

CBN EUROPE

"TO MAKE JESUS KNOWN TO EVERYONE
IN THE UK, EUROPE, AND BEYOND."

Character Study

ESTHER

Summary:

A Jew living under the
Persian Empire ruled by
Xerxes (486 - 464 BC)

She was key in saving the
Jewish people through
her bravery and boldness

Marked by her beauty and
character

Became Queen to King
Xerxes

Adopted by her cousin
Mordecai

Only book of the Bible
where God isn't named

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ESTHER

Introduction

Welcome to our Bible study on the character of Esther. Esther is a remarkable woman whose story is recorded in the biblical book bearing her name. Through her obedience, courage, and faith, Esther played a significant role in God's providential plan to deliver the Jewish people from destruction. As we explore her life, we will uncover valuable lessons about trust, divine timing, and standing up for what is right. Let us delve into the life of Esther and discover how her story can inspire and guide us in our own faith journey.

Before we begin, take a moment to ask God to fill our hearts and minds with the truth of His Word. Invite the Holy Spirit to bring fresh revelation to our own walks with Jesus and commit to His ongoing plan of transformation and renewal as you learn from this study.

SESSION 1

Esther's Rise to Queenhood

Key Passages: Esther 2:1-18

Key Points:

- Queen Vashti had been banished from Xerxes' presence and removed as Queen for refusing to obey him
- Esther was a Jewish exile living in Persia

Discussion Questions:

1. How do you think Esther felt about being chosen to be a potential Queen to the most powerful King in the known world?
2. Have you ever met royalty or someone with great worldly power? How did it feel?
3. Esther was thrown into a new culture but kept her Jewish roots. Have you ever experienced living in a different culture? How is this similar to living in the world, but not being of the world (John 17:14-16)?
4. In what ways does our current culture value external beauty and status in both positive and negative ways?
5. In light of Esther's experience, should we always begrudge when others are chosen based on beauty? In what ways can we know if it's of God or not? How should this relate to developing inner character?

SESSION 2

Mordecai's Guidance and Esther's Decision

Key Passages: Esther 2:19-23; Esther 4

Key Points:

- Haman had convinced the King to issue an edict destroying every Jew because Mordecai didn't bow to Haman

Discussion Questions:

1. Discuss the role of Mordecai in Esther's life and his influence on her decision-making process. How can mentors and wise counsel impact our own choices?
2. Can you share a time when God guided you through the wisdom of someone else in your life?
3. Notice how Esther gave credit to Mordecai when she could have gained even more favour from the most powerful man alive. What can we learn from her character here, and where might we face these same situations?
4. Reflect on Esther's courage to approach the king, risking her own life for the sake of her people. How can we cultivate courage in the face of difficult decisions or stand up for what is right?
5. Reflect on 4:14. What lessons can we learn from this?

SESSION 3

Fasting, Prayer, and Divine Intervention

Key Passages: Esther 4:10-17; Esther 5:1-8

Key Points:

- Many of the Jews were already fasting and most likely petitioning God to change the verdict before Esther had called the Jews of Susa for a 3 day fast

Discussion Questions:

1. How did Esther's reliance on fasting and prayer demonstrate her faith and trust in God? How can we incorporate these spiritual disciplines into our own lives?
2. Have you ever fasted? What was your experience?
3. What we can we learn about Esther's appeal for others to join her in her struggle? What does this teach us about the importance of community?
4. Discuss the significance of Esther's courage in approaching the king and her deliberate strategy. How can we balance faith and wisdom in navigating challenging situations?
5. In a culture that often values self-sufficiency and immediate solutions, how can we learn to trust in God's timing and intervention?

SESSION 4

Unveiling the Truth and Haman's Downfall

Key Passages: Esther 6; Esther 7

Key Points:

- Mordecai's good deeds of informing Esther about the plot to assassinate the King went unnoticed for a long time - he continued to do good despite this

Discussion Questions:

1. Reflect on Mordecai's recognition and Haman's downfall. How do these show God's justice and sovereignty?
2. Should we do good for recognition's sake, and what are some of the outcomes of looking for it?
3. Why is it important to celebrate and honour the good things others do?
4. Discuss Esther's bravery in revealing the truth about Haman's plot. How can we apply the principles of truth-telling, integrity and standing up against injustice in our own lives? Why are these values so important?
5. Is there a time when you had to share a hard truth? What was the outcome?
6. Can you think of any other examples in the Bible where the desire to elevate or humble oneself produces the opposite effect?

SESSION 5

Celebration and Deliverance

Key Passages: Esther 8-9

Key Points:

- The Feast of Purim is still observed to this day. It is celebrated with joy, feasting, giving gifts, and remembering God's faithfulness in delivering His people.
- The authority of the king was bestowed on Mordecai to save God's people from destruction

Discussion Questions:

1. Discuss the significance of Esther's role in the salvation of her people. How can we use our own influence and positions for the good of others?
2. What can we learn from Esther in the way she honours those in authority above her? Is honour important? How does the Bible differ from our culture on the topic of honour?
3. How can celebrations and remembrances of God's faithfulness, like Purim, impact our own faith and encourage us to trust in His providence?
4. In a world that often promotes self-preservation and self-interest, how can we cultivate a spirit of community and support for those who are oppressed or marginalised, even if it might mean we're not liked? Why do we sometimes prefer staying silent?

ESTHER

For such a time as this!

As we conclude this study on the character of Esther, may her story inspire us to cultivate courage, trust in God's providence, and stand up for what is right. Let us reflect on the challenges she faced as a woman of faith and draw wisdom from her example.

As we navigate our current culture, may we be encouraged to live out our faith with conviction, selflessness, and a willingness to take risks for the sake of others. May the story of Esther empower us to make a difference in our world today.

Why not take a moment to pray for one another that your character might reflect that of Esther and Mordecai.

