

## MESSY FAITH: FINDING OUR STORY IN ESTHER

"Seeing the Hand of God" (Esther 5-7)  
Community Group Curriculum for the week of March 15, 2015

### The Story Continues

The book of Esther tells the story of how a Jewish girl becomes the queen of Persia and how she saves her people from a plot to destroy them. She is assisted in this by Mordecai who is both her cousin and guardian. In Chapter's 5-7 we see Esther become queen and a wise plan unfolds after she and her people fast. She asks for permission to meet with the king which could have ended in her death. However, she finds favor with the king and is offered whatever she wants up to half of the kingdom. What she requests is the presence of the king and Haman, who desires to destroy her people, at a banquet she has prepared. Haman plots, Esther prays and plans, and God intervenes, ever working behind the scenes in what looks like coincidence to the unbelieving eye.

### Let's Discuss!

If someone agreed last week to "tell the story" of Esther 5-7 let them do so. After telling the story, read a chapter and then let the group rebuild/retell the story from memory. Do this for each chapter (5, 6, and 7).

### Chapter 5

1. Read Esther 5:1. The verse opens with "On the third day..." What is this referencing (Esther 4:16)? Why was this a tense moment? What was at stake? Esther had a plan. What was the purpose of having the king and Haman attend two feasts?
2. Esther 5:9-14 describes Haman in all his glory. What are his characteristics? After listing each characteristic, describe how to "counter" the bad characteristics. Extra Credit: What Bible verses support your "counter" to the bad characteristics?
3. Pride stifles our walk with the Lord. Here are some simple signs of pride: insecurity, the need to be right, being argumentative, more invested in being heard than in hearing, impatience, lack of submissive attitude, not easily corrected, receiving correction but not changing, stubborn, need to proclaim your accomplishments. How have you combatted pride in your life? Share with the group.
4. What gave Esther the confidence to intercede for her people? Read Proverbs 16:3-4. What does it mean to "commit your work to the Lord."? How do you do that? What does it mean that "the Lord has made everything for its purpose"? Does this give comfort in the struggles of life? How?

### Chapter 6

1. Of all the things to read when you cannot sleep, the "book of memorable deeds" (Esther 6:1-3) seems an unlikely source! (JUST FOR FUN: Poll your group on what they do when they cannot sleep). What does this tell you about God's providence?

2. Read Esther 5:12-14 and then read Esther 6:12-13. Describe the advice of Haman's wife and wise men for each passage. Why did their viewpoint change drastically?
3. Read Proverbs 16:25 and Hosea 14:9. Haman is an example of many today that spend their life seeking their own fame, fortune and glory only to be consumed by these things which leads to their downfall. How do you stay true to the Lord while living in this sinful world? What advice would you give to others on this subject?

## **Chapter 7**

1. Summarize the story in chapter 7. What a great story! How is God's timing illustrated in this chapter? Do you need to learn to trust God's timing? Do you need a greater confidence in God's care so you can stand firm when facing trials? How does this story encourage you that God is active in your life and will respond in His perfect timing?
2. When you have had the opportunity to take a stand for Christ in the workplace, at school, in social settings, or even at church, did you follow Esther's example of using prayer, wisdom, and humility? Would you do it the same way again or would you want to make some changes? What kinds of changes might you make?

## **Next Week**

Leaders, ask for a volunteer to summarize the final three chapters (8-10) of the story told in Esther and be ready to share the summary to your group when you next meet. After summarizing the story, you can either read Esther 8-10 (takes about 10-15 minutes), or read one chapter at a time and discuss the questions for that chapter.

## **Response and Prayer**

Take some time to compare Haman's pride and Esther's humility. Which list most reflects you as you engage with coworkers, church members, people in authority, and family members? If you have acted in pride, is there anyone to whom you might need to apologize and make amends? Have you had someone in your life that you realize was a humble leader whom God might want you to affirm and pattern your interactions after?

Write a prayer below processing what you have learned about God, His providence and timing, humility, and pride. Ask Him to continue molding you into the person He created you to be and that He would point out anything in your heart that hinders your relationship with Him.