



Growth Group discussion questions for Esther
Week of Nov. 4-7, 2018

1. Scripture memory: Memorize, meditate on, and be ready to recite Ephesians 2:1-8 (adding v. 8).
2. Read the book of Esther. The events in this book take place after the Babylonian exile around 485-464 BC, but the people in this story were still in exile in Persia (Persia had replaced Babylon as the dominant power).
3. It's important to understand who the key people are in this book. Who are:
 - Ahasuerus (Xerxes) (1:1-2)

 - Vashti (1:9, 11)

 - Mordecai (2:5-7)

 - Esther (2:7, 15, 16-17)

 - Haman (3:1-2) (Note that Haman was an "Agagite," a descendant of Agag, king of the Amalekites, a long-time enemy of the Jews (see Ex. 17:8-16))
4. One feature of the book of Esther that has troubled Jews and Christians is the fact that God is not mentioned in the book. However, it's hard to miss the hand of God throughout this story. In what specific ways do you see God providentially at work in this book? Though God is sovereign, he still often uses means – he uses people to carry out his purposes. How do you see this in this book?
5. Oftentimes we don't see God's sovereign hand at work in our lives day by day; it only becomes apparent as we look back and see how all the pieces fit together. How have you seen God's sovereign hand at work in your life? (Rom. 8:28-29, Eph. 1:11, Is. 46:9-10)

6. What divine principle does God demonstrate in Haman's example? (6:6, 10; 7:7-10; Luke 18:9-14, James 4:6, 10) Where have you seen this principle play out either in your life or in others?

7. a) What can you learn from Esther's example in 4:4-17? What risk did she take? In what ways does this stimulate and challenge you?

b) How might you apply the courage and trust in God that Esther showed to a situation in your own life? (2 Cor. 1:8-10, 9:8; Phil. 1:19-21)

8. At the end of the book, the Jews establish a new annual feast called Purim which is still observed today. Where does the name come from and what is the feast about? (3:5-7, 9:23-32)

9. Why was God's providence, Mordecai's actions, Esther's courage, and the king's second order (8:1-8) so important and significant, well beyond their current circumstances, for the advancement of God's larger plan of redemption? What would have happened if the Jews had been completely destroyed through Haman's plot? (See Gen. 12:1-3 → 2 Sam. 7:12-13 → Matt. 1:1)

PRAY IN THE GROUP: Pray for our upcoming elections. Pray that God would providentially work through these elections for his glory and good purposes. Pray for God to work in and through our local and national leaders for his glory.