

BIBLICALLY PARENTING THE MATURING CHILD
Part VII: Handling The Unique Challenges Of Adopted Children
(Mordecai and Esther)

I. Introduction

- A. Parents who adopt a child face special challenges: genetic differences between the child and parents can lead to relatively greater ignorance on the parent's part on how to discern and deal with various behaviors in the child, and the parent and child may be tempted to withhold some love and trust from each other to varying degrees due to their mutual awareness of their genetic differences.
- B. Queen Esther had been raised by her older cousin, Mordecai, and their parent-child relationship was sound enough that God could effectively use Esther to save her people in Persia from the wicked, powerful Haman. We view the relationship between Mordecai and Esther for insight on handling the unique challenges of raising adopted children (as follows):

II. Handling The Unique Challenges Of Adopted Children, Mordecai and Esther.

- A. When Esther's Hebrew mother and father had died in the Babylonian Captivity, her older cousin, Mordecai took and raised her as his own daughter, Esther 2:5-7.
- B. The Scripture's record of Mordecai's interaction with Esther reveals he functioned with wisdom and skill in influencing Esther so she could be used of God to produce a great deliverance of her people:
 - 1. Mordecai did his best to guide Esther into succeeding in her life:
 - a. When Esther was taken into the contest to win the king's favor and become the next queen, Mordecai told Esther not to reveal her ethnic heritage as a captive Hebrew, Esther 2:8-10.
 - b. Mordecai did not want Esther's captive status to discourage the king from taking her as his queen; he wanted Esther's greatest assets, her personal qualities, given ample opportunity to impress him!
 - 2. Mordecai remained supportive and loyal to Esther when she faced a big personal crisis: he walked daily in the court where Esther was taken into the contest for queen to learn what would happen to her, 2:11.
 - 3. Mordecai had made Esther mind himself as a parent, giving her a great advantage for success:
 - a. Esther's willingness to wear what personal makeup the king's eunuch had suggested showed she had learned to submit to male leadership under Mordecai, becoming "teachable," Esther 2:15!
 - b. This worked to Esther's advantage in the contest: she heeded the eunuch on what to wear and how to adorn her face, a wise move as the eunuch would have best known how what pleased the king!
 - 4. Mordecai taught Esther her **adoptive state** had **helped rather than hindered** her usefulness as Queen:
 - a. He let Esther know her station made her uniquely qualified to help her people, Esther 4:13-14.
 - b. In examining Esther's state, we note the following components were involved: (a) Esther's genetic composition given to her through her deceased parents had granted her the beauty needed to become pleasing enough that she could qualify to be chosen as queen, cf. Esther 2:7b; (b) then, Mordecai's effective rearing of Esther had produced a charming and submissive woman in Esther in contrast to the former queen Vashti that made the king want her to be his queen, Esther 2:16-17 with 1:10-12; (c) finally, God's use of Esther's adoptive parent in Mordecai to save the king's life on an occasion provided Esther grounds for political impact through her relationship with Mordecai that would serve her and her people well, cf. Esther 2:21-23 with 6:1-14 and 7:9-10.
 - 5. Mordecai encouraged Esther to face her life's hardest crisis with courage: when Esther initially balked at Mordecai's suggestion that she seek the king's favor without being invited, a potentially lethal move, he told her that she did not have anything to lose since she would otherwise be killed by Haman. Mordecai accordingly encouraged Esther to act courageously, to put her life on the line for her people and approach the king uninvited in hope that he would grant her a favorable hearing, 4:10-12, 13-14.
- C. In the end, Mordecai and Esther delivered their people, and were honored, Esther 7-10, esp. 9:29-10:3.

Lesson: *By rearing Esther (a) to heed authority well, (b) to value her lot in life as his adopted daughter and as Queen of Persia at that time, (c) to guide her to succeed in her life's ventures, (d) to stay supportive to her and (e) to encourage her in life's crises to be courageous, Mordecai led his adopted daughter, Esther to be a blessing not only for herself, but also for Mordecai and for their whole nation!*

Application: *May we who adopt children follow Mordecai's footsteps to rear those children well.*