

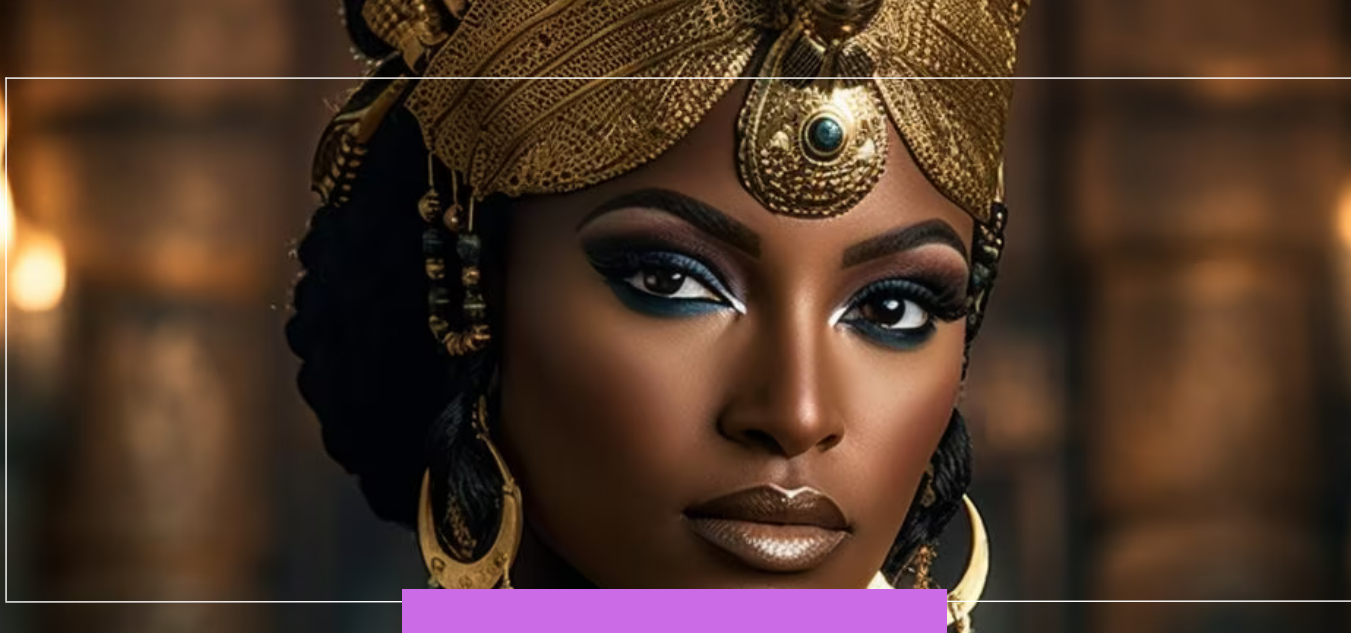
SHAKEENA HOWARD



THE  
POWER OF  
PURPOSE

LESSONS FROM QUEEN ESTHER





## CHOSEN FOR PURPOSE

“And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?”  
Esther 4:14

A lot of Christians struggle to find their purpose. And in that process, most fail to realize that just like our life doesn't solely belong to us, the purpose we desire to find is God's. What we should be looking for is plan for our life; God's has a plan that he will reveal to us in due time.

God's plans can be elaborate. To the extent that we wonder why He chose us for it. In the process of fulfilling our purpose, it is normal to face difficulties and uncertainty. During those times, it is vital to remember that God is there with us, working all things for good.

Esther's story is one of providence. It shows us that everything truly happens for a reason which God will reveal to us in due time and that God has already equipped us with what we need to fulfil the purpose He will call us to.

In the story, we see Mordecai, a Jewish man who lived in the Persian capital of Susa and worked in the king's palace. He raised his cousin, Esther after her parents died. When Esther was chosen to be part of the king's harem, Mordecai instructed her not to reveal her Jewish identity. He knew that there were forces working against the Jews and that her identity would have halted her progress.

Mordecai's purpose here was to raise Esther to become the queen of Persia and to use his position in the palace to help save the Jewish people from extermination. When the king's advisor Haman plotted to kill all the Jews in Persia, Mordecai urged Esther to reveal her Jewish identity to the king and plead for her people's salvation. Mordecai's wisdom and guidance ultimately helped to save the Jewish people from destruction.

Esther's purpose was to use her position as queen to intercede with the king on behalf of her people. She had lost her parents so that Mordecai would become her guardian. And she was beautiful and smart, which was the requirement to get closer to the king and achieve her purpose. As a Jewish woman, she had access to the king that other Jews did not, and she used this access to plead for her people's lives. Esther showed great courage and faith in God's plan as she risked her life to save her people.

It could have been a simple rag to riches story where we see her moving from an orphan to the queen and call it a happy ending, but there were more things in play. She wasn't just going to stand back and sit pretty in her Queen's seat. No, Esther realized that she had become the queen for a reason.

When the time comes, we will see that we are at a position to fulfil our purpose, and the things which seemed to be a coincidence, will come together, and make sense. We will notice that nothing happens by accident: whatever happened in the past, and whatever is happening now is shaping you to get you to the position where you can fulfil the purpose that God has chosen you for.

We might be Esther or Mordecai in our lives. We might be in the position to offer advice and guidance through God's direction to achieve God's purpose, or we might be in the position to speak up and implement those changes ourselves. How then can we speed up the discovery process?



**Reflect on your gifts:** While we may not have the gift of interpreting dreams, we can have gifts of counseling, wisdom, or leadership that we can use to serve God. Think about what you love to do and what comes naturally to you. Consider how you can use those gifts and talents to make a positive impact on the world.



**Seek guidance and wisdom:** Just as Esther sought the guidance of her cousin Mordecai, you can seek the wisdom of trusted friends, family members, or mentors. They can help you to gain clarity and direction in discovering your purpose.



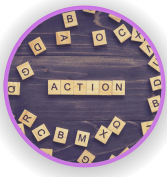
**Have Faith in God's plan:** Trust that God has created you for a purpose and know that he will work things out for good. God allowed Mordecai to overhear the plot against the king and warn Esther about it. Doing this made the King care for her and listen to her when she came to beg for her people.



**Step out of your comfort zone:** Esther had to step out of her comfort zone and risk everything to fulfill her purpose. Similarly, you may need to step out of your comfort zone to discover your purpose. This might involve taking on new challenges or trying something completely different from what you're used to.



**Pray or meditate:** Esther relied on prayer and fasting to gain clarity and strength for her purpose. You may find that prayer or meditation helps you to connect deeper with God to discover your purpose and how to fulfil it.



**Take action:** Once you have gained clarity about your purpose, take action to bring it to fruition. Esther acted by revealing her identity and pleading with the king on behalf of her people. You too can act by using your passions and talents to make a positive impact on the world even in the face of danger.

Remember the words of Kelly McGonigal, "Once you appreciate that going through stress makes you stronger, it changes how you respond to it."

By incorporating these stress management techniques into your daily routine, you can change your response to stress, transforming it from a potential threat into a source of strength and resilience.





## PURSUIT OF PURPOSE

"If I have found favor with you, Your Majesty, and if it pleases you, grant me my life—this is my petition. And spare my people—this is my request."

Esther 7:3

God's plans may seem grander than we can achieve. And when we He calls us to do those big things, we are forced to realize that we can't do it alone. You've asked God to reveal your purpose, but will you respond when he calls you? Even when your life and position might be at risk?

Esther, an orphaned Jewish woman was placed in the palace under a false identity for such a time as this, at the time when she was in the right place at the time when action needed to be taken. She had been chosen by God and placed in that ideal position where she can be used to serve God and save her people.

At that time, her people were in danger and there seemed to be no way to save both herself and her people. Esther knew what was at risk. Mordecai instructed her to beg the king to save her people. Esther replied that it was impossible to see the king without being summoned; doing so would be asking for the death penalty that awaited anyone who entered uninvited except the king held out his gold scepter.

Mordecai, who knew that his purpose was to help Esther save the Jews, insisted that the time had come for her to reveal her real identity. He called her out for hiding behind fear by saying that she shouldn't think that she alone would survive because she was in the king's house. And then he insisted that she might have been placed in her position because of a time such as this.

What would have happened if Esther had chosen to ignore Mordecai's instructions, and in so doing, abandon her purpose? She could have decided to stay quiet and comfortable in her new position while waiting for someone else to come and do the hard work. She could have chosen not to risk her position and the favor she had found with the King. This is another reminder of how God will push us to do things we thought would be impossible.

Esther realizes that this is something she had to pursue. It was something more important than her position, power, or safety. It was her purpose; the very reason she had become the Queen of Persia. And she said, "I and my assistants will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish."



Those words weren't light, meaningless words. No, she knew exactly what was at stake. She knew that it was a risky situation where the King could end up condemning both her and her people. It was customary to hesitate when faced with the difficult decision of risking her own life by approaching the king to plead for her people's safety, or to remain silent and allow the plot to unfold. The King didn't know that she was Jewish, and seeing how Queen Vashti was deposed for her disobedience, Esther was likely going to receive a greater punishment, but she pushed forward, ready to sacrifice herself if it meant fulfilling her purpose.

On the third day of the fast, Esther went to meet the king. He was pleased to see her and held out his gold scepter. This action was the first step to uncovering Haman's deeds and accomplishing her purpose. It started by proclaiming, if I perish, I perish. The very statement indicates surrender to God's plan regardless of the outcome. When we get rid of the fear of what happens next and focus on trusting that regardless of what comes next, God is always working for our eventual success.

Because she had overcome her fear, she was able to host the banquet to reveal Haman's plans to annihilate the Jews. Mordecai was finally honored, and the decree was reversed. You may not be saving an entire nation, but Your purpose is just as great. If you can help people who are lost discover their purpose, or provide guidance and mentorship to them, you are helping them achieve their purpose just like Mordecai did for Esther. If you are in that ideal position where you can make changes or suggest changes to be made, then you can fulfil your purpose.



It is never an easy decision. We can find ourselves in situations where we are called to pursue God's purpose in our lives. It could be contributing to the community, doing something to make a positive impact in the world, or even risking our position to follow a just cause. By aligning our lives with God's will and purpose, we can find fulfillment and satisfaction in all that we do and make a meaningful contribution to the world around us.

It is key to remember that the pursuit of purpose is a journey. It will take time and effort to achieve your goals. God has chosen us, and all we must remain patient, persistent, and prepared, and your purpose will unfold as we take steps to follow it. After which, we must be ready to pursue the purpose He reveals to us.

You cannot decide to start living for a purpose and remain in the back seat. Esther was about to sit back and wait for someone else to come and save her people, but through Mordecai, she was able to realize that ignoring her purpose would be a bad decision. Esther finally acted by speaking up. And because of that, she remains an example of bravery, courage, and determination.

We might not know our purpose yet, but we need to trust that God will reveal it when the time is right and that as he reveals it, he will also grant us the resources and guidance that we need. Queen Esther might have been asking God for her purpose ever since she was a child, but it was only revealed in His time.





## — FULFILLMENT OF PURPOSE —

On the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar, the edict commanded by the king was to be carried out. On this day the enemies of the Jews had hoped to overpower them, but now the tables were turned and the Jews got the upper hand over those who hated them.

Esther 9:1

As Christians, we sometimes forget that nothing is truly coincidental. How could it be coincidental that you got into a workplace where the minority never succeed? When we find ourselves in that position, it is easy to round up your success because of your efforts. While it is a great thing to give yourself a pat on the back, it is also important to remember that God was there working things out.

A lot of people might disagree and say, "So I was blamed for being insufficient when I got the rejection letters, and now that I'm succeeding all glory suddenly goes to God?"

Just like the scripture that every Christian knows, God works all things together for our good. He is there even when we might not feel him working. He is working through us every day.

It is important to remember that "God doesn't call the equipped; He equips the called." He has arranged a position that He is equipping you for. You can see your courage, determination, perseverance, and faith growing through the challenges. You might be forced to discover a new skill or something you are passionate about, and at the end of the journey, you will be someone that's able to guide other people.



If you complain about giving God the glory now, what would Queen Esther have done? She was a s orphaned and raised in a land that hated her people. She had only her uncle, Mordecai by her side. After being raised to a Queen, she would have chosen to lay back and reap the benefits.

Mordecai reminded her that she had been chosen to serve and put aside her individual desires and ambitions in order to save her people. Esther could have argued that the Jews were not her people. She was a Persian Queen, set to rule beside a Persian King. Why should she be bothered about people who had not influenced the course of her life? Why would she risk her position for people she hadn't built any personal connections? She could have decided that the King choose her over all the other women solely because of her beauty, but even in that situation, it was clear that all Glory belonged to God alone.

Fulfilling God's purpose is tied around being ready to accept your calling. The entire process requires that we remain ready to take risks, make sacrifices, and completely surrender to God's will. God has a plan for our life that we need to follow. We can be called to minister, guide, or mentor. It is endless! And it doesn't have to be the greatest position. All you need to do is to use those gifts and talents to make a difference.

We can fulfill God's purpose through faith. The knowledge that God alone is in control of our life's journey is all we need to take that step. When we step in faith and obey His guidance, He will continue to equip us with all we need to fulfill our purpose.

At first, the obstacles may seem like a mountain that's unclimbable; it may seem to have blocked your path entirely and left you no choice but to back down, but Esther's story shows us that those mountains seem huge only from afar. The mountains seem unsurmountable until we realize that no mountain can compare to the greatness of God who is with us.

The closer we move to those mountains, the more strength and courage we are filled with. At first, Esther was afraid of meeting the king for fear of her life, but that fear was immediately pushed back when she went to God for guidance. The king allowed her in and even asked her to make her request.

And there was Haman, who seemed invisible. He had great plans of annihilating the Jews. And everything seemed to be going his way at first. Until it was turned around in God's time, because Esther had decided to fulfill her God-given purpose. When God calls us, we have a choice to follow or not to follow. As Mordecai said, "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..." we make choices every day and those choices either lead us closer or farther from our purpose. You will see God's promises come true as you follow the path, he has created for you.

## How do you know that you're on the right path to fulfilling God's purpose?

You will gain peace. Even the most successful people struggle to sleep well at night, and that might be because they lack the peace that comes with assurance from God. You might choose to ignore God's purpose to fulfill yours, but even those with hardened hearts will feel the conflict in their spirit that tells them that they're doing the wrong thing.

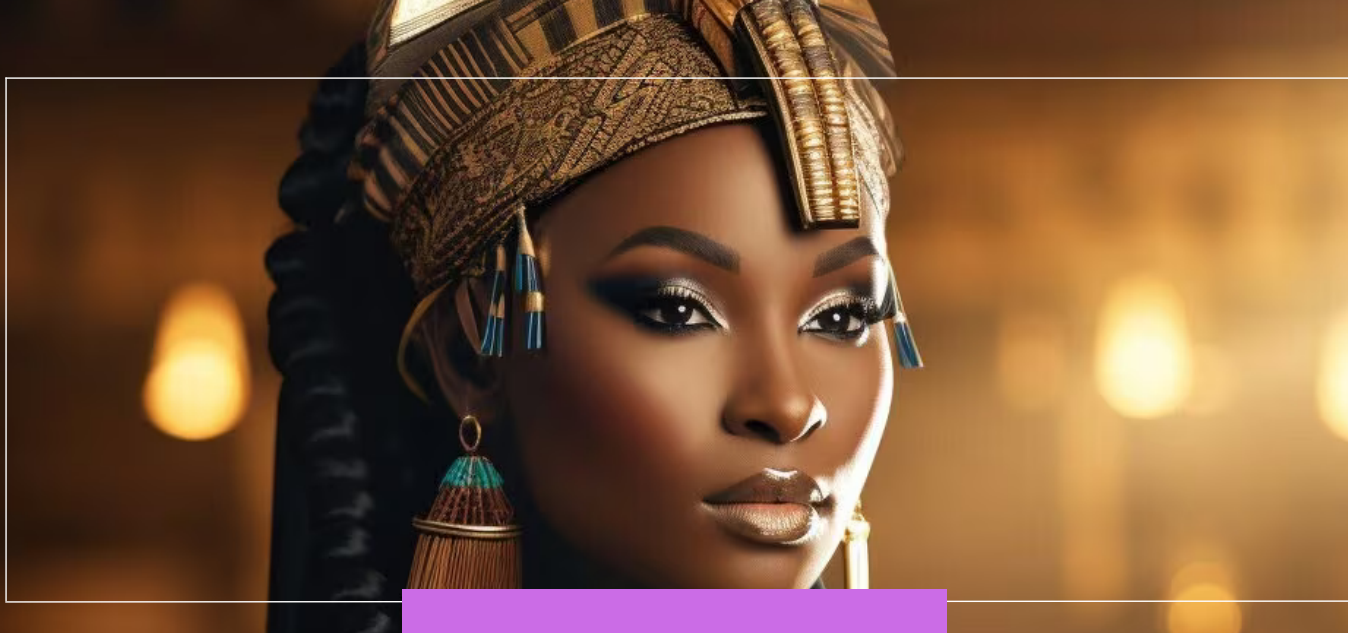
Esther might not have had any direct connection with all the Jews she saved, but she wouldn't have lived a happy life knowing that she could have done something to save them and choose not to.

We are called to minister to certain people and make a difference in their lives. We could have just seen somewhere from afar and then a thought pop into your mind, "Go and minister to them." It might seem challenging at that moment, but it is important to act.

As we fulfill our purpose, we will make countless sacrifices and take risks, but it is important to remember that the reward we stand to gain from following our God-given purpose is far greater than whatever we think we are losing. We will experience the peace, joy, and fulfillment that can only come from serving God. We open ourselves to countless opportunities to touch the lives of others and allow ours to be touched as well.







## LIVING FOR PURPOSE

Esther again pleaded with the king, falling at his feet and weeping. She begged him to put an end to the evil plan of Haman the Agagite, which he had devised against the Jews.

Esther 8:3

What happens when we as mere human beings decide to delegate purpose to ourselves? We would find ourselves stuck in an endless circle of emptiness. Some people believe that their life's purpose is to be successful, wealthy, or triumph over their enemies. God's purpose is greater than your individual desires and ambitions. It is the very reason you are alive at this time and in the position, you find yourself in. Living for purpose is living in accordance with God's divine plan. It is following God's direction and discovering the meaning behind your life, and actively pushing for the fulfillment of that purpose.

When we start living purposefully, we will understand that we cannot be just bystanders in our lives, waiting for others to make the changes we desire to see. We finally realize that we are people with the ability to shape our destiny. The task of living for purpose begins with seeking God's guidance through prayer and reading the Bible. We can also look to the examples of others, like Queen Esther, to gain insight into how God works through us to fulfill His plan.

Queen Esther is undeniably a woman who lived for a purpose. A Jewish orphan selected to be a part of the King's harem moved on to gain the favor of the king and become the queen of Persia. A position so close to the king, a position no Jew could be in at that time. Her purpose was revealed when the time had come that her people were in great danger. Instead of running away, she used the position God had placed her in to make a positive impact and stand up for her people, even at the risk of her life. Your purpose might not be revealed in a life-or-death situation, and it might not be as great as saving an entire nation, but it is still important. A lot of us struggle with discovering our purpose, understanding how to live for it, and finally achieving it.

**Let's start from the beginning:** To live for a purpose, you need to discover what your purpose is. Discovering your purpose can only be done through God. Spend time in prayer and ask God to reveal His plan for your life. Ask him to show you the goals and talents he has equipped you with. Discover the things you are passionate about, and how you can use them to make positive impacts. Esther's purpose was clear. She had been elevated from a Jewish orphan to a Persian queen for a time when her position would be used to stand up for her people. She was afraid of making changes until she realized her purpose; that realization gave her the courage and faith she needed to face the challenges ahead.

Seek advice from others who know you well, and who can help with your journey of discovery. We can find people who have already dedicated their lives to helping others discover their purpose. Queen Esther was able to discover her purpose because Mordecai had been placed to guide her. Mordecai encouraged her throughout her journey of discovery and called her out when she almost allowed fear to discourage her.

Fear has always been a big challenge for Christians. Fear holds us back from taking risks and moving in faith. We become scared of losing the benefits that come from fulfilling our own ambitions. Esther, just like all of us, was not immune to fear. She knew that meeting the King without being summoned and revealing her Jewish identity could end in her losing her life. She was the queen with no decision-making abilities that would turn the situation of her people around. The challenge seemed unsurmountable because she thought she was doing it alone. When she finally brought the situation to God through prayer and fasting, she was filled with courage, guidance, and strength. She was finally able to approach the King and begin to live out her purpose.

In His time, she was a Queen who could intercede for her people. Esther could have used her position for selfish gain, after all, no Jewish person apart from her uncle had helped her get to the throne, but instead, she used it to save her people. We might not be kings, queens, or rulers of a country, but in we too have positions of influence, whether it's in our workplace, community, or family. And we too can use our positions for good. To use our positions for good, we must first identify areas where we can make a difference. We must be intentional about using our influence in ways that align with God's purpose for our lives. And we must be willing to take risks and step out in faith, trusting that God will use our efforts for His glory.

Living for God's purpose requires us to be intentional, put in the effort, and surrender to God's plan even when it doesn't align with our desires. It requires shifting priorities to make sure God takes the first place. Have you discovered your purpose yet or are you still ignoring God's calling for your life? Whatever your purpose is, I pray that God grants you the strength to pursue it with all your heart and soul. No matter how meaningless it may seem to you, the world will be better when you showcase your God-given talents. Start living purposefully like Queen Esther today!