

Esther

FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS

Overview:

The story of Esther reveals how God works in our everyday circumstances to advance his plan for our lives.

Lessons:

1. The God of the Mundane
2. When Life Seems Impossible
3. The Schemes of the Wicked
4. God's Timing is Perfect



THE GOD OF THE MUNDANE

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TALKING POINTS

The story of Esther reveals how God works in mysterious ways, even in mundane ways. We may not always recognize his handiwork but he's always working to accomplish his plans.

- The story of Esther takes place in Persia during the reign of King _____. It's an account of a handful of Jews who stayed in Persia after others went back to rebuild _____.
- A seemingly _____ event was the impetus for God to do something great for the nation of Israel. And he used a _____ to do it. **Esther 1:10-12, 19-20**
- The king chooses Esther as _____. That's when her uncle Mordecai enters the picture and saves the king's life. Neither of them understood at the time how these random events were setting up the eventual _____ of their people. **Esther 2:16-17, 21-23**
- Some may mistake it for _____, but God often uses _____ things to lead us toward his greater plans for our lives. **Romans 8:28**

DISCUSSION

1. Share a time when you had a "fish out of water" experience when you felt like you didn't belong. What were some of the emotions you felt? How did that experience bolster or defeat you?
2. Read Esther 1:10-12, 19-20. Why do you think Vashti refused to come to the king? How do you think all the other women felt when they heard about this decree demanding their obedience to their husbands?
3. Why do you think God used the disobedience of one woman as the impetus for a new woman to come into power?
4. Read Esther 2:21-23. Review all of the "coincidences" that occurred in this part of the story. Why do you think God wrote the story this way? Share a time you were in the right place at the right time for something. Did you recognize God's hand in that then?
5. Read Romans 8:28. As you look back on your life, share a time a challenging situation turned out to be for your good. How did God provide and lead during that time? What lessons did that situation teach you that can help you when you face future challenges?

WHEN LIFE SEEMS IMPOSSIBLE

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TALKING POINTS

Just when Esther thought life was good, an evil person enters the picture threatening the lives of herself and her people.

- Esther 3 introduces a new character named _____ whom the king elevates to a place of power. Just when it looked like God was in control, other forces seem to _____ and derail the plan to save the Jews. **Esther 3:1-2, 5-6**
- As the Jews grapple with their impending doom, _____ pleads with Esther to intervene. Esther is placed in an impossible situation, forced to choose between saving _____ and her people. **Esther 4:1-3,8 Esther 4:13-17**
- We may face impossible situations where God asks us to make _____ decisions that test our _____ and trust in him. **Joshua 1:9**

DISCUSSION

1. *Have you ever felt like you were on cruise control and then something happened that derailed your life? Explain.*
2. *Read Esther 3:1-2, 5-6. What does this passage reveal about Haman? What does it reveal about Mordecai? Have you ever refused to “kiss up” to someone in your life? Explain.*
3. *Read Esther 4:13-14. What were all the risks Esther faced with her decision? How do Mordecai’s words possibly reveal his understanding of how God was working in their lives?*
4. *Share a time you bravely took a stand for something unsure of the consequences for doing it?*
5. *Read Joshua 1:9. How has your resolve been tested? Share a time you were courageous and confronted someone. Share a time you lacked courage and wish you could go back and try again?*

THE SCHEMES OF THE WICKED

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TALKING POINTS

God's sovereignty means his justice is better than any revenge we can seek.

- Esther bravely requests two _____ for Haman and the king. Haman fools himself into thinking he is in _____ of his own destiny. **Esther 5:3-5,7,9-14**
- God reminds the king that he had never formally _____ Mordecai for saving his life. The praises Haman craved were lavished instead on _____. **Esther 6:3-6,10-12**
- When the wicked scheme against you, don't seek _____. Pray that God will expose the lies and establish _____. **Psalms 37:7**

DISCUSSION

1. *Share a time you were wronged by someone. What happened and how did it turn out?*
2. *Read Esther 5:9-14. Why was Haman feeling so good about himself at this point? How does pride taint our view of ourselves? How have you seen pride ruin someone's life?*
3. *Read Esther 6:3-6, 10-12. Notice the phrase "as it happened". How does God begin to reveal his justice for Haman in this passage? How would things have been different if it were someone else who had to march Mordecai around instead of Haman?*
4. *How did God's justice show up in this part of the story? Make sure to identify each thing that happened that led to Haman feeling humiliated and dejected.*
5. *Read Psalm 37:7. How have you wasted energy in the past seeking revenge? How does this part of Esther's story encourage you to trust that God's justice always wins out?*

GOD'S TIMING IS PERFECT

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TALKING POINTS

Sometimes it may feel like God is late to show up but the story of Esther proves that God's timing is always perfect.

- At just the right time, Esther makes her request to the king – revealing her own _____ and Haman's evil intent to kill the _____. **Esther 7:3-6**
- God's plan is fully revealed when a new _____ is issued, replacing Haman's plan to execute the Jews with one that _____ the Jewish nation once again. **Esther 8:5-8, Esther 9:1-2**
- To this day, the Jews celebrate the _____ in memory of the Esther story. We, too, should regularly take time to reflect and celebrate God's _____ in our lives. **Esther 9:20-22, Psalm 100:3-4**

DISCUSSION

1. *Have you ever experienced a miracle or an event that was so perfectly timed that it had to be God's handiwork? Explain.*
2. *Read Esther 7:3-6. Notice how Esther framed her request to the king. Why was each part significant to share and in the order it was shared?*
3. *Read Esther 8:5-8. Why do you think the king was so open to letting Esther and Mordecai draft the decree themselves? Why is it important to note that once a decree was written it couldn't be revoked?*
4. *How does chapter 8 reveal God's perfect timing? What do you think the Jews thought as this new decree began to circulate?*
5. *Why is it important to remember God's provision in our lives and celebrate it year after year? What do we stand to miss out on if we don't?*

