

BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, September 17, 2006

Passage: Esther 1

Memory Passage: Jeremiah 29:11

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 1:1-9.** When and where do these opening events occur (also see Nehemiah 1:1 and Daniel 8:2)? What do we learn about the size of this kingdom? Describe the feast of Ahasuerus: who was invited? What seems to be the purpose of the feast?
- (b) Read Ecclesiastes 10:16-18. What did Ahasuerus really demonstrate by his feast? What character flaws can you see in Ahasuerus? What area of restraint is shown by Ahasuerus?
- (c) Read Proverbs 29:23 and 1 Peter 5:5. What kind of characteristic pleases God? How is this missing in King Ahasuerus?
- (d) Read Daniel 4:27-37. What was Nebuchadnezzar's attitude toward himself and his kingdom? How did God humble him? What did he learn about God through that experience?
- (e) What is the proper attitude that we should have about all we have (1 Corinthians 4:7)?
- (f) *Family:* Read Esther 1:1-9 and 1 Peter 5:5. Talk about pride and humility. Why is it important for those who are in authority to be humble? What happens to all of us when pride begins to take over in our lives? How can we protect ourselves from becoming proud? Thank God for all He has given to each of you and pray that you will be humble in your hearts.

DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Esther 1:10-12.** What unusual command did Ahasuerus demand at the end of the 7 days of feasting? What was Vashti's response?
- (b) Why did he make such a command? What warning is given to kings in Proverbs 31:4-5? Why is this especially important for those in authority (also see 1 Timothy 3:3, 8)?
- (c) What made Ahasuerus angry? What do Proverbs 16:32 and Proverbs 25:28 tell us about anger?
- (d) How does Ahasuerus feel after his anger has subsided (Esther 2:1)? What does Proverbs 14:17 say about an angry person?
- (e) What is the appropriate way to handle anger according to Ephesians 4:26-27?
- (f) *Family:* Read Esther 1:10-12 and Ephesians 4:26-27. Discuss anger. Why do we get angry? What happens to wise thinking and acting when we are angry? What should we do whenever we get angry? Confess some act or attitude of anger and ask the Lord to forgive you for it. (You may also need to ask for forgiveness from those who have been hurt by your anger).

DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Esther 1:12-22.** What question did the king ask his advisors? What did they find *according to the law*?
- (b) What was the main concern of the advisors of Ahasuerus? Was this a real concern for the empire or were their decisions based upon selfish motives?
- (c) Is it possible to legislate honor and respect? What causes a wife to truly respect her husband?
- (d) What is the proper attitude that a man ought to have toward his wife (Ephesians 5:25-29)? How does pride affect the way a man responds to his wife?
- (e) What is the proper response of a wife (1 Peter 3:1-2; Ephesians 5:21-24)? Why should she respond this way? What should she do if her husband wants her to do something that is not right in God's eyes (Acts 4:19)?
- (f) *Family:* Read Esther 1:12-22. Think about a time when you were placed in a difficult situation. How did you respond? Did your actions and attitudes honor God? Think back over this chapter: what actions honored God? Which displeased God? What resulted from Vashti's refusal? Can doing the right thing result in bad things happening to us? Pray for families in your church, especially for marriages, that husbands and wives would honor God by the way they treat each other.

DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Luke 18:18-20.** What does the rich ruler call Jesus? Why does Jesus correct him? What is He saying about himself and about all others?
- (b) Does God let "bad things happen to good people"? Explain your answer. Does God "cause" evil (James 1:13-15)? Does He "allow" it (Genesis 50:20)? What is the difference?
- (c) Are believers promised protection from evil people and situations? What do Acts 14:21; 1 Thessalonians 3:1-4; and 2 Timothy 3:12 tell us about suffering for believers?
- (d) Read 1 Peter 4:12-19. What did Peter tell believers about the suffering they faced? What should they do when facing difficulties?
- (e) *Family:* Read 1 Peter 4:12-16. Discuss some of the difficulties that believers face in this world. Pray that each of you might be willing to stand firm for Christ in every situation. Also pray for someone who needs to know the Lord.

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

- (a) **Read Job 1:8-22.** Who was the cause of all the evil that came on Job? Was some of the evil brought by the actions of evil men? Was some of the evil brought by natural disasters?
- (b) Could any of it have happened without God allowing it (also John 19:10-11)?
- (c) Read Isaiah 55:8-9. Why can't we see what God is doing in our lives?
- (d) Read Jeremiah 29:11. Who alone knows what God's plans are for us? How should this affect the way we view things that happen to us?
- (e) What was Paul's conclusion about God's sovereign choices in Romans 11:33-36? What should be our attitude when evil things happen to us?
- (f) *Family:* Read Job 1:8-22 and Romans 11:33-36. Can God be blamed for evil? Does He cause evil in this world? How can He be in control of everything and not do evil Himself? Talk about what happened in Job's situation. How did Job respond to all that happened to him? What was his view of God? Pray for someone who is going through a difficult time. Pray that they might trust God's wisdom even though they cannot see it.

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

Think back through what you have learned each day this week. Read Esther 1. Why do bad things happen to people? Can we see the providence of God even behind the evil acts of men? What evidence of this do we see in this chapter? Pray for worship services tomorrow that those who are going through difficulties might be encouraged to trust God.

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When Bad Things Happen
“For I know the plans I have for you...”