



**Sermon-based reflections connect the week to the weekend!**

*Dig deeper into the talk each week, in a small group or independently. Challenge yourself to see how the message actually makes sense and applies to your everyday life.*

**Message Info:** People Problems - It's Not Just What You Say, 6/11/23 - The tongue holds the power of life and death. The words we say can deeply devastate, or encourage greatly. It's our choice to make. The problem is, we don't usually stop long enough to make a calculated choice. And that pause makes a world of difference. (*Passages: Proverbs 18:2, 6-7, & 21, James 3:2b & 8, Esther*)

**Discussion Questions:** Take your time and dig into these questions.

Have you ever responded hastily? Emotionally? Were matters of discussion steam-rolled by defensiveness? Or blown out of proportion due to resentment? Have you struggled to recall what was said by others because of focusing on your own position?

Read Esther 4:11-17. What stands out to you in this passage? Why?

When Esther learns of Haman's plot from Mordecai to eliminate all Jews, she considers the danger of intervening. She could be banished, even killed, for approaching the King. How else could Esther have replied to Mordecai's urging? How would you have replied?

Instead of responding emotionally, she makes the wise decision to ask all the Jews in Susa to join her in prayer and fasting for three days. She knows that inviting God into the situation is the answer; regardless of her interests. How can we adopt Esther's ability to respond wisely? What little choices can we make every day for it to become our lifestyle?

Reading on in Esther, we learn that the King accepts her into his presence favorably (5:1-2). The beginning of her plan is set into motion and, long story short, Mordecai is honored, the Jewish people are saved, and the villainous Haman is hung on the gallows he built for Mordecai. How did inviting God into the situation effect the outcome? Did it only impact Esther?

Let's pause more to think and pray. To convey our care for others, we need to position ourselves to operate in wisdom; not manipulation. Trying to understand what others are feeling will make drastic changes in our relationships. Finally, don't allow emotions to run the day.

**Weekly Challenge:** Commit to one of the solutions above for the rest of the month. Track how it changes things for you and those around you.