

Use “The Scene” to introduce “The Price of Power (Esther)” the High School Sunday school lesson for October 22, 2017. The lesson is found on page 51 of *High School Teacher* by Standard Publishing.



The news about Harvey Weinstein’s downfall caused by the revelations of the victims of his predatory sexual behaviors spread like wildfire. Prompted by a Twitter post by actress Alyssa Milano, women everywhere have been joining the declaration of #metoo, a way of having a voice and being counted among those who have suffered from sexual harassment. The idea is that if the world can see how big the problem is, perhaps people will stop silencing the victims and instead do something to stop the perpetrators.

But even while some women are reclaiming their voices and standing up in the strength and courage that comes from people supporting one another, there have been dissenting voices. Some have said that the actresses who met with Weinstein alone knew what they were getting into and gave up their power on purpose in order to get something in return. In other words, they traded their bodies or at the very least their comfort and a part of their mental health for the chance to make it big in Hollywood. They wanted to use Weinstein’s power to add to their own.

The problem with this thinking is that anytime there is one bigger, stronger, extremely powerful individual on one side and one smaller, weaker, less powerful person on the other side, the definition of *choice*, and who actually has it, gets muddled. If you feel you have nothing to bargain with, and the person who is asking something of you holds your livelihood, your ability to secure the essentials of viable life, in his hands, then yes—you may say that you still have a choice, but what kind of choice is it? Add fear of potential physical harm to the mix, and again, you have to realize—a choice where one feels any “no” will be a form of career suicide and lead to worse problems, or might actually result in immediate bodily harm, is really no choice at all. The power shifts. Instead of the one having a very little and the other having a lot, it changes to the other having it all.

That’s why it’s important to give the weaker persons the power of a strong voice—because sometimes that’s all we have, but many times, that is enough. #metoo

As students arrive, give each of them a copy of the article. Then discuss in this way:

Have you heard the stories about the movie producer Harvey Weinstein? What do you think about the situation?

Why do you think so many women stayed silent for so long? What kinds of situations lead to the silencing of those not in power?

Have you ever been in a situation where you felt your choices were very limited? What did you do?

There are many kinds of power and as many ways to use it. Today we’ll read about Queen Esther and discover what we can learn about gaining and using power.