



THROUGH FAITH & WITH COURAGE

FOCUS PASSAGE: ESTHER 4:15-5:8

FOOD FOR THOUGHT:

When you are faced with a difficult decision, how do you usually go about dealing with it? Has there ever been a time when you felt God leading you to make a specific decision?



HEAR THE WORD

Pause for a moment of prayer before reading today's focus passage.

CONTEXT

As opposed to Vashti who took a risk by choosing not to appear before the king, Esther chose to risk everything by appearing before Xerxes. Upon making her decision, she calls on the support of others to fast and pray on her behalf as she prepares herself to face the king.

Rituals like fasting and praying are spiritual disciplines that invite the believer to deepen their relationship with God through the act of seeking after God's guidance and blessing. This involves the believer drawing near to God and surrendering oneself to God in an act of seeking to hear and understand what God's will is for any given situation.

SEEK THE WORD

Spend the next 5-10 minutes seeking to understand more about the passage. What are the key events, characters or themes that stand out? Which parts of the passage draw your attention? Express these in questions, observations, and reflective response.

ENGAGE THE WORD

Continue to reflect and discuss today's focus passage using the following questions. Feel free to address any questions or observations brought up in the previous section.

- In today's passage, we can see how Esther's actions recognize both her identity as a Jew and her position as the queen of Persia. What else have you observed about Esther's character throughout the book so far? Is there anything that can be learned from it?
- In what ways might you observe a parallel between Esther's character and actions with the character and actions of Jesus Christ?
- Take a moment to reflect and respond to the following poem by Frances M. Caulkins:

Esther

*Imperial Jewess, thy sweet story sheds
A light on heaven's deep ways;
Shows Providence inweaving golden threads
Amid life's dubious maze.
From varying shades of good and ill
One beauteous whole is wrought,
While all man's erring paths fulfil
Eternal Wisdom's thought.*

LIVE THE WORD

Whenever we encounter the Word of God on our own time or with other believers, we are called to understand its message with not only our heads, but with our hearts.

"Courage starts with showing up and letting ourselves be seen."
- Brene Brown.

- How might today's passage be calling you to live this week? Has God been calling you to act on something?
- There will be times when we are called to gather and support the needs of a family, friend, or neighbor. How can you be present to the needs and requests of another believer in this season? Alternatively, is there a need in your community that calls for your prayer and action?

BIG IDEA: When we are faced with life challenges, we should seek to know what God wants us to do and act on it.

