

BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, October 22, 2006

Passage: Esther 5

Memory Passage: Proverbs 16:4

TODAY: *From your study this past week, what is one thing that impressed you that can be of help in your life?*

DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Esther 5:1-2.** What had Esther been doing for the three days (Esther 4:16; James 1:5)?
- (b) Read Isaiah 40:31. What is the value of waiting on the Lord? What does it do *for us*? How does it demonstrate faith (Isaiah 28:16)?
- (c) How did the king respond when he saw Esther? What did God do during those days (Proverbs 21:1)? How is this obvious?
- (d) What was Nehemiah's prayer in Nehemiah 1:11? What requests does he make? How are these important in our own praying?
- (e) What was his concern (Nehemiah 2:1-8)? How did God answer his prayer?
- (f) *Family:* Read Esther 5:1-2 and Nehemiah 2:1-8. Discuss the importance of prayer. What was the most helpful thing you learned from last week's lesson on prayer? What are some of the values of praying about situations in our lives? What do we miss when we fail to pray? Spend some time praising God for hearing our prayers and for being a prayer-answering God!

DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Esther 5:3-8.** What does the king tell Esther? Does he literally mean to give her half his kingdom (Mark 6:21-23)?
- (b) What is the difference between Esther's approach to the king and our approach to God? What did Jesus teach his disciples about this in Luke 18:1-8?
- (c) What surprising request does Esther make? What risk is she taking? Why did she make this request? What is the value of such a delay? What is the danger?
- (d) How do we know what God desires? How did the early church decide (Acts 15:22, 25, 28, 34)? What phrase is repeated in each of these verses? How did Esther know God's will and timing? How should we act when we are not sure about God's plans?
- (e) Carefully read Proverbs 3:1-6. What provides the foundation for God's guidance in our lives? What are you told to do "in all your ways?" Compare this with James 4:13-17.
- (f) *Family:* Read Esther 5:3-8 and Proverbs 3:1-6. Talk about how God guides His people. Is His guidance usually specific? How does the Word of God form a foundation for us in terms of directing our paths in God's ways? Does Esther know what God desires? Pray that you might walk with the Lord so you might be sensitive to His leading in all your ways.

DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Esther 5:9-14.** What was Haman's attitude when he left the palace to return home? What changed his attitude?
- (b) What does he begin to talk about when he gets home? What does Proverbs 26:12 tell us about such a person?
- (c) What does pride blind us to (1 Corinthians 4:6-8)?
- (d) What advice does his wife give him (Psalm 37:32; Romans 3:15)? How does Haman set a trap for himself (Esther 5:14; 7:10; Proverbs 26:27; 11:15)?
- (e) How would Esther's plan to wait another day before telling the king her request impact Mordecai? How does Proverbs 19:21 apply to this situation?
- (f) *Family:* Read Esther 5:9-13 and Proverbs 26:12. Talk about pride and how it affects us. How does Haman's pride blind him to God and to the danger that awaits him? How does pride blind us too? What can we do to keep from becoming proud (1 Corinthians 4:6-8)? Spend some time talking about all that God has done for you and pray praising Him for all He has given you.

DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Romans 8:18-22.** To what does Paul attribute the presence of suffering and evil in the world today? *When* will all suffering be done away with?
- (b) How is evil in the world part of God's judgment on the world (Genesis 3:17-19; Romans 1:24-29)?
- (c) What should be our attitude in dealing with the difficulties of living in a sinful world (Romans 8:23-29)? What should be our prayer (Matthew 6:13; Psalm 140:1-13)?
- (d) What are two things we can be certain of (Romans 8:31, 35-39)? Does this mean that we can never be hurt by evil? Explain your answer.
- (e) *Family:* Read Romans 8:18-28. Why does evil exist in the world today? Discuss how early Christians faced the evil actions of others. How should we face the reality of evil in our world today? Read Psalm 140. What is a situation of evil in the world that especially troubles you? Pray that God would not grant the desires of the wicked but that His name would be praised by His people no matter what happens in this world.

DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT**READ THE PASSAGE**

- (a) **Read Romans 9:21-33.** What is one reason that God allows evil to continue according to Romans 9:22?
- (b) What is a second reason He allows evil to exist (Romans 9:23-24)?
- (c) What is a third reason that Paul suggests God permits evil to continue (Romans 9:29)?
- (d) What is Paul's conclusion in Romans 9:30-33? What would be the effect on evangelism if all evil and sinful people were removed? How is this another reason for why God allows evil to exist?
- (e) What is God's promise in Romans 9:32-33? What should this motivate us to do in a world under the influence of evil (2 Timothy 2:24-26; Philippians 2:15-16)?
- (f) *Family:* Read Romans 9:21-33. Discuss the presence of evil in the world today. Why doesn't God eliminate all evil? What would happen if He did that? What are some of the reasons that God has allowed evil to continue in this world? Pray for someone who needs to hear about Christ and respond to His mercy.

DAY 6 – ASK FOR INSIGHT**READ THE PASSAGE**

Think back through what you have learned each day this week. Read **Esther 5**. Discuss why God allows evil to exist in the world today? How does prayer and fasting prepare us to face whatever God allows in our lives? What should be our attitude toward suffering and difficulties that come our way? Pray for worship services tomorrow, that believers might rest in the Lord's care especially when facing evil situations.

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Why Evil Exists

“The Lord has made all things for Himself, yes, even the wick for the day of doom.”