

STEPS TO HELP OUR GIRLS HANDLE COMPARISON:

Below you will find a few practical steps you can take with your pre-teen daughter to help her understand what comparison is and how to handle it. These steps are designed to work together as a process. They are simply suggestions and can be modified and adapted for age-appropriateness.

- 1. Pray God would give you the wisdom and guidance you need to walk her through any difficult situation she may face regarding comparison in her life.**
- 2. Read the story of Esther together.** (Suggested pacing: two chapters per day for 5 days.)
- 3. Read the following article on your own.**

More Than One Queen

"So he set a royal crown on her head and made her queen instead of Vashti. And the king gave a great banquet, Esther's banquet, for all his nobles and officials." Esther 2:17-18 (NIV)

At this pivotal moment in history, Esther stepped into her new role as Queen of Persia. She understood the importance of her job, but she had yet to find out the depth of her purpose. Though Esther's story is inspiring and serves as a lesson for women young and old, I want to focus our attention on her predecessor, Queen Vashti, and the transition Esther made into her new-found place of honor.

You see, Esther was not the only heroine in this story. The story of Esther and Mordecai holds eternal significance for the Jewish people and for us as Christians, but Vashti was a woman of noble character, as well. We should not forget the reason she was removed from the throne by her husband. Being in "high spirits from wine," (v.10) and certainly not in his right mind after seven days of a continuous party, King Xerxes sent for Vashti to come and put herself on display.

When she refused, the king's consultant, Memukan, suggested the king "issue a royal decree and let it be written in the laws of Persia and Media, which cannot be repealed,

that Vashti is never again to enter the presence” of the king. (v.19) He went on to advise that “her royal position (be given) to someone else who is better than she.” The king agreed. Although this was an unexpected end to her reign, it should not darken the reputation of the queen she once was. In fact, *All the Women of the Bible* study dictionary says this about her:

“By birth Vashti was a Persian princess, possessing along with her regal bearing, an extraordinary, fragile beauty... Her self-respect and high character meant more to her than her husband’s vast realm... Rather than lower the white banner of womanly modesty, Vashti accepted disgrace and dismissal.”

Wow! Vashti sounds like a pretty special lady. Remarkably, after verse 10 Queen Vashti is never mentioned again in Scripture. I wonder if Esther ever heard, “You need to do things the way Vashti did them.” Or maybe, “Vashti was a good queen, so it will be hard to follow in her footsteps.” We will never know, because once Esther put on the crown, she never looked back. Her mission was clear. Because of God’s divine intervention in her life, she stood in a position to intervene on behalf of her people – something the previous queen would not have the authority or the ability to do. The young new queen didn’t have experience in these matters, but she had a willing heart and a humble attitude. It was Esther’s time, and if she had focused on Queen Vashti’s purpose instead of her own, she would have missed her mission entirely.

Throughout their lifetimes, our girls will have many opportunities to step into new roles and new adventures. Some will be more challenging than others, but with God as their leader, they can learn to step confidently into each situation. Let’s take a lesson from the queens and teach our daughters in Christ to live with enthusiasm and courage. I’m sure both Esther and Vashti would agree.

4. **Read this Scripture together with your girl.** Discuss its meaning. (Refer to page 146 in *Over It.*)

“We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:5 ESV).

5. **Capture the words.** Have her tell you in her own words something that was said by a friend, acquaintance, or classmate that caused discouragement or doubt. *You* write the words on a notecard in pencil, just as she says them.
6. **Make the words obedient to Christ.** Give her an eraser and have her erase the words from the notecard, thus erasing them from her life completely. Have her copy down one of the short but powerful verses from the lists in the *Over It* book, right in the place where the other words had been.
7. **Protect the promises.** Place the notecard with God's Word about her in a small box or container next to her bed.

These steps offer a symbolic, tangible way for your girl to understand the power of God's Word in her life. They also illustrate how she can spiritually make hurtful comments or thoughts obedient to Christ. I pray your time with your girl will be just what she needs to set her on a course of discovering God's incredible love for her. May she always know how remarkable she is to God.

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Bonus material for *Over It. Conquering Comparison to Live Out God's Plan*