



*From the Heart of the First Lady*

## Act Like A Lady

**Philippians 1:27 (NLT)** Above all, you must live as citizens of heaven, conducting yourselves in a manner worthy of the Good News about Christ. Then, whether I come and see you again or only hear about you, I will know that you are standing side by side, fighting together for the faith, which is the Good News.

### How's Your Conduct?

*Ladies are made – not born!* This implies that we have to be trained to be a lady, whereas any female can grow up to be a woman. The following Biblical account contrasts two women whose stories started the same way, yet had vastly different endings and further proves my point.

The scene is set from the Book of Esther. To fully capture the context of this newsletter, I highly recommend you read the entire Book of Esther. For our sake, we will simply touch on a few relevant highlights.

Queen Vashti, one of the fairest women in the land, was married to Xerxes, king over 127 provinces stretching from India to Ethiopia. This king, having the extremely high standards of any royal figure, reveled in the finest of life's accessories and had a profound appreciation for beauty; which was clearly demonstrated by his choice of women. However, we quickly learn from Queen Vashti that beauty must be more than skin-deep. At the tail-end of an elaborate six month celebration, King Xerxes gave a banquet for all his nobles and officials. Under the influence of alcohol, the king does something contrary to the protocol of that day – he summons Queen Vashti to the banquet to display her before a convention of men as his treasured possession. However, Queen Vashti also responded unscripted – she refused to come.

Queen Vashti did more than just refuse a seemingly inappropriate invitation; she publicly humiliated her husband before his direct reports and everyone in the citadel of Susa from the least to the greatest. She disobeyed a direct order from the king and set an example of disrespect for all women to follow. Lastly, her cavalier antics had the potential to set the entire kingdom at risk if this scandal broke to enemy nations that the king is unfit to rule because he cannot run his own household. Her behavior, though trivial from our lens, provoked a crisis meeting of the cabinet to decide what must be done to her. Ultimately, her conduct got her dethroned and forever sealed her reputation as the 'rude and disrespectful' queen (Esther 1:18 (NIV) This very day the Persian and Median women of the nobility who have heard about the

#### Prayer:

Father, help me to be a capable, intelligent, and virtuous woman – faithful, diligent, generous and spiritually strong. May the law of love and kindness always be in my heart and on my lips. Thank you that I am unique in your kingdom. **In Jesus' Name, Amen.**

queen's conduct will respond to all the king's nobles in the same way. There will be no end of disrespect and discord.).

How we act definitely shows our spots. Have you ever stopped to consider how you act when you are around other people? Are you loud, boisterous, pushy and unkind or are you considerate and even-tempered? How do you act towards your family and your husband?

Contrast Vashti's conduct with her replacement – Queen Esther, an orphan Jew raised by her cousin Mordecai, who was trained for her royal position. In addition to undergoing a full year of beauty treatments (6 months of oil and myrrh and 6 months of perfumes and cosmetics) Esther "continued to follow Mordecai's instructions as she had done when he was bringing her up" (see Esther 2:20). She was a godly woman who fasted for three days and sought the LORD for wisdom when she learned of Haman's diabolical scheme to annihilate the Jews (see Esther 3). Being selfless to the point of risking her own life, she courageously approached the king (without being summoned – a crime punishable by death) to invite him and Haman to a banquet she prepared (see Esther 4). She was politically savvy as she leveraged the favor she had with the king to expose Haman's plan and persuade him to reverse the decree to extinguish her and her people (see Esther 5).

Queen Esther was the vessel that God used to invoke justice against His adversaries and save His people from destruction (see Esther 6-10). She was so effective in her role that "many people of other nationalities became Jews because fear of the Jews had seized them" (Esther 8:11b).

Though perhaps not to the same extreme, this is God's idea for you and me – that our conduct will so impress those in our sphere of influence that we will win them to Christ. As ladybugs go through a complete metamorphosis, are helpful in ridding the environment of toxins like plant lice and are considered to be the most beneficial of all insects; we as ladies are to "put off the old self ... and be changed by the renewing of our minds" Ephesians 4:22. So let me ask you: Which queen are you most like, Vashti or Esther?