

LESSONS FROM Queen Vashti

As of my writing this article, I am currently reading through the book of Esther, one chapter per night. I began my re-reading excitedly, as Esther is one of my all-time favorite books of the Bible. I began with Chapter 1, and as I read, I found myself intrigued by Queen Vashti, Ahasuerus' queen before Esther comes onto the scene. She gets a bad rap; she refuses to parade before the king and his guests, only to find herself cast away, never to be seen or heard from again—at least in the Biblical account.

As I thought more and more about her, I found myself thinking about what I and my fellow young adult brothers and sisters in Christ can learn from Vashti. She only appears in the Bible for what seems like a moment, and there is actually quite a bit that young Christians can learn from the former queen of Persia.

Here are the lessons I found from Vashti's character, and how they apply to both relationships and character that Christians should have.

1. Never, ever, ever settle.

I have been told this adage for quite possibly my entire life, but this advice rings true, especially today. But how does it relate to Vashti? Her husband, "merry with wine," asked her to parade her beauty before a wide audience of equally raucous men (Esther 1:10-11). How would you feel if your spouse asked you to do the same? While that scenario seems unlikely in this day and age, you don't want to be seen and valued just for your looks, or be someone's "trophy" on a shelf. You should be valued for your heart and soul, and your spouse should strive to walk the path God has set before you both, with the ultimate goal of Heaven in mind. This idea is so important to utilize now, especially within a culture that says it's okay to divorce your spouse if things "don't work out."

2. No one person is the sum of their appearance.

King Ahasuerus wanted Vashti to come out to his feast in the first place because "she was beautiful to behold" (Esther 1:11). Elaborating on a thought from my previous point, no one person—male or female—should be sought after as a husband or wife just because of his or her appearance. God has given everyone talents, and God has also given specific roles to both men and women that not only benefit His Kingdom,

but also the marriage relationship. Men should strive to be the spiritual heads of their households, while women should strive to be loving helpmeets and nurturers of their children. And, ultimately, as stated by Jesus Himself in Mark 10:6-9, "... From the beginning of the creation, God 'made them male and female.' 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh;' so then they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate." Thus, every talent that a husband and wife possess individually can be used to contribute to their marriage, allowing it to thrive, no matter the appearance of either person.

3. Refuse to back down from your convictions, no matter the situation.

If anyone—friend, classmate, or co-worker—berates you for not wanting to partake in an action or standing for a particular cause, you have every right to hold true to your beliefs. The consequences of this can be steep, especially when it comes to occupations or personal relationships. But the truth of the matter is that standing for God has a much greater positive outcome in the long run. In scenarios like this, I turn to one of my favorite scriptures, Hebrews 6:19-20: "This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek." Placing your relationship with Him above all things—and anchoring yourself in His promises—will open more doors in life, as we see with Esther later on in her story. We don't know what happens to Vashti, but we do know that her standing up for her own convictions ultimately contributed to the good that would come out of the story of Ahasuerus and Esther.

In conclusion, Vashti can actually teach us important lessons about our walk with Christ, both individually and in a marriage relationship. What I personally learned from this look at the character of Vashti is that anyone, great or small, has a role to play in the story that God has written, even if they are mentioned for what seems like a few words on a few pages, and they all have a story to tell and a lesson to share from their actions. I hope that we all can look at any person in the Bible with the same lens and value their contributions in God's design. ▲