

Firmly Grounded
As presented by Deb Gorton
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Day One

One of the things I hear a lot from people, especially women who are in the marketplace, is when they get into a situation that is overwhelming or they start to feel that anxiety level rise, they begin to ask, "How do I navigate this?" I think one of the most important things for us to recognize about being bold and courageous is where we are launching from.

What is the ground you are standing on like? It is really hard to step out in courage when the floor beneath you is shaky. But I think we can ground ourselves more easily than we realize. I think we can be grounded right here, right now. You can be grounded whether your circumstances are overwhelming, or whether the decision you have to make is rather exhilarating but also daunting. Maybe your team or your family or whatever you are navigating is well oiled and going well or maybe it is breaking down. You can be grounded when people are with you and when people are against you. In any and every circumstance, as a Christ-follower you are grounded.

The Apostle Paul tells us "*Therefore, as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, having been firmly rooted and now being built up in him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude*" (Colossians 2:6-7).

Did you catch that? You have been firmly rooted. It is a done deal. Everything else from that point is the building up part. The building up part is hard. And that's where our emotions can come in. But I want you to recognize that you are already there. You *have been firmly rooted* therefore you are grounded. So, when we hold on to that, we can keep our emotions in check. When I am feeling anxious, I can say "I am standing on solid ground." I may feel overwhelmed but the ground beneath me is not moving. You may feel this is impossible, but God has got you. You are firmly rooted.

Day Two

What is radical acceptance? Esther gives us an example of what radical acceptance looks like. Esther was called to stand up and challenge the King to save her people. Esther was in a very dangerous position. Her life was on the line. As God gave her the courage and the boldness, she also had to consider her circumstances.

I think a lot of times we have an idealized version of what our circumstances are going to look like when we are called to step into uncertainty—when we are called to speak up. We want to feel a certain way. We want to feel emboldened, confident; we don't want to feel anxious. The reality of it is that most of the time those emotions of uncertainty are going to accompany us even if we know we are doing the right thing.

Think about all the emotions Esther must have been feeling. She must have been feeling terrified, uncertain, and yet she showed up with faith, courage and conviction. She said, "I am going to stand up." "I am going to speak up." "I am going to respectfully push back." Esther was by God to be a liberator of her people but as the Queen of Persia she was expected to be obedient to the law. She was

expected to be quiet and submissive. But what she did in that moment is she chose to partner with God.

She stepped into that place of uncertainty—of not knowing the outcome, probably feeling quite anxious about the outcome, and overwhelmed. But she knew her circumstances and said “Okay this is where God has placed me. I’m going to partner with God and we are going to bring about radical transformation. We are going to free the people. I am stepping out in faith.”

When you find yourself facing a really difficult situation, I want you to consider how you can embrace and accept those emotions that might be holding you back. And yet still challenge yourself to step forward knowing that God will provide victory and God will carry you through.

Day Three

Is there a season or circumstance that may be happening right now where God is calling you to step out, to say something, to be an agent of change, to support the people around you? Whatever that circumstance is for you, I want you to consider the importance of context. Context is something that we often take for granted or forget to consider, especially if our circumstance is immediate and possibly causing us a lot of pressure. We have to get this done now. We need a solution in place. And we fail to consider context. That often can cause damage to our relationships that can actually create a solution that is not long term or more damaging than we had hoped.

Looking at Esther’s story, one of the things that is so important is when her cousin Mordecai first comes to her to let her know that there is someone out there who wants to obliterate their people. And when this message is sent to Esther it comes through the people around her. Mordecai doesn’t come directly to Esther, and Esther needs some clarification.

Sometimes when we are faced with an obstacle or a solution one of our first responses might be to immediately go to someone—the source of the problem or the person in charge—and ask for help, support, or clarity. But what we see Esther do here is so important.

When she first becomes aware of Mordecai’s distress, and he can’t come to her because under the Persian law he is in mourning, she is beside herself. She wants to know what is happening, what is going on and what is troubling Mordecai. So, she actually sends clothes for him to change so that under the law he could come to her. But he objects. When we are in those seasons when we act on a situation, especially in an emergency, and things don’t go as we had planned, we immediately push back. And yet Esther pauses. She chooses to respect Mordecai’s decision. She considers the context of the situation. You know what she does next? She flexes in her approach.

So, as you are facing a difficult season or circumstance and you are being called to step out in boldness and courage, I want you to consider the context of your circumstance and be open to flexibility.

Day Four

One thing that always strikes me when reading through Jesus’ earthly ministry is how frequently and perhaps even how easily he set healthy boundaries despite the pressures of others. I don’t know about you, but I am typically the type of person that when a request is made of me, or I feel called to step into a situation, I am pretty apt to say “yes” right away.

I don’t often place boundaries around my time like I would like to, or say “no” to the people around me in fear of letting them down. Yet, when I look at Jesus’ example, so often his willingness and his abilities to set boundaries was out of necessity for sustenance and a nourishment from the Father first. He stole away to quiet places to pray. The time he spent in the desert and resting and praying makes

me feel uncomfortable as I face the pressures of my life. To think about taking days or weeks at a time to spend with the Lord makes me think about “all the things on my to-do list: what am I to do about all those things?” When I don’t set those healthy boundaries around my daily choices, too often I am not functioning out of God’s design for my life. I am trying to take things into my own hands.

So, I want to encourage you, if you are walking in a season of challenges and difficulties, maybe you’re in a season of growth and opportunity, and you’re knowing that you are stepping into this bold and courageous place. How can you set healthy boundaries around your time, your relationships, your time with the Lord, with your family? That takes the ability to stop and ask yourself, “what is most important to me?”

When I have new clients, one of the first activities we usually do is list out *everything* in their life that is important to them. Nothing is too significant or insignificant. We end up with a list of 25-30 things and then we go back and rank the top ten. Then I ask them to think back over the last week and over the last few days and ask, “How often have you prioritized these things?” And as you can imagine it makes them uncomfortable and it reminds me of how often I don’t prioritize my most important things.

So, I encourage you, set boundaries like Jesus did. Even if you feel like you don’t have the time or space take five minutes, ten minutes, even one minute as a great starting point. Your decisions, your family, the people around you will thank you.

Day Five

If you haven’t read the book of Esther, I encourage you do so. Esther was faced with a challenge to go and share with the King that something was going to happen to her people. She told the King “My people are at risk. They are going to be completely taken away from the earth. There is a death wish on my life.” Her bold and courageous actions put her in a position of risking her own life. There is a part toward the end of the book of Esther where Mordecai, her cousin, who is taking care of her, the one who has told her of the plot to kill the Jews, tells her you can choose to remain silent.

Like Esther it is actually your right as well. But rest assured that God’s purpose will prevail because he has a promised plan for us. And you are able to determine, in this critical moment, how your actions, or the lack there of, will influence the course of your history or simply tuck you away in its shadows.

Esther with faith, courage and conviction replies, “I will rise. I will speak out. I will respectfully push back.” I am so inspired by Esther’s response here. You know why? Because she recognized that she had something to lose, and she was willing to lose that in order to gain a partnership with God and become a liberator.

So often we navigate this world only thinking about gains. What am I going to accomplish? What am I going to get out of this? What am I going to receive in return? And yet so often we fail to consider what we could lose. And that is equally, if not more important, than considering our gains. Esther had the very lives of her people in her hands, and she was willing to say that she was not willing to risk that loss.

When you think about your day-to-day life, what are you actually losing? It may not be as significant as what Esther was about to lose, but maybe it is time with your family, or time with the Lord. Or maybe it is the opportunity to do something else.

So, I would encourage you, as you face your decisions, to be bold and courageous, and don’t forget to consider the losses as well. Maybe, just maybe, there are actually losses you are not willing to incur.