



Scripture



Esther 4:6-16; 7:3-6; 7:10-8:2

6 So Hathach went out to Mordecai in the city square in front of the King's Gate. **7** Mordecai told him everything that had happened as well as the exact amount of money Haman had promised to pay the royal treasury for the slaughter of the Jews. **8** Mordecai also gave him a copy of the written decree issued in Susa ordering their destruction, so that Hathach might show it to Esther, explain it to her, and command her to approach the king, implore his favor, and plead with him personally for her people. **9** Hathach came and repeated Mordecai's response to Esther. **10** Esther spoke to Hathach and commanded him to tell Mordecai, **11** "All the royal officials and the people of the royal provinces know that one law applies to every man or woman who approaches the king in the inner courtyard and who has not been summoned—the death penalty— unless the king extends the gold scepter, allowing that person to live. I have not been summoned to appear before the king for the last thirty days." **12** Esther's response was reported to Mordecai. **13** Mordecai told the messenger to reply to Esther, "Don't think that you will escape the fate of all the Jews because you are in the king's palace. **14** If you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will come to the Jewish people from another place, but you and your father's family will be destroyed. Who knows, perhaps you have come to your royal

position for such a time as this." **15** Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: **16** "Go and assemble all the Jews who can be found in Susa and fast for me. Don't eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my female servants will also fast in the same way. After that, I will go to the king even if it is against the law. If I perish, I perish." ... **3** Queen Esther answered, "If I have found favor in your eyes, Your Majesty, and if the king is pleased, spare my life; this is my request. And spare my people; this is my desire. **4** For my people and I have been sold to destruction, death, and extermination. If we had merely been sold as male and female slaves, I would have kept silent. Indeed, the trouble wouldn't be worth burdening the king." **5** King Ahasuerus spoke up and asked Queen Esther, "Who is this, and where is the one who would devise such a scheme?" **6** Esther answered, "The adversary and enemy is this evil Haman." Haman stood terrified before the king and queen. ... **10** They hanged Haman on the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the king's anger subsided. **1** That same day King Ahasuerus awarded Queen Esther the estate of Haman, the enemy of the Jews. Mordecai entered the king's presence because Esther had revealed her relationship to Mordecai. **2** The king removed his signet ring he had recovered from Haman and gave it to Mordecai, and Esther put him in charge of Haman's estate.

Unit .18

Session .01

God Saves His People Through a Queen

What is the difference between a healthy and unhealthy risk? Give an example.

Why do you think some people are prone to avoid all types of risks? Why is this impossible to actually achieve?



99 Essential Doctrines

God's Plan and Human Action

God's sovereignty over all of life encompasses the free actions of human beings. Proverbs 19:21 says, "Many plans are in a man's heart, but the Lord's decree will prevail." In ways we are unable to comprehend fully, the Lord's plan goes forward through the choices of human beings as moral agents. Even freely chosen sinful actions are factored into God's overarching plan, as is the case with the crucifixion of Jesus—an event both purposed by God through foreknowledge and yet also carried out by the wicked decisions of human beings (Acts 2:23). Knowing that God is working all things for the good of those who love Him (Rom. 8:28), we trust in His promise to fulfill His plan, even when we do not understand our present circumstances.

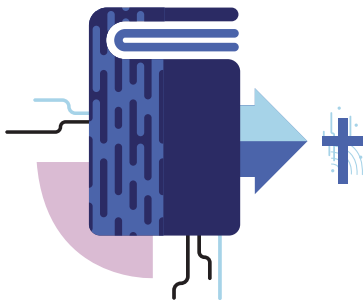
Main Point

God is at work even when we cannot see His plan.

What are some examples of people taking risks to follow Christ? When have you had to risk your own welfare in doing what God called you to do?

How have you seen God's wisdom, rule, and care displayed in the circumstances of your life?

How have you been blessed by the grace of God for the benefit of others?



Christ Connection

The command to kill all the Jews threatened the fulfillment of God's promise of a Messiah King who would bring the blessing given to Abraham to the world. God brought salvation to His people through Esther, who interceded for them at great risk to her own life. God would provide a greater salvation—from sin and death—through Jesus who interceded for us and laid down His life on our behalf.



Head

How does Esther's story strengthen your confidence that God is near and cares for you?

When have you felt like you were put somewhere "for such a time as this" to do God's will?



Heart

What does Esther's story teach us about waiting patiently?

What does waiting patiently say about our faith?

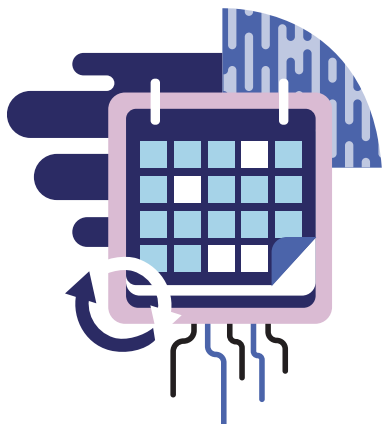


Hands

How might the story of Esther challenge the way you live this week?

Like Esther and Mordecai, how will you take risks in your own life for God's glory and the good of others?

Daily Devotions



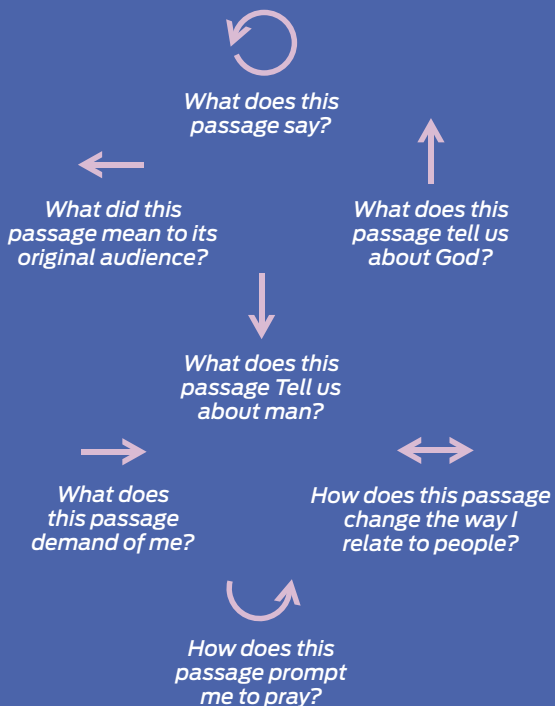
Day 1

Psalm 40

This psalm is a statement of the faithfulness of God and an invitation to respond to His faithfulness with patient waiting, even in tough circumstances. But waiting patiently is not waiting idly—David was seeking God, and God responded (v. 1). God’s response wasn’t immediate, given that David had to wait. Neither was the delay the result of God ignoring David. David knew who God is and trusted His care for him (v. 17). He declared that his waiting patiently was not a testament to his personal strength but confidence in his trustworthy God.

Patience is a gift no one seems to want but God is eager to give. Patience is rooted in the reality and grows in the faith that while we are limited, God is not. Therefore, we must acknowledge our limitations by adopting a posture and ethic of not forcing what we desperately want but trusting God to provide what we absolutely need. God is wise and merciful; His holy character and ability are worthy of our faith and patience.

The 7 Arrows of Bible Reading



How is God’s past faithfulness cultivating present patience in your life?

Esther

1:1-3:15

God’s powerful and guiding hand and activity in the affairs of all history can be unsettling at times. This feeling of angst may come from wrestling with whether or not God’s guiding hand is good all the time in all situations. The story of Esther is a powerful reminder that God is faithful for His glory and our good. God was setting up the work of redemption for the Jews before the need of rescue was even realized. God was orchestrating experiences of good before the encounters with evil took place. His hand was good before and even in environments of evil. What would have been seen as random blessings in real time are seen clearly from the perspective of hindsight as the very things God would use to accomplish His saving work.

This reality invites us to cultivate confidence in knowing God is working for our good in ways we can’t yet see or understand. Furthermore, we should be motivated to deepen present faithfulness because in doing so we honor God in the here and now.

How can you focus on the goodness of God and cultivate present faithfulness in light of His sovereignty?

Esther

4:1-6:14

Thus far, Esther’s identity as a Jew had remained hidden at the command of Mordecai (2:10). Concealing her identity had cost her nothing in the presence of the king, but revealing it, as Mordecai later requested, could cost her life. Certainly she could’ve gone as just Esther, but there was something powerful and personal about going before the king not just as Esther the Queen but as Hadassah the Jew. There’s a power associated with personalized intercession. In fact, intercession involves a willingness to identify with others. Esther chose to share in the fate of the Jews—“Spare us,” she pleaded, not just, “Spare them.” Whenever God calls someone to go on behalf of another, it’s not in a detached theoretical way devoid of intimacy or risk; rather, it involves authentic relational identification. We see this with Jesus in His identification through incarnation. With us it must be no different as we intercede for the lost.

How can you better identify with the people on whose behalf you are interceding?

Esther

7:1–10:3

Haman's evil plan was about to be unleashed, which would result in the Jews being wiped off the face of the earth. God's people were on the proverbial ropes, teetering on the precipice of extinction. But God was not unaware of His people's plight. All the while, God had been providentially working to position Joseph, the son who was believed to be dead, in a position of influence to intercede for his family and spare them from death. In the same way, although He is not mentioned directly in the Book of Esther, God was at work once more. God was aware of Haman's edict, and He worked providentially to place Mordecai and Esther in positions of influence to intercede for their people and spare them from death.

Neither Pharaoh in Egypt nor Haman in Persia would stop God's plan; indeed, neither could. God's sovereign work is unstoppable. He would provide His Son, Jesus, to make intercession for people through His death and resurrection so we might find eternal life.

In what ways might God be positioning you to intercede for others through prayer and sharing the gospel?

Isaiah

26

Waiting is an exercise and expression of dependence because your actions are tied to those of another. That dynamic often produces an experience of frustration and anxiety in the heart. Yet Isaiah 26:3–4 says there's a different experience available for people who are dependent on the Lord—a promise of peace. God's peace is perfect, providing everything necessary for continued focus as we live with and for Him. This peace doesn't come from the absence of anxiety but from an active pursuit of God. God's peace is granted to those with an active and intentional resolve to depend on Him, not those with a passive circumstantial resignation. God's immutability—He is unchanging, unwavering, an everlasting rock—provides a solid foundation for us to rest on. This promise of God's peace is available to all who desire it and who come to Him in faith, namely, to those who have come to God through faith in Jesus Christ (Phil. 4:7).

In what situations do you actively need to place faith in the person of Jesus to experience God's perfect peace?