

# Living the Story

## A Study through Scripture

### Introduction:

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We struggle, at times, knowing the will of God for our lives. I say that based on the number of times I and those I know have asked the question: What does God want for me or want me to do, usually in regard to a specific situation. Big picture, we recognize that God wants us to follow him and share his good news with others, but when it comes to things like dating relationships or possible occupations, we tend to lose some of our certainty.

Some of this is obviously related to how we understand God working in the world we live in today. Does God care about or even control the minute details of our lives? Is this some giant cosmic script that if we were able to read it in advance we would discover that on June 13 of 2021, we will need to be sure we are on vacation in Florida, because God is going to use us at that specific moment and at that specific time.

As we struggle with the answers to these questions, we read about Mordecai telling Esther: Perhaps you were made queen for this very reason at this very moment. Perhaps God knew what he was doing all along. How does such a statement shape how we view God's working in our lives? And perhaps more importantly, how do we take advantage of those moments in our lives?

### Summary of the Text:

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If you did not read the book of Esther either in *The Story* or the Biblical text, you need to do so prior to this lesson. It is needed to have an understanding of everything that is happening at the point Mordecai visits with Esther. In summary, here's what goes on: King Xerxes has a banquet where Vashti, his current queen, refuses to dance for him and his dinner guests. To prevent being made a laughing stock, the queen is disposed and a search is made throughout the kingdom for a new queen. Esther, her nationality unknown to the king, is pleasing to the king and is made the new queen. Meanwhile, evil Haman, notices Mordecai, a good Jew, refusing to bow down to him, as the king commanded all the people to do. Enraged, Haman seeks to not only destroy Mordecai, but his entire people, too. Haman convinces (with a promise of a cash payment, if needed) the king to issue an edict that all of the Jews were to be destroyed.

Needless to say, this did not set well with the Jewish people, Mordecai in particular, who had an inside source in the palace, so to speak. It is here we pick up the story. Mordecai attempts to have Esther go to the king and have him stop the order to have the Jews annihilated. The only problem, in Esther's eyes, was that the king would kill anyone who approached him without his permission first. For Esther to attempt this might be equivalent to suicide.

Notice Mordecai's response. First, he tells Esther that even though she is in the palace, this is no reason to assume she will escape what is to happen to all of the other Jews. The Jews, Mordecai believes, will be saved one way or another. Esther and her house, however, will perish regardless. And, Mordecai goes on, who knows but this is why you are here, in the palace, in favor of the king. Perhaps, Mordecai says, someone is putting you in position to make a dramatic rescue.

I say "someone" here because Esther is the only book in scripture that the name of God is not mentioned. Mordecai never says "God" put you here. As you read through it, you would think that at some point God would be mentioned, but never is. Most scholars agree that the fact God is not explicitly named in the book is intentional, what they do not agree on is why. The truth, however, is that even though he is not named, God's presence is throughout the entire

### LESSON #21

**Date:** 2/10/2013

**Text:** Esther 4.9-17

**The Story:** Chapter 20

**The Big Picture:** You can live your entire life doing nothing ... and still lose your life? How are you choosing to live your life?

**Materials Needed:** none

book. Perhaps the overwhelming presence of God in the book means God does not have to be named. We know he is there even without saying so.

Perhaps God is not mentioned in the book of Esther because the issue is not whether God will show up in dramatic ways, but whether Esther will be faithful to God in her response. Regardless of how Esther ended up in the position she is in, the reality is that she has a moment to live out her faith in God. Here is the challenge for us, I believe. Instead of looking for the specific path God “wants” you to take, can you be willing to be faithful on the path you are on?

*Preparing for the Group Time:*

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What is God’s will for your life? As you study Esther, you may ask yourself this question. We often ask: Should I take the job in Texas or the one in California? What does God want me to do? And sometimes I wonder, if we are able to hear the voice of God, if he might say: “Do whichever you want to do. Just be faithful.” My question for you is: Are you being faithful in the roles you find yourself in?

## Living the Story

Lesson #21  
Text: Esther 4.9-17

### *Lesson Outline:*

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To begin your group time, ask group members the following questions:

- Why do you live in Lubbock?
- Why do you hold the occupation you do?
- Why do you go to South Plains?

What common answers do you hear to these questions? In what ways are our answers pointing to a reality far beyond the minutia of our everyday lives?

Read Esther 4.9-17.

Go through the discussion questions.

Close with a time of prayer.

### *Discussion Questions:*

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What do you think you would do if you were in Esther's shoes?

How would Mordecai's words alter your perception of what you needed to do?

What is the worst-case scenario for Esther? We assume that her death may be the thing to avoid, but what other situation could be worse?

Someone once said, "you can do nothing your entire life and still lose your life." How did Esther's choice prove this to be true?

When you get ready to do something for God, how do you know what it is you are to do?

Do you sense your responsibility is to do exactly what God tells you to do in different situations or to "be God" to people in any and every situation you find yourself in? How do you accomplish this?

Do you have to explicitly state you are doing something in the name of the Lord for it to be so?

How does living our specific jobs and using our life situations for the glory of God both create and also come from a life of faith?

### *For the Children:*

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Depending on the age of your children, determining what God wants for their life may be something they have yet to fully wrestle with. If you have older, high school age children, it may be what they deal with every day. Regardless of their age, I think it is appropriate to remind our children of the importance of following God in any situation, regardless of the consequences.

We know the end of this story and so know that Esther was not killed for approaching the king, but what Esther really chose to do was die, if necessary, to attempt to save her people. Fortunately we are not often called to make a life or death decision in regards to our faith, but we are called to be faithful even when the consequences are less than desirable. This is a message we need to hear and we need to communicate often to our children.

*Living the Story:*

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This week, look for situations that you find yourself in where you have an opportunity to act for God. In reality, every moment is an opportunity to do so. Be sure to consciously recognize each moment as a moment for God.

*Next Week:*

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Next week's lesson will be from *The Story* chapter 21.