

LIFE GROUP SERMON SUMMARY QUESTIONS

ESTHER SERIES

These questions are for the **February 11, 2018** sermon, "The Dinner Invitation." Please read the sermon passage (Esther 5:1-14) together out loud.

SERMON OUTLINE

WHEN CONFRONTING EVIL SCHEMES, THERE IS WISDOM IN . . .

1. Concealing strategic plans initially (1-4)
 - a. Before she did anything else, Esther tells everyone to pray for 3 days.
 - b. Esther is a woman of tremendous courage. God grants her favor in the king's eyes.
 - i. The king pledges a positive response, but the promise is made in private.
 - ii. Esther could ask for anything up to half of the king's kingdom.
2. Obtaining critical promises publicly (5-8)
 - a. Esther takes initiative and is working on influencing the king, her husband.
 - i. Haman thinks he is getting traction in his evil plan.
 - ii. But it is Esther who is wielding influence.
 - b. The king repeats his promise, but this time the promise made publicly.
 - c. When you feel out of position, wait on the Lord, who is positioning you to influence.
 - i. You may feel out of position at work, in a relationship or in your city.
 - ii. God will use people who feel out of position, but remain obedient to him.
3. Enduring oppositional displays patiently (9-14)
 - a. Haman constructs a giant gallows in order to carry out a murderous plan.
 - b. God can turn frightening intimidation into "windows of promise."
 - c. God can turn a seeming "display of strength" from the enemy and show that it is actually a considerable weakness. No Jew will die on Haman's gallows.

Life Group Discussion Questions

1. Based on #1, above: Esther's life was on the line, but she approached the king. She did not tell him what was in her heart, but instead invited him to a dinner, prepared in his honor. Have you ever been in a situation when you initially concealed a plan? How do you know when the concealing of a plan is wise, and when it is deceptive? [It is wise when we have God's glory as our aim and when we speak no falsehood. It is deceptive when we are working a plan for self.]
2. Based on #2, above: The king now makes his promise to Esther in front of Haman. Without coercion, Esther now has confirmation that the king will act in her favor, and witnesses. Have you ever been in a situation where you needed someone to make a public promise? (This may happen most frequently in parenting, or in the work setting.)
3. Based on #3, above: Haman has practically everything, but he feels disrespected by Mordecai. On the advice of his close friends, Mordecai builds a high gallows on which to execute Mordecai publicly. Do you have anyone who seems to hate you because of your submission to God? What kind of anger, or outbursts or "oppositional displays" have you had to endure? How might God turn those intimidation tactics into "windows of promise"? How might he turn those "displays of strength" into a considerable weakness?