



The Chosen Life: Studies in Esther

Esther Ch. 5

Inductive Women's Bible Study – Lesson 5

After three days of fasting and prayer, Esther was ready to go before the king. Her plan was simple but it involved great risk. Would the king receive her? If so, she would prepare a special dinner for him. As the story unfolds, we see that Esther used wisdom and restraint. She was careful to approach the king in a way that would show respect and win his favor. As you read how Esther dealt with the delicate situation, ask the Lord what He wants to teach you about going forward in His plan *and* in His timing.

Background Imagine what a daunting prospect it must have been for Esther to go, unbidden, into the king's presence. If we could slip into the queen's chamber as she prepared for her unannounced visit, what might we see? Esther's handmaidens would be tending her, seeing to every detail with meticulous care. Where normally this would be a pleasant daily ritual, this was no ordinary morning. For the last three days all routine had been abandoned. There had been no drawing of the bath, or laying out fine silk garments. No need for the perfumes and preparations. The queen had not called for her musicians. She took no visitors. She took no meals.

For three days, Esther and her maids had fasted and prayed. On the third day Esther called for her finest robes to be brought out. She gave extra care to be at her best and we can almost see her maids nodding in admiration as Esther takes one last look in the mirror. They watch in silent apprehension as Esther leaves behind the safety of her chamber.



Ahasuerus would be in the inner court of the king's palace, which was a vast and structurally intimidating space.

Excavations of the palace have shown there was an audience hall measuring over 120,000 square feet. The room was supported by seventy-two columns, each estimated to be sixty-five to eighty feet tall. Can you imagine Esther making her way silently across the cool marble escorted only by the hushed whispers of stunned onlookers?

Ahasuerus was an unpredictable man with a disposition that ran hot and cold. He could be jovial and hospitable at one turn, then moody and withdrawn at the next. Those close to him did well to learn how to read the king—their life depended on it. Esther knew this about the man she was married to. Though he treated her with kindness and was clearly captivated by her beauty, she took nothing for granted. But Esther was prepared for this hour, strengthened in body and mind for what she must do.



Getting started. Find a quiet place to study. Take your Bible, your lesson and any other study tools you want to use. Plan to spend about an hour each day on your lesson. **Pray.** Take time to settle your heart, focus your thoughts and ask the Lord to help you see with clear eyes.

“Open my eyes to see the wonderful truths in Your law.” – Psalm 119:18 NLT

Esther Ch. 5 Read the passage, without interruption, two or three times. If possible, read from more than one Bible translation. Briefly describe in your own words what you have read.

With each lesson, a “working” text is provided for your convenience. You can use this to scribble notes, write down word definitions, highlight events—whatever you find useful to your own personal study. The translation used will vary from week to week.

Working Text for Esther Ch. 5

New International Version (NIV)

1 On the third day Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the palace, in front of the king’s hall. The king was sitting on his royal throne in the hall, facing the entrance.

2 When he saw Queen Esther standing in the court, he was pleased with her and held out to her the gold scepter that was in his hand. So Esther approached and touched the tip of the scepter.

3 Then the king asked, “What is it, Queen Esther? What is your request? Even up to half the kingdom, it will be given you.” 4 “If it please the king,” replied Esther, “let the king, together with Haman, come today to a banquet I have prepared for him.”

5 “Bring Haman at once,” the king said, “so that we may do what Esther asks.” So the king and Haman went to the banquet Esther had prepared. 6 As they were drinking wine, the king again asked Esther, “Now what is your petition? It will be given you. And what is your request? Even up to half the kingdom, it will be granted.”

7 Esther replied, “My petition and my request is this: 8 If the king regards me with favor and if it pleases the king to grant my petition and fulfil my request, let the king and Haman come tomorrow to the banquet I will prepare for them. Then I will answer the king’s question.”

9 Haman went out that day happy and in high spirits. But when he saw Mordecai at the king's gate and observed that he neither rose nor showed fear in his presence, he was filled with rage against Mordecai. 10 Nevertheless, Haman restrained himself and went home.

Calling together his friends and Zeresh, his wife, 11 Haman boasted to them about his vast wealth, his many sons, and all the ways the king had honored him and how he had elevated him above the other nobles and officials. 12 "And that's not all," Haman added. "I'm the only person Queen Esther invited to accompany the king to the banquet she gave. And she has invited me along with the king tomorrow. 13 But all this gives me no satisfaction as long as I see that Jew Mordecai sitting at the king's gate."

14 His wife Zeresh and all his friends said to him, "Have a gallows built, seventy-five feet high, and ask the king in the morning to have Mordecai hanged on it. Then go with the king to dinner and be happy."

This suggestion delighted Haman, and he had the gallows built.

Gallows: Different from what we commonly call gallows, this was a sharpened post. This cruel punishment was used to execute live prisoners or as a method of further humiliating an already dead person. The body was impaled on a stake and raised up on a pole as a warning to others.



Esther 5:5–8

Bible Facts and Information:

[illegible]

Esther 5:9–14

[illegible]

My Research and Observations:

[illegible]



INTERPRETATION – *What does it mean?*

Look for a spiritual lesson. Be careful not to read into the Bible an idea that is not there. Examine each verse in light of the verses around it. To help you find a spiritual lesson, ask questions such as, “Is there a command to obey? A promise to claim? A condition to that promise? Is there a warning to heed? An example to follow or avoid?” **State the lesson in one simple sentence.**



APPLICATION – *How does it apply to me?*

We don't study the Bible just to gather information—we want to spiritually grow. Our heart needs to be open to change. The only way to move truth off the pages of your Bible and into your life is to **put it into action.**

To apply a spiritual lesson, we must examine ourselves and take deliberate steps to do something with what we have learned. Ask yourself: Is this a new lesson, or does it reinforce what I already know? What does it challenge me to do? Does it point out error in my attitude or actions? What changes does it require? Think of how the lesson relates to you and what specific course of action you will take. **Write your application in the form of a question to make it personal.**

Esther 5:1–4

Lesson: _____

Application: _____

Esther 5:5–8

Lesson: _____

Application: _____

Esther 5:9–14

Lesson: _____

Application: _____

Summary

Write a simple sentence that summarizes what the chapter is about. _____

Give a title to the chapter that will help you personally to remember it. _____



Take a Closer Look

**“Yet all this avails me nothing, so long as I see
Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king’s gate.”**

Esther 5:13 NKJ

Haman was a man with a terminal case of “I” trouble. With all his wealth, status and power, you’d think he would be content. But seeing Mordecai stand while all others bowed low just took the polish off. Haman couldn’t bask in the light of his own glory with that pesky Jew casting his shadow.

Haman is the villain we love to despise and boo. We watch him and shake our heads in wonder that he could be so foolish. With an ego spiraling out of control, he is a classic example of what *not* to do. Let’s examine the attitude that defined Haman’s character with an eye to discover how to avoid making the same bad choices he did.

What caused Haman to be proud? _____

What made Haman angry? _____

A prideful spirit leads to problems. What consequences does the Bible warn us about?

Proverbs 11:2 _____

Proverbs 16:18 _____

Proverbs 28:25 _____

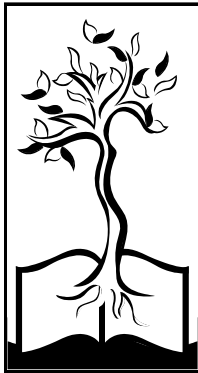
Proverbs 29:23 _____

Psalms 119:21 _____

Why is pride such a dangerous attitude to indulge—or even tolerate—in ourselves?

According to James 4:7–10 what is the correct way to deal with a prideful spirit? _____

Is there an area of your life where you are tempted to be proud? What will you do to guard against allowing this sin to get a foot in the door of your heart? Be specific.



God's Word Bearing Fruit

For you personally, what has been the most important lesson from this chapter? How will you put what you have learned into practice?

Something to Think About . . .

“God sends no one away empty except those who are full of themselves.”

— D.L. Moody —

