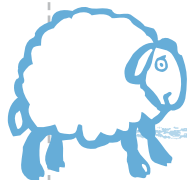




Lesson Five

God Works through Esther



Nourishing Your Heart

Scripture

Esther 1–10

Bible Truth

God saved his people through Esther's trust and courage.

Lesson Aim

To learn that God gives protection and courage to his people.

Esther—Mordecai's cousin—was a young Jewish woman who, in the providence of God, became queen of Persia. Because of her position, she was able to be God's instrument in delivering her people from their enemy Haman.

Try to read the story of Esther at one sitting. You will notice that it is the account of how God delivered the entire Jewish nation during the reign of Xerxes. It also tells of the institution of the annual festival of Purim to commemorate their deliverance.

Although God's name is not mentioned in the book of Esther, the text speaks clearly of his rule and compassionate care for his covenant people. Throughout the story, God's control and direction are assumed at every point, and his hand is clearly evident to those of us who know that history is the outworking of his sovereign plan.

From the text, we cannot be certain whether Mordecai's strong confidence that God would deliver the Jews stemmed from true, saving faith or simply from a nationalistic fervor. The same may be said of Esther. The main point is that God controls all the events and people in history to accomplish his redemptive purpose. God used Mordecai and Esther—real people with real intentions and emotions.

God controls all the events and people in history to accomplish his redemptive purpose.

He even used the pagan king Xerxes to preserve his people, through whom the Messiah would come. It is not unreasonable to infer that Mordecai was banking on God's faithfulness to his covenant promises. Esther's call for extensive fasting, moreover, may well imply a humble dependence upon God. Only after collective and personal prayer was she willing to risk her position, and even her life, to serve the people of God.

Use Esther's story to reinforce your children's trust in God, who is faithful to his promises and who is all-powerful in his sovereign rule over all his creation, including the circumstances of their lives.

You must also teach them that before they can show courage and unselfishness like Queen Esther, they must first trust the faithfulness of God. Pray that they will put their faith in the Savior, who not only was *willing* to perish but who *did* perish on behalf of his people. With the gift of salvation he gives to those who truly repent, he also gives hearts that are willing to serve him.

Memory Verse

REVIEW:

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.

EPHESIANS 2:8–9