



LONG STORY SHORT

A Year through the Bible

Reflection Guide

The Queen of Beauty & Grace: Esther

Exploring the Story, Chapter 20

While God is never mentioned in Esther, this story is rightly held up as an example of faithfulness in action. Facing persecution at the hands of Haman, Esther and her cousin Mordecai use everything at their disposal to save the Jews.

The story of Esther is an exciting, entertaining story that shows what it means to put faith in action.

MONDAY

Read: Esther 1–2

Reflect: Esther begins with a power struggle. Queen Vashti disobeys the king, and the king needs help from all his advisors to respond. Women, nearly powerless in Ancient Near Eastern societies, are the ones who are controlling the events in this story. True power cannot simply be asserted, it must be exercised with wisdom and restraint. When you think of “power” what comes to your mind? What power, if any, do you have? Who in your community is typically seen as powerless?

Respond: In prayer, ask God to help you exercise your power with wisdom, restraint, and humility.

TUESDAY

Read: Esther 3–4

Reflect: Mordecai challenges Esther to act to save her fellow Jews by saying to her, “Who knows if perhaps you were made queen for just such a time as this” (4:14). Sometimes God places people in situations to act on behalf of others. When, if ever, have you felt that God has placed you in a specific place for a specific purpose? How do you find the courage and faith to do what is right when the right thing is unclear?

Respond: In prayer, ask God to help you to act so that God’s will would be accomplished in your life and the lives of those around you.

WEDNESDAY

Read: Esther 5–6

Reflect: Things like sleepless nights and Haman’s presence in court—narrated as coincidences—are visible to the eyes of faith as God at work. Even when God’s appears to be absent, God is still very much active. How, if at all, do you tell the difference between coincidence and God’s hand at work? What resources does your Christian faith give you to help you see God at work?

Respond: Consider your faith journey. When, if ever, have

you realized that what at first glance seemed like happenstance was actually God at work in your midst?

THURSDAY

Read: Esther 7

Reflect: Esther’s wise scheming has led to Haman’s downfall, but this isn’t a fairy tale ending. There is more to this story. The Jews living in Persia are still threatened because their fate depends on a fickle king who is easily swayed. Ultimate security can be found in God alone. Where are you tempted to look for security? What, if anything, makes finding security in God alone challenging?

Respond: In prayer, ask God to help you rest in God’s protection and provision.

FRIDAY

Read: Esther 8

Reflect: The Jews are a threatened minority, dependent on the King for protection. Esther uses every ounce of power that she has over the King to save the lives of the Jews, even going so far as to cry at the King’s feet. What are you willing to do to accomplish God’s will in the world? What resources does your Christian faith give you to do whatever it takes to follow God’s call?

Respond: In prayer, ask God to give you the confidence to use every tool at your disposal to advance God’s kingdom in the world.

SATURDAY

Read: Esther 9:1–19

Reflect: The slaughter of thousands of Persians by the Jews is told as the happy ending to this story. The Jews go from being powerless and hated, to powerful, feared, and victorious. What would it be like to live in a world where people aren’t threatened, and such a “happy ending” is not necessary? What, if anything, could you do to work to make sure that world comes closest to becoming reality?

Respond: Who in your community is vulnerable and needs protection? In prayer, ask God to help you work for justice and peace for those who are vulnerable and in need of protection.

SUNDAY

Read: Esther 9:20–10:3

Reflect: Esther and Mordecai are held up as examples of faithfulness, wisdom, and success. Esther and Mordecai both use the power that they have for the benefit of others who cannot protect themselves. They serve as enduring examples for both Jews and Christians alike. In what ways does the story of Esther challenge or affirm your understanding of faithfulness? What lessons from this story could you incorporate into your own life?

Respond: In worship this morning, praise God for the example of Esther and Mordecai.

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