

For Such a Time as This (Esther)

Small Group Guide
Week 2: A Godly Leader

In this series we will walk through the book of Esther to understand how God works in our lives even when we can't see it. We will see how students should engage with God and depend on Him while exhibiting effort towards His good.

Our memory verse for this series is Proverbs 3:5-6

5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding.

6 In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.

BACKGROUND

- 1) This week is about Leadership.
- 2) Greek words for Love
 - a) Eros: Romantic Love
 - b) Philia: Brotherly Love
 - c) Agape: Sacrificial Love
- 3) The concept of "The Good, The True and The Beautiful" dates to Plato's Republic but can be a useful rubric for Christian ethics and living out our faith.
 - a) "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth."
 - b) "The Good" here is grace; "The True" is truth; "The Beautiful" is his glory.

POINT 1: A LEADER WILL STEP INTO THE UNKNOWN

- 1) God loves divine reversals. How God is working can be hard to predict.
- 2) You don't need to fully understand what God is doing to seek Him and be faithful.
- 3) You must lean on what you DO know instead of focusing on what you DON'T know.

POINT 2: A LEADER WILL SHOW SACRIFICIAL LOVE

- 1) Sacrificial Love (Agape) comes at a cost.
 - a) Esther risked her life
- 2) Sacrificial Love seeks human flourishing.
 - a) This can be described as "The True, The Good and The Beautiful"
- 3) Sacrificial Love creates a change
 - a) Sacrificial Love is not simply an act that abandons the recipient to their current status quo. Instead, it calls them from where they ARE to where they COULD BE in Christ.

POINT 3: A LEADER WILL DEPEND ON GOD

- 1) Mordecai put his faith in God's deliverance, regardless of what Esther did.
- 2) Esther didn't just make a plan, she sought God first.
- 3) A Leader will
 - a. Seek God's Guidance
 - b. Rely on God's Strength
 - c. Surrender to God's Will

GOSPEL

Jesus is the true and better Esther who didn't just risk his life but gave it that we might have life and have it abundantly.

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Small Group Questions: Below are some topics to guide your discussion and sample questions. You know your students best. What questions can guide them through these ideas to a better understanding of God and a clear next step for themselves?

POINT 1: A LEADER WILL STEP INTO THE UNKNOWN

- *Have you ever been in a situation where you had to step into the unknown? (first day of middle/high school, joining a club, etc)*
- *How did you feel? How did you get through it?*
- *What does it mean to "step into the unknown" as a leader, based on the story of Esther?*
- *How do you think Esther felt when Mordecai asked her to approach the king, knowing the potential risks?*
- *How does trusting in God's sovereignty help us when we face uncertain situations?*
- *What are some fears or doubts that might hold us back from stepping into the unknown?*
- *How can we discern when God is calling us to step out in faith, even when it feels uncomfortable or scary?*
- *What are some practical ways we can prepare ourselves to step into the unknown with courage and faith?*
- *In what ways can we support and encourage each other as we step into the unknown together?*
- *What can we learn from Esther's example about perseverance and trusting in God's timing?*
- *How do you think Esther's leadership impacted the people around her?*
- *Are there any risks or sacrifices that you feel God may be calling you to make in order to step into the unknown?*
- *How can we maintain a positive attitude and trust in God's plan when things don't go as we expected?*
- *What are some ways we can apply the lessons from Esther's story to our own lives as teenagers?*
- *How does our identity as children of God give us confidence to step into the unknown?*
- *What are some practical steps we can take to grow in faith and courage as we face unknown situations?*
- *How can we encourage others to step into the unknown with us, even if it means taking risks?*
- *What is one step you feel challenged to take as a result of studying Esther's story and the theme of stepping into the unknown?*

POINT 2: A LEADER WILL SHOW SACRIFICIAL LOVE

- *In what ways have people sacrificed for you? (parents, church, teachers, friends, etc)*
- *What are some obstacles or fears that might prevent us from showing sacrificial love to others?*
- *How can we discern when God is calling us to demonstrate sacrificial love in our relationships?*
- *How can sacrificial love bring about positive change or transformation in our relationships?*
- *How can we support and encourage each other in showing sacrificial love, especially when it feels difficult or costly?*
- *How can you demonstrate sacrificial love in your house this week?*

POINT 3: A LEADER WILL DEPEND ON GOD

- *What does it look like to depend on God?*
- *Why does it matter that we depend on God?*
- *How did Mordecai and Esther depend on God?*
- *What keeps you from depending on God?*
- *How would your life or decisions look differently if you increased your dependence on God?*
- *What can you change tomorrow to increase your dependence on God?*