

BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, September 24, 2006

Passage: Esther 2

Memory Passage: Proverbs 19:21

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 2:1-7.** *Approximately a 4 year period has passed since King Ahasuerus deposed Queen Vashti. During this time, he went on a campaign to conquer the Greeks and was thoroughly defeated. Why do you think that the king is thinking about Vashti at this time? What solution do his advisors propose?*
- (b) What do we learn about Mordecai? Who is he related to (2 Samuel 16:5)?
- (c) How had Mordecai come to live in Susa? Can you discover anything about his name (from sources outside the passage)? What might this tell us about him?
- (d) What was Esther's Jewish name? Why has her name been changed? What does this tell us about her?
- (e) What tragedy had occurred in Esther's life? What was her outstanding feature? Where did this come from (Psalm 139:14; Exodus 4:11)?
- (f) *Family:* Read Esther 2:1-7 and Psalm 139:14. Discuss the providence of God in the lives of Mordecai and Esther. What difficulties and tragedies had they faced? How did it affect their faith? Pray today for someone that you know is struggling with a tragedy in life. Also pray that each of you might be comfortable with how God has sovereignly created you.

DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Esther 2:8-17.** What did they do with all the women that came to the palace? What two kinds of beauty treatments did they have?
- (b) Read Proverbs 31:30 and 1 Peter 3:3-4. What is the most important characteristic for a woman? What can be wrong with charm and beauty?
- (c) What did Esther conceal (Esther 2:10)? Why did she do this (see Esther 2:20)? Was this right for her to do (Colossians 3:20)?
- (d) What, besides her beauty, caused the king and everyone else to notice Esther? Where did this come from (Genesis 39:20-21; Daniel 1:9; Nehemiah 1:11 and 2:1-6)?
- (e) *Family:* Read Esther 2:8-16 and Proverbs 31:30. Tell the story of Esther's selection as queen. Why was she selected? Where do we see human choices and decisions and where do we see the providence of God in her selection? What is the most important characteristic that a woman can have? Pray for the girls in your church, that they would be more concerned about godliness and the "favor of God" on their lives than about their beauty.

DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Esther 2:19-23.** Where is Mordecai? Look at Esther 2:11. What is he doing there? What does the passage indicate about his concern for Esther?
- (b) What happens during one of the times when Mordecai is at the gate? What does Proverbs 16:9 tell us about the timing of Mordecai being at the gate?
- (c) How detailed is God's care over us? Do little things matter to God (Luke 12:4-7)?
- (d) Read Matthew 6:25-34. What details in your life does God care about and control? How should we respond to His sovereign care? What should be our priority (Matthew 6:33)?
- (e) *Family:* Read Esther 2:19-23 and Matthew 6:25-34. Discuss how God takes care of His creatures. Does He do it without them doing anything? How does God's sovereignty and man's responsibility go together? Pray for someone that does not know the Lord. Ask God to open his heart. Pray for an opportunity to share with this person.

DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Ecclesiastes 11:1-6.** What does this passage tell us about our actions? Do they matter? Explain.
- (b) What is the problem with the person in Ecclesiastes 11:4? What causes inactivity in this case? How can a misunderstanding of God's sovereignty cause inactivity?
- (c) What does the writer remind us about our knowledge (Ecclesiastes 11:5)? How should this cause us to respond to God's providence in our lives?
- (d) According to Ecclesiastes 11:6, what should be our attitude toward our own actions and God's sovereignty?
- (e) What does Paul remind us in Ephesians 5:15-17? Why are we to be wise and make the most of our time and opportunities? What does this tell you about God's sovereignty and our responsibility?
- (f) *Family:* Read Ecclesiastes 11:1-6. Talk together about human responsibility and God's sovereignty. Why should we make decisions and take action if God's plans are going to be accomplished anyway? How does the Bible speak about our responsibility? How does the sovereignty of God give us the confidence to decide and act in difficult situations? Thank God for His sovereign care over every situation and pray that God would give you the wisdom to act in ways that please Him.

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

- (a) **Read James 4:13-17.** What attitude is James confronting in this verse? Is James condemning all planning and preparing ahead of time? Consider the following verses: Proverbs 6:6-8; 21:5; 20:4; and 30:24-25?
- (b) What did Jesus tell his disciples about planning in Luke 14:28-32? Was he encouraging them to avoid all planning?
- (c) Read James 4:14. What two reasons does James give for avoiding such presumptuous planning? What are we warned about in Proverbs 27:1?
- (d) How are we to make our plans (James 4:15-17)? What is the importance of saying, “If the Lord wills?” Do we have to *say* this every time or is this to be our attitude in every situation?
- (e) Why does James emphasize “he ought to do?” Compare James 2:17 and John 13:12-17. How is doing the will of God connected to knowing the will of God (John 7:17)?
- (f) *Family:* Read James 4:13-17. Talk about planning for the future. Why should we do this? What is the one thing we must consider in every decision we make? Are there decisions you have made where you left out God? What does our memory verse remind us (Proverbs 19:21)? Ask for His forgiveness and pray that you will be willing to accept His will in every situation.

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

Think back through what you have learned each day this week. Read Esther 2. Why do little things matter? Why is every action and decision in your life important? What evidence of this do we see in this chapter? What have you learned this week about our responsibility in life? Pray for worship services tomorrow that those who are apart from Christ will hear His Word and respond by trusting in Him.

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Why Little Things Matter
“For I know the plans I have for you...”