

Respect

Description

Esther 1:13-22

It is surprising that King Xerxes didn't banish Vashti immediately, because he could—he was king, after all. Did he hesitate because he didn't know what to do? Did he love Vashti?

He could have made the decision himself, but Xerxes instead looked for support, perhaps due to political expediency. The opinions of his advisors gave him cover, so he didn't lose face across his kingdom. Any show of weakness would be devastating, so a strong response to this situation was essential. What an opportunity to send a message to all women: Respect your husbands.

While obedience and submission can be demanded, respect cannot. Respect given in response to mistreatment is not true respect. Did Paul have that in mind in Ephesians 5 when his words to husbands, "Love your wives, just as Christ loved the church" (v. 25), formed the basis for marriage relationships? A wife who is loved like that doesn't require a king's edict to respect her husband.

When we are divinely loved like that, no law is needed for us to love in return.

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