



ESTHER

THREADS OF SOVEREIGNTY & SACRIFICE

GETTING STARTED: POWER OF STORY

Stories are powerful; they can inspire, challenge, encourage, teach, and connect. The Book of Esther is a story that has stirred the mind and soul every year since it was written. This semester let's use our own stories to challenge and encourage each other to grow.

1. Each week, choose someone to share a 5-minute story at your next gathering.
2. Consider having them follow one of these prompts:
 - When did you choose to follow Christ for the first time?
 - Describe a time of hardship when you experience God's provision.
 - When was a moment you vividly remember celebrating God's goodness?
 - Has God answered a big prayer for you, or answered a prayer in a big way?

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

Read the following Scriptures together and then use the questions below (or any you wish to add) to discuss the text and unpack its meaning.

NOTE: The text covered this week is long as we finish out our series on Esther. Be prepared to have multiple people ready to read the relevant portions as we finish out our study on the book of Esther.



Have someone in your group read **Esther 8:1-12**.

- What stands out to you about today's text?
- What actions take place in Chapter 8 involving Mordecai, Esther, and the Jews that signify a significant reversal of circumstances?
- What is the problem that persists for the Jews?
- What were the Jews allowed to do to their attackers? What were the limits of their retaliation?

NOTE: Our English translation of verse 11 stating, “any people or province that might attack them,” seems to leave the door open for the Jews to kill anyone they even remotely suspect may cause them harm. But the verb tense in the Hebrew is far more clear. A better reading would be: “any people or province that is moving to attack them.” How does this help inform your understanding of the ‘permission’ given to the Jews?



Have someone in your group read **Esther 9:1-19 & 20-28**.

- What stands out to you about today’s text?
- Three times in chapter 9 the text tells us that “*they laid no hands on the plunder.*” (9:9, 9:15 & 9:16) How might this help us interpret the heart and spirit of the Jews in this moment?
- How were the Jews told to remember the events that took place? What is the significance of the command to commemorate this event? Why might God want His people to remember that this happened?

GETTING PRACTICAL

1. Countless places in the Scriptures call us to commemorate God’s redemptive work in our lives. What are some ways that you have seen God move and provide for your family? What are some of the ways that you seek to commemorate and celebrate God’s redemptive work in your life and/or family?
2. What parallels do you see between the Esther story and Easter?
3. The story of Esther gives us confidence that God will be faithful to His promises and His people. Which of God’s promises are you clinging to in this season and why? As you close, spend time in prayer together lifting up these concerns and praying the promises of God over those in your group.