



There are two kinds of people in the world: those who watch a TV show as the episodes come out week-to-week and those who binge watch the whole series in one sitting.

[Teacher's Note: I explained which category I fall into; adapt to explain which group you are in and why. I fall into the group that **MUST** watch all of the episodes at once, because I cannot handle the suspense!]

Everyone knows that the cliffhangers, twists and turns, and tear-jerking moments are what makes or breaks a show.

Before the days of Netflix, watching a series on a weekly basis was the only option. And I dreaded the moment of the season finale, because I knew the fate of my favorite character would be hanging in the balance. My entire summer would be spent wondering, hoping, anticipating whether or not that character would live or die, finally confess their love for another character, or leave everything they've ever known for the opportunity of a lifetime. As the last few minutes of the episode approached, I sat there hopeless and powerless, knowing there was nothing I could do to reach the resolution I longed for. The show would end, I would take a few moments to recover. Don't act like I'm the only one who's ever been far too emotionally invested in a show — and attempt to move on with my life.

Here's the crazy thing: many of us think Jesus watches our lives in the same way. We assume He is sitting on the edge of His throne in heaven, nervously devouring popcorn, because He can't handle the suspense of what might happen next. We wrongly think that He has no involvement or say in the events of our lives. Friend, that view of Jesus is far too small. In fact, that's the complete opposite of whom the Bible says He is.

God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit are constantly at work in our lives orchestrating every action, reaction, tragedy, and victory for our good and the ultimate glory of God. This is not a passive role; no, it's an active role in which He is directly involved in writing every word of our stories. Jesus is the screenwriter, not the spectator. He has a marvelous plan, and at no point is He powerless or incapable of intervening in our lives. We can rest assured that He is never surprised by anything we face.

He uses every twist and turn to craft beautiful stories that are beyond our wildest imaginations.

Take the book of Esther, for instance. At first glance, it's a typical story filled with heroes and villains, where good conquers evil, and ultimately a happy ending for the main characters. Because God's name is not mentioned in this book, it would seem that He was not involved, was disinterested, or ill-equipped to take action. But, the opposite was true; He fervently worked behind the scenes to ensure the rescue of His people and the glory of His name.

I wish I could channel my "inner-Olaf" from Frozen 2 to provide an epic synopsis of Esther's story in the same way he recounted the entire first Frozen movie, but I'll do my best to make it just as riveting and sensational. I'll need some volunteers to help me tell the story.

[Teacher's Note: Choose four volunteers to be Esther, King Xerxes, Haman and Mordecai. Each volunteer needs to act out certain parts of the story.]

When you hear your character's name, pay attention to the actions you need to perform.

[Teacher's Note: As you tell the story, pause at appropriate moments for the characters to act out the various scenes and cues.]

Esther, a Jew and the heroine of our story, was forced to **compete in a beauty contest** to become the king's wife. She **won** this epic showdown and **became queen**. Her relative and father-figure, Mordecai, **watched** this stage of her life unfold from afar. How many of you girls in the room have protective dads or older brothers? Do you think they would okay with your competing in a beauty contest to get married? I doubt it! But unfortunately, Esther did not have a choice.

Haman, the king's righthand man who was **evil and manipulative**, had a vendetta against Mordecai and all of the Jews. He **tricked the king into writing an edict** that would cause the Jews to be annihilated at a future date. In essence, he single-handedly instituted a death sentence for an entire people group! Can you imagine what would be said about him on social media today?

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