These alternative seats of authority permeate the mind, determining the moral outlook of whole societies.**

**When authority is derived from position rather than reason, the act of questioning leadership is dangerous because it has the potential to upset the system. Dissension is reprimanded, and obedience is rewarded. Correct and incorrect courses of action are assessed socially, not individually. A person’s virtue is thus determined by how well he meets social expectations, not by an individual determination of right and wrong.**

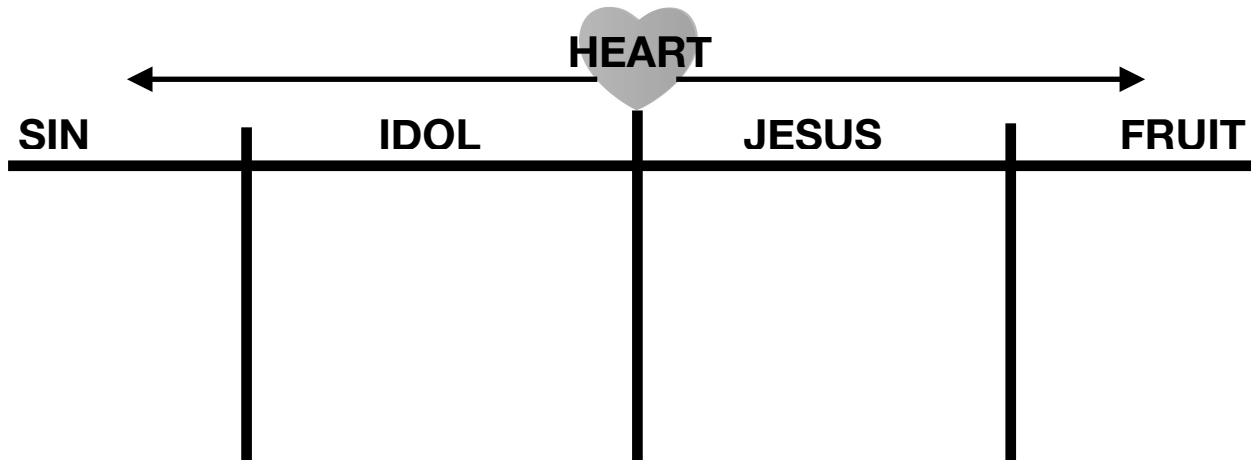
**“Thus, positional authority yields a society that determines right and wrong based on honor and shame.”**

**“This reliance on positional authority explains some characteristics in parts of the Muslim world that confound many Westerners, such as the continued practices of honor killings, child brides of six or younger, and blood feuds. For one reason or another, the prevailing sources of social authority in these regions deem these customs acceptable, perhaps even preferable. No amount of sheer reason is going to change these practices, nor will externally imposed prohibitions. The change will have to be social, internal, and organic.”**

Excerpt From: Nabeel Qureshi. “Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus.”

**So, how does a person deal with the idols we recognize in our hearts?**

# Gospel Transformation Chart



The gospel helps you:

- Find out (honesty with self; I have sin)
- Root out (Helps us put to death by replacing. Sinful desires with proper gospel desires)
- Keep Out (helps us foster and nourish truth and grace in our hearts)

## Repentance as the Way to Gospel Freedom

**“Our sins are many, but His mercies are more: our sins are great, but His righteousness is greater: we are weak, but He is power.”**

**“Wait on the Lord, and He will enable you to see more and more of the power and grace of our High Priest. The more you know Him, the better you will trust Him; the more you trust Him, the better you will love Him; the more you love Him, the better you will serve Him. This is God’s way: you are not called to buy, but to beg; not to be strong in yourself, but in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.”** John Newton