



The Nourishing Vocation Project Near and Now:

Vocation: Who are you called to be? What are you called to do?

Warm-up Question

Tell of a time you faced a tough dilemma at work, at home, or at church. What was the outcome?



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Discussion Questions

1. What do you see in this image?
2. What do you feel looking at this image?
3. What stories from your own life does this image bring to mind?
4. What stories of the world does this image bring to mind?

For Just Such a Time as This

Read [Esther 4:1-14](#)

Bible Story Reflection

The book of Esther takes place about one hundred years after the Babylonian exile. Some Jews returned to Jerusalem, but others did not. The setting for Esther is a Jewish community living in Susa, the capital city of the Persian empire. Esther and her uncle, Mordecai, both Jews, are the main characters, along with the drunken king of Persia, Ahasuerus, and the villain, Haman, a Persian official. Now, the story begins with King Ahasuerus holding elaborate banquets that show-off his power and wealth. On the last day of the celebration, the king demands his wife, Queen Vashti, come out and display her beauty for the guests. She refuses. At this act of defiance, the king is outraged, deposes his wife, and holds a beauty pageant to find a new wife.

Enter Esther, who hides her Jewish identity, wins the favor of the king, and becomes Queen Esther. After this, Mordecai, Esther's Uncle, happens to overhear two guards plotting to kill the king. Mordecai tells Queen Esther who tells the king and credits Mordecai for saving the king. Now enter Haman, who is the highest official for the king. He demands everyone bow in his presence, yet Mordecai refuses. This angers Haman, who finds out Mordecai is Jewish and then persuades the king to make a decree destroying all the Jewish people.

This is where chapter four picks up. Mordecai tells Esther about the decree and together they devise a plan to save the Jewish people in Susa. Yet, anyone who enters the king's court without invitation can be put to death, leaving Esther with a choice: risk death to save her people or remain silent and live. Mordecai prophesied that if Esther chooses the latter, deliverance will rise up elsewhere. However, maybe, just maybe, Esther was called "for just such a time as this". This passage invites us into Esther's dilemma. And while God is never mentioned in the entire book, God is at work throughout the whole story and it's the readers job to pay close attention and find those moments.

Discussion Questions

1. Put yourself in Mordecai's position. How would you feel if you were him?
2. Why does Esther send Hathach to Mordecai and not go herself?
3. What do you make of Mordecai's statement, "perhaps you have come to royal dignity for just such a time as this?" Do you think he's confident in Esther?
4. How do you think Esther would tell her own story?
5. When you are faced with a dilemma or immense pressure, how do you decide what to do?
6. Talk about a time when God seems hidden and yet at work amid challenges.
7. When have you felt like God led you "to such a time as this"?
8. Finish this sentence, "For such a time as this, our congregation is called to...". Replace "congregation" with "I am".



Activity Suggestions

Practice deep breathing exercises. Breathe in for five seconds, hold it for five seconds, and breathe out for as long as you can. Repeat this three times. How do you feel after?

God puts people in our lives who support us and help us navigate tough dilemmas in life. Make a list of those people in your life. Then call at least one of those people and express your gratitude.

Make a list of the ways you manage stress or discern important decisions in your life, and share that with others in the group. Write at least one new item someone else mentions and try it in the weeks to come.

Prayer Concerns

Those struggling with dilemmas, pressure at work, all wondering how God is calling them

Closing Prayer

Open my heart, O God, to be who you have called me to be and to do what you have called me to do. In the name of +Jesus, Amen.

