



Podcast Show Notes

Watch Your Mouth - DEFEND

This episode explores the courage and altruism it takes to come to someone's defense (both verbally and physically). In our "That Was Then" segment we glean wisdom from stunning examples like Esther and Mordecai (in Biblical times who saved Jews from annihilation). Our "This Is Now" segment features Irena Sendler (Polish Social Worker who saved over 2500 Jewish children from the horrors of the Holocaust), Wesley Autrey (NYC subway passenger who literally saved someone from moving train) and Philip Zimbardo, PhD Psychology Professor at Stanford University who discusses "What Makes a Hero".

Opening & Overview (3½ minutes)

THAT WAS THEN (14 minutes)

[Lead into episode's content]: (1 minute, 50 seconds)

- **DEFINITION:** According to Merriam-Webster's dictionary, **DEFEND** means "to speak or write in support of (someone or something) that is being challenged or criticized".
- **APPROXIMATE # OCCURRENCES IN SCRIPTURE:** 66 times
- **BIBLICAL ACCOUNT TAKEN FROM:** the entire book of Esther in the New International Version from Bible.com read by Max McLean
- **FEATURED TEXT:** Esther chapter 4 verses 13 through 16 in the New International Version on Bible.com and read by Max McLean, which says "he sent back this answer: "Do not think that because you are in the king's house you alone of all the Jews will escape. For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?" Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: "Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maids will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish." And Esther chapter 7 verses 1 through 4 add more color: So the king and Haman went to Queen Esther's banquet, and as they were drinking wine on the second day, the king again asked, "Queen Esther, what is your petition? It will be given you. What is your request? Even up to half the kingdom, it will be granted." Then Queen Esther answered, "If I have found favor with you, Your Majesty, and if it pleases you, grant me my life—this is my petition. And spare my people—this is my request. For I and my people have been sold to be destroyed, killed and annihilated..."

Full Biblical Account of Esther narrated by [The Bible Project](#): (9 minutes, 13 seconds)

Commentary by Dorma Guice

- *So how's that for a concise overview? Again, because it's exceedingly difficult to take in all the events that are packed into these 10 chapters, I encourage you to read the Book of Esther. If you liked the overview, then you certainly won't be disappointed by the Biblical text.*
- *Because there's so much going on, it's easy to get lost in the story – which isn't a bad thing. But for the sake of this Verbal Activity **DEFEND**, let's take a moment and place our feet in Queen Esther's royal shoes. How many of us would have been able to resist focusing on all the threatening barriers like the lethal risk of approaching the King unsummoned, exposing a secret you long kept from him, speaking truth to the most powerful person in the land at that time by accusing his top noble – the 2nd most powerful person in the land, daring to call for the reversal of an irrevocable edict, and the looming threat of being dethroned – at a minimum. Staring down these intimidating obstacles, how many of us would decide not to get involved. Thank GOD she stepped up and spoke up! Who knows how things would have otherwise ended? As I mentioned in my blog, sometimes the price of keeping silent can cost far more than the risk of being denied.*
- **(1 minute, 20 seconds)**

[THIS IS NOW \(14 minutes, 18 seconds\)](#)

Transition:

*I hope you got something from our “That was Then” segment. For my contemporary listeners, thanks for hanging in with me. As King Solomon often said, “there's nothing new under the sun”, let's fast-forward a couple thousand years to explore an account of the same Verbal Activity – **DEFEND** in our “This Is Now” segment. (20 seconds)*

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N2zhu5RH34>
- *Imagine being in a situation where you're just going about your business and you're drawn into a horribly compelling and yet daunting position. Not only is the need or the cause more dreadful than anything you've ever faced, but the adversary you'd have to confront in the name of justice [not necessarily like a speeding train, but a person, group or system sooo dangerous that they can literally wreak a train-reck of havoc and sooo menacing that you feel like a gnat going up against a behemoth.] Admittedly, this thought experiment tilts toward the extreme, but we are presented with similar smaller-scale situations quite frequently. And just as often we may or may not decide to pass. Let me explain how it works:*
- *Before a word is spoken, there is a subconscious methodology that is applied when deciding to come to someone's defense. As you're assessing the problem, there are 3 things that are taking place in your mind... First, the defendant's plight is assessed to determine the degree of oppression, lawlessness or harassment [in other words, “is it worth it?”]. Next, the defendant(s) themselves are gauged for character, guilt/innocence or worthiness of such defense [in other words, “are they worth it?”]. Lastly, the cause, temperament and strength of the antagonist(s) are evaluated [in other words, “am I up for this fight?”]. Based on the results from these subliminal criteria, one decides to either get involved or simply look the other way. This all occurs within a span of about 90 seconds.*

- *As we heard from Esther, it takes an extraordinary person to come to the defense of another who is facing a formidable adversary. Courage, selflessness, and a compulsion for justice consumes them and propels them into action (which is what literally happened in this news clip). They surrender themselves fully to the cause, placing higher value on the lives of the defendants than their own. Such people are rare and should be part of a very exclusive club. The Israeli government thought so when they bestowed the honor “Righteous Among the Nations” to some amazing people who risked their lives defending and saving Jews from the horrors of the Holocaust.*
- *One such person is one of the voices you will hear next, but first I just want to give you some context. Irena Sendler was a Polish Catholic nurse and social worker who at the age of 29 helped lead the Polish anti-Holocaust resistance in Warsaw. During World War II, she came to the defense of over 2,500 Jewish children by smuggling them out of the Warsaw Ghetto to individual and group children’s homes throughout Poland. Knowing she would need help, she brilliantly coordinated alliances with about two dozen Zegota members. Zegota is codename for Polish Council to Aid Jews. Through this clandestine coalition, Irena set out to relocate as many children as possible. Leveraging her assignment to conduct sanitary inspections during a typhoid outbreak, she smuggled babies and small children out of the ghetto in ambulances, trolleys, and trams by hiding them in suitcases and boxes (disguising them as packages). Cleverly, she traveled with her dog who she trained to bark on queue whenever she was stopped and questioned by the Gestapo so they couldn’t hear the babies crying. Likewise, her job with the Social Welfare Department enabled her to provide older children with false naturalization documents which allowed them to roam freely outside of the ghetto. She also dyed their hair blonde, taught them the Rosary and how to make the sign of the cross so they could camouflage themselves within the Catholic church.*
- *This next audio-clip is an excerpt from the documentary “In The Name of Their Mothers” and you will hear part of Irena’s story told in her own words with the help of an interpreter, as well as commentary from a Polish Historian, a Rabbi, the daughter of one of the Zegota members and the founder of the Zegota himself. Take a listen... <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DwNd-6k9dKU>*
- *Thankfully, Irena evaded the frigid clutches of death as her fellow activists raised enough money to bribe the officials who allowed her to escape. Undeterred though, she continued her underground rescue capers straight through to the end of the War. Irena Sendler died in Warsaw, Poland on May 12, 2008. She was 98 years old.*

WHO SAID THAT?!!! (1 minute, 18 seconds)

- *Esther, Wesley and Irena modeled for us the valor and altruism it takes to defend the cause of the vulnerable and afflicted. Particularly, Irena’s example – still freshly imprinted on our consciousness, is a perfect segue into our “Who Said That?!” segment. Near the end of her life – after all she had accomplished, she still had this to say:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TRFcrvVRb3o> . Are you doing enough? Can you do more in the world around you to change it and make it a better place? That was Megan Felt, lead collaborator of “Life In A Jar: The Irena Sendler Project”. Throughout the development of this project, Megan became very close to Irena during the last few years of her life. You can learn*

more about “Life In A Jar” by downloading the shownotes from website at www.watchyourmouth.blog/podcast/defend.

WHAT DID YOU SAY?!!! & Closing (5 minutes, 50 seconds)

Outro: “What Did You Say?”:

- This brings us to our final segment: “What Do You Say?”, where we examine our choice of words and decide to eliminate unhelpful and hurtful speech from our dialogue. The fastest way to decide what to say is to know “WHAT NOT TO SAY”. And the best way to determine what not to say is to see what the Bible says about what we say.
- Today’s queue comes from Proverbs chapter 31 verses 8 and 9 in the New International Version, which says **“Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.”** Well, that’s straightforward. And it’s well worth pointing out that this is written as a command – not a suggestion. Scripture has obligated us to say something when we see something that’s not right, but it also urges us to do something. Have a listen to James chapter 2 verses 14 through 18 in the New Living Translation and read by Todd Busted. **“What good is it, dear brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but don’t show it by your actions? Can that kind of faith save anyone? Suppose you see a brother or sister who has no food or clothing, and you say, “Goodbye and have a good day, stay warm and eat well” – but then you don’t give that person any food or clothing. What good does that do? So you see, faith by itself isn’t enough. Unless it produces good deeds, it is dead and useless.”** The combination of these two scriptures provides a clear roadmap for us to follow when we come face-to-face with oppression and injustice. On this road a response of “that’s not my problem” or “good luck with that” or “I don’t want to be bothered” or “what’s that got to do with me” or “they’ll work it out” may temporarily give us an out, but they are not acceptable to GOD.

In an earlier podcast where we explored the Verbal Activity “BULLY”, I shared a quote from Archbishop Desmond Tutu who said, “if you are neutral in the face of oppression, then you have chosen the side of the oppressor. If an elephant has his foot on the tail of a mouse and you say you are neutral, the mouse will not appreciate your neutrality”. That said, the six most simple yet powerful words you can say to someone in distress, facing oppression or in need of a defense are “Is there anything I can do”? Or even simpler... “how can I help?” https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/what_makes_a_hero

Affirmation & Closing:

- Until we get together again, ponder and recite this AFFIRMATION: ... " As GOD faithfully comes to my defense when I am vulnerable and in need, I do not turn away from those who are suffering or being persecuted; but stand in the gap for and with them when the situation warrants it.."

Closing remarks:

- Thanks for listening to this podcast. If you enjoyed it, feel free to share it with everyone and check out the corresponding blogpost at watchyourmouth.blog for more insight. Feel free to download the show notes from our [Podcast](#) page to get links and references to the information shared in this episode. You can also join our [Member](#) Community by subscribing and we'll make sure you never miss one. Members can also share comments, stories and keep the conversation going in our [Discussion](#) Forum. Additionally, please consider supporting this podcast by donating any amount on our [Donate](#) page. Your generosity enables us to keep

delivering fresh content and reach more people. Lastly, like us on [Facebook](#), follow us on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [Pinterest](#). Until next time... be well and watch your mouth!

Sources and Links:

www.watchyourmouth.blog

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<https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/esther/>

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In The Name of Their Mothers: The Story of Irena Sendler <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DwNd-6k9dKU>

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