A poster with a group of people

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CHILDREN CURRICULUM

***RUN THE RACE*!  Hebrews 12:1-2**

Endurance. Team Spirit. Discipline. Focus. These are the things that make great sports teams, but more importantly – great *SERVANTS* of God! Join us as we learn about Paul while we *run the race!*

We will have classes for all ages. Classes will be held in designated areas. The Adult Class will be held in the sanctuary.

Nightly Schedule • June 17-20

5:45 Late Registration and Materials

6:00 VBS Opening

6:15-7:30 Classes in session

Between 7:15 and 7:45 Rotation for Refreshments

7:50 Reassemble in Sanctuary

7:50-8:00 Closing/dismissal Prayer

REFRESHMENTS

Please take a few minutes to enjoy the refreshments and fellowship in the EL Reed Fellowship Hall, nightly.

* **Adults** will have a special speaker in the Sanctuary every night.
* **9th -12th graders** will be in designated area
* **6th thru 8th grade** will be in a designated area
* **3rd-5th grade** will be in a designated area
* **k thru 2nd** grade will be in a designated area
* Our **younger ones** will be accommodated as well.

**SERIES ON RUN THE RACE**

**OVERVIEW**

God created you and me. He tells us in His Word that He knit us together while we were inside our mother’s wombs. Psalm 139:13-15 He knows every little detail about us. He knows how much hair we have on our heads. Matthew 10:30 He knows what we like and what we don’t like. He made each unique and there is no one created exactly like us in the whole world.

The following lessons are more than just a story; they are a journey of faith, trust, and understanding God’s eternal love. They are about knowing that even if things don’t work out as we want now, a Heavenly home awaits us someday.

**CHILDREN LESSONS FOR DISCUSSION**

Lesson No. 1 Jochebed

Lesson No. 2 Paul

Lesson No. 3 Joseph

Lesson No. 4 Esther

**JOCHEBED**

This lesson outline for children focuses on Jochebed, the mother of Moses, highlighting her bravery and faith in God, even when faced with a difficult situation. It encourages children to think about how they can be brave and trust God, just like Jochebed.

**Lesson Title:** Jochebed: A Brave Mother Who Trusted God

**Bible Passage**: Exodus 2:1-10 (or a simplified version)

**Target Audience:** Children (ages 6-10)

**Learning Objectives:**

* Children will be able to identify Jochebed as the mother of Moses.
* Children will understand the context of the story: Pharaoh's decree to kill all Hebrew baby boys.
* Children will learn about Jochebed's bravery and faith in God.
* Children will be able to discuss how they can trust God and be brave, even when facing difficult situations.

**Materials:**

* Bible (or simplified version)
* Pictures of Jochebed, Moses, and Pharaoh (optional)
* Craft supplies (optional)

**Lesson Outline:**

1. 1. **Introduction (5 minutes):**
   * Start by asking the children if they know the story of Moses.
   * Introduce Jochebed as Moses' mother and explain that today's story is about her.
   * Ask the children if they know what it means to be brave and trust God.
2. 2.  **Time (10 minutes):**
   * Read Exodus 2:1-10 (or a simplified version) to the children.
   * Use pictures or props to help them visualize the story.
   * Ask questions to check for understanding:
     + "What did Pharaoh order to be done with all the Hebrew baby boys?"
     + "What did Jochebed do with her baby boy, Moses?"
     + "Where did she hide Moses?"
     + "Who found Moses in the basket?"
3. 3. **Discussion (10 minutes):**
   * Ask the children to describe Jochebed's actions.
   * Encourage them to use words like "brave," "wise," "loving," and "bold."
   * Discuss how Jochebed trusted God and risked everything to protect her child.
   * Ask the children to think about times when they have been brave or trusted God.
4. 4. **Application (10 minutes):**
   * Explain that just like Jochebed, we can also be brave and trust God in our lives.
   * Discuss how we can be brave by:
     + Obeying our parents and teachers.
     + Standing up for what is right.
     + Asking for help when we need it.
   * Discuss how we can trust God by:
     + Praying to Him.
     + Reading the Bible.
     + Remembering that God loves us and is always with us.
5. **5. Craft or Activity (10 minutes - optional):**
   * Have the children create a craft related to the story, such as:
     + A basket for Moses.
     + A picture of Jochebed and Moses.
     + A drawing of the Nile River.
6. 6. **Conclusion (5 minutes):**
   * Review the main points of the lesson.
   * Encourage the children to be brave and trust God, just like Jochebed.
   * End with a prayer.

**Possible Questions for Discussion:**

* What do you think Jochebed felt when she knew her baby was in danger?
* What would you have done if you were in Jochebed's place?
* How can we be brave and trust God in our own lives?
* What are some ways we can show our love for God?

**Additional Notes:**

* Adapt the lesson to the specific age and needs of the children.
* Use visuals and props to make the lesson more engaging.
* Encourage interaction and participation from the children.
* Make the lesson fun and memorable.

Conclusion: God's protective hand was over Moses, and He allowed the baby's mother to have her child once more. Thus, she could instruct him in the ways of God.

**QUESTIONS**

Why did Jochebed, mother of Moses, have to hide him when he was a baby?

What do you think were the feelings of Jochebed when she put her baby in the little ark in the river?

Because of God's protecting hand, who found Moses when he was hiding in the River Nile?

How was Moses' mother able to help her baby after he was found by Pharaoh's daughter?

Miriam was just a young girl at this time. What characteristics might describe her? Were you in her place, what might your feelings have been?

What incidents in this story reveal God's answer to the prayers of this family?

1. Did Moses' mother talk to him the most about God or Pharaoh? How was Jochebed able to implant the truths of God and Moses' true heritage in his mind and heart?
2. What influence did that have in his later life and the decision he made as a young man?
3. What might Moses' life have been like had he chosen to remain in Egypt as the son of Pharaoh's daughter?
4. How might we compare the decision Moses made with the one we all must make at some time in our life?

**PRE-SCHOOL SUGGESTIONS**

Give each child a copy of the simple drawing of the baby in the basket (see Patterns). Let them draw in the tall grass which hid the baby.

Tell the story with a doll with blanket in a basket (nut shell may be used). Use blue cellophane for water, plastic or silk greens for flags. Make a simple line drawing of the king with a frown. Make scroll and write "decree" words on it. Doll figures can act out the story.

**Paul**

In this lesson of the series, children will discover how Paul served God according to his belief that God’s promises would come true. Paul was alive during the time of the early church and was used greatly by God to teach others about faithfulness, obedience, and suffering for Christ. This lesson contains a fun craft and word scramble as supplements for reviewing the lesson and series.

**TARGET AGES: 9 – 13 Older Elementary**. You may need to simplify this lesson when working with younger children.

**OBJECTIVE:** To teach the children that God’s promises can be trusted.

**MAIN IDEA:** Paul had a hard past, but when he became a believer, he wholeheartedly trusted God’s promises. We learn from Paul’s life that earthly circumstances can’t stop God’s promises from coming true.

**SCRIPTURE PASSAGES:** 2 Corinthians 11:23-30, 2 Corinthians 12:6-10, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, 1 Corinthians 15:51-52

**SUGGESTED MATERIAL(S):** God’s Promises Magnets (from Oriental Trading), “Promises Word Scramble” attachment, pencils

Introduction (15 minutes)

**OPENING PRAYER:** “Lord, you give us true promises that can be trusted. Thank you for loving us and giving us time together today to learn more about your word. Amen.”

**ICEBREAKER ACTIVITY:** “God’s Promises Never End” magnet craft

Purchase the craft from Oriental Trading. Then help the children assemble their crafts to remind them of the entire lesson series about God’s promises. Say, “We’ve learned about people in the bible who God used to fulfill his promises. And today, as we finish the series by learning about Paul, we will take home these magnets to remember that God’s good promises can be trusted.”

**Lesson (15 minutes)**

Briefly explain to the class that Paul wasn’t always a devout follower of Christ: He had an amazing conversion (Acts 9) even though he had persecuted other believers. Say, “The Lord chose Paul to be a powerful preacher and missionary even though he had a horrible past. This should remind us that God desires for everyone to receive his promise of salvation through Jesus Christ.” Then discuss the various trials Paul faced by reading 2 Corinthians 11:23-30. Ask, “What were some of the ways Paul was persecuted (beatings, floggings, imprisonments, etc)? What promises do you think motivated him to be faithful even when faced with hardships (That God would avenge him, help him, give him strength, etc)?” Next, read 2 Corinthians 12:6-10 to guide the children’s understanding toward Paul’s acceptance of God’s will and his trust in God’s promises as evidenced through his service.

Go on to discuss Paul’s fervent preaching about the one day return of Christ. Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. Ask, “How will Jesus return (from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel, with the trumpet call of God)? Who will return with him (believers who have already died and gone to Heaven)? What will happen on earth when Jesus returns (the dead in Christ will rise and believers still alive on earth will meet him in the air)?” Next, read 1 Corinthians 15:51-52. Comment, “How should we live if we believe the promise of Christ’s return (daily obedience, continual trust in the Lord, intentional service so others can trust in him, etc)? How do we know Paul understood what it meant to really serve the Lord (he made sacrifices and worked hard to obey God)?” Further explain that Paul was killed because of his belief in Jesus, so he paid the ultimate sacrifice for his faith. Encourage the children to consider whether or not they have truly believed in God’s promise of salvation. Allow time for the children to ask questions about salvation, Paul, or Jesus’ second coming.

“Promises Word Scramble” (15 minutes) \*Attachment\*

Print a word scramble for each child and help the class review key words about Paul’s life and God’s promises (scripture references are provided to help the children unscramble each word). After completion, use the answer key to briefly summarize the importance of each word. Comment, “Aren’t God’s promises wonderful?! We should tell everyone we meet about God’s love.”

**Conclusion (5 minutes)**

**RECAP**: Paul believed God’s promises were true and lived as a servant. Even though life on earth can be hard, we can follow Paul’s example and continue serving God no matter what we face.

**CLOSING PRAYER**: “God, we know that you keep your promises. Help us serve you even when it is hard. Thank you for sending Jesus to die for our sins. Amen.”

**JOSEPH**

Trust and Faith (Genesis 45:1-15, 50:19-21)

Life is full of twists and turns, and sometimes we find ourselves in situations that are hard to understand. In these moments, we need to remember that God has a plan for us, just as He did for Joseph in the Bible. We’re excited to introduce our latest lesson plan, “The Story of Joseph,” designed for children aged 6-12. This lesson is a beautiful reminder that God is always with us, guiding our path and working for our good.

**Lead the Activity**

When we have been forgiven by God, we can show His love to other people by forgiving them. Let’s find out how a woman helped some people forgive each other and show God’s love.

Show laundry basket and/or detergent.

What are these things used for? Students respond.

Before washing machines had been invented, it took people many hours to wash and iron their clothes. People often hired others to do their laundry.

Amanda Smith was a former slave who earned money by doing laundry for others. After her husband died, she had to work hard to earn enough money to care for her family.

Amanda also worked hard so that she could spend time telling others about God’s love and forgiveness.

One day after hearing Amanda speak, a young man asked for help. The man had fought with a friend several years before.

Amanda’s teaching helped the young man see that he needed to forgive his friend, but he was afraid to speak to him. Amanda prayed for him and said that God would help him.

The next day, the young man saw the man he had fought with. Even though he was afraid, the young man walked up to him and started to speak.

The other man said, “I’m so glad you came to talk to me. I wanted to say something, but I was afraid you wouldn’t speak to me!” The two men quickly forgave each other and became good friends again.

Amanda felt that seeing those two men forgive each other was worth all the clothes she had to wash in order to have time to tell others about God and His love.

***Read Colossians 3:13 aloud.***

How did Amanda Smith help the two friends obey this verse? Let students respond.

Let’s thank God for forgiving us and ask God to help us have courage to obey this verse and forgive others. Lead students in prayer.

**Discussion Questions**

1. When have you needed to forgive a friend?
2. What happened when you forgave your friend?
3. Why is forgiveness important?
4. What do you think might happen to friendships if neither friend is willing to forgive the other one?
5. How does forgiveness help people get along with each other better?

**What’s Inside the Lesson? 🎒**

**1. A Timeless Tale of Faith**

The story of Joseph (Genesis 45:1-15, 50:19-21) is a powerful lesson about trusting God’s plan, even when things don’t make sense. It teaches children that God’s love and guidance are constant, even in confusing and troubling situations.

**Conclusion: A Lesson for All Ages 🏡**

“The Story of Joseph” is a lesson that resonates with all of us, regardless of age. It’s a reminder that God is always at work, providing and loving us every step of the way. Don’t miss the opportunity to share this timeless lesson with the young hearts in your ministry.

**Discussion Questions**

1. Why did Joseph’s brothers put him in a pit and sell him?
2. When Joseph was a slave, what did he do? What did he do in jail?
3. What did Joseph’s brothers do when they came to ask for food?
4. Why do you think Joseph forgave his brothers?

Forgiving people is not always easy. Even in our families, people can hurt our feelings. But when we forgive, we show the fruit of God’s love!

**ESTHER**

Bible Story: God’s Purpose for Esther

Scripture: Esther 4:1-10

Target Age Group: Age 9 – 12 (U.S. 3rd – 6th Grade)

This lesson is based on the whole of Esther 1-10.

In preparation for class, you should familiarize yourself with the Book of Esther. As you teach the lesson you can pull out key verses from the Book to teach the points you want to convey to the class.

**Arrival Activities**: Choose a few activities for your students to take part in as they arrive in the classroom. (Additional resources can be found at the end of this lesson.) It’s good to have choices that meet the particular needs of your students. Some students enjoy quietly coloring (even older students do this sometimes), working a word puzzle or even reading a Christian picture book. Have an active activity for the students who learn by doing. Floor puzzles, putting a Bible verse in order, or a memory game (Older children like memory games too. You can use index cards and put Biblical characters on one card and a fact about what that character did on another (this can be used as a review game at the end of teaching a series)). Activities should help the students to focus on the Lord and prepare them for the Bible lesson. Also keep in mind that the activities are an opportunity for the teacher to visit with the students and find out how their week went. This time is an opportunity for the Lord to give you insight into the needs of your students. On that note, it’s important to have your room set up in advance and if that’s not possible, choose simple activities that can be put out quickly so you can spend this time with your students.

**Lesson Objective(s):** Students will learn:

* Each person has great value to God.
* The purpose for every follower of Jesus is to be used by God and to be a Godly influence in the lives of others.
* God has given His children gifts to help others to see that He exists, and He wants them to be a member of His family.
* We are to trust and obey God even when we don’t understand our circumstances.

**Memory Verse:** Esther 4:14b (NIV) “And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this.”

**An activity for the students:**

Use a puzzle (floor size would be best). Give each student a piece of puzzle. Let them look at their individual piece. As you teach the verse talk about how with just our one piece of puzzle we can’t see what the whole puzzle will look like when put together. We can see bits and pieces of what might be the picture from our piece but as each of us begin to assemble the puzzle with our piece we see the bigger picture. This puzzle is like God’s plan for each of our lives. We only know such a small piece of God’s bigger plan. When we are obedient and faithful to what God has asked us to do, He uses us to be a part of His bigger picture.

**Bible Lesson:** God Created You for A Purpose.

This is just a guide to help you as you prepare to teach your class. Provide Bibles for students who did not bring one.

**Introduction:**

We live in a world that sometimes makes us think that we aren’t special because we are not popular, pretty, athletic, or as smart as others. Our value to God isn’t based on any of those things. He loves us because He created us and placed us in this world for a purpose. His purpose for placing each one of us on this earth is to glorify Him and enjoy Him forever. We glorify God when we live a life that pleases Him and points others to Him. When we live that kind of life we will enjoy God and all the blessings that come from Him.

Because God’s purpose is for each of us to glorify Him and enjoy Him forever, He has given us gifts or talents that we can use to help others see that God exists and wants them to be a part of His family too.

Sometimes we know clearly what our gifts/talents are and how God wants to use us in this life. Other times we may not know what our gift and purpose is in this life. (If possible take a gift-wrapped box out of a bag and set on your lap.) Our lives are like this unopened present. We have received a present but we don’t know exactly what is inside until we take the wrapping paper off the present. As each of us walk with God by faith day by day, obeying His Word He begins to prepare us for what is inside that present. In God’s perfect time He allows the wrapping on the gift we have to come off and He allows us to see what the talent/ability for serving Him will be. Whether we know what gift God has given us or not, we are to live a faithful and obedient life that pleases God. Because even though we might not feel like we have a purpose and are not useful to God, He sees all that is going on around us. He knows how your life will affect the people around you.

We all influence the lives of others around us. Whether it’s your brother/sister or your classmates there is someone who is affected by the way you live your life. The question we need to think about this morning is: are you influencing people to want to know God and live for Him, or are you influencing people to disobey and rebel against God?

**Bible Teaching**

Let’s get right into the Bible story for today. It is found in the Book of Esther. Esther is found to the left of the Book of Psalms in the Old Testament.

Esther 2:6-7 (Have volunteer read these verses.) From these verses what do we learn about woman named Esther? Did anyone see what her other name she was known by? (Hadassah). We learn from this passage that Esther is a young Jewish woman. When we say Jewish what does that mean? (A person who is a descendant of Abraham, also known as an Israelite or Hebrew.) What happened to Esther’s parents? (They died.) Who raised Esther as his own daughter? (her cousin Mordecai)

These verses don’t tell us how Esther felt about her life. Did she feel like her life was valuable to God? Did she understand that God had a plan for her life that would influence the lives of many? We don’t know how she felt about these things. As we look at her life we will learn that God had great plans for Esther whether she realized it or not.

Mordecai, Esther’s older cousin was a Jewish man who was taken as a prisoner by King Nebuchadnezzar when he invaded and attacked Jerusalem. We have learned about some other Jewish people who were taken from their home in Jerusalem to Babylon. Do you remember who those people were? (Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego)

These verses don’t tell us a lot of how Mordecai felt either. We do know that he took care of Esther and raised her as if she were his own daughter. Because of things we will see as we travel through the Book of Esther, we can see that Mordecai was a Jewish man who loved and obeyed the One True God. Since he loved and obeyed the One True God, he must have taught Esther to love and obey God. We don’t know how Mordecai felt about his life and if he understood that God had a purpose for him either.

Mordecai simply obeyed His God and trusted Him. It doesn’t matter whether he understood God’s plan for his life. It is the same with us. Whether we understand God’s purpose or not, He values our lives and uses us exactly where He places us. Our job isn’t to fully understand what God’s purpose is. Our job is to trust God, obey His Word and walk with Him every day.

Esther 1 The king over the country Persia at this time was named Xerxes. He was a very rich king and had very fancy parties that lasted for days and days. One night King Xerxes commanded that his wife Queen Vashti come and show herself to all his men friends. Queen Vashti refused to do what the King commanded. This made Xerxes furious that his wife didn’t come and do what he commanded. The king’s helpers said, “This woman must go! We can’t have her setting a bad example for the other wives in your kingdom!” Xerxes followed their advice and did not allow Vashti to be queen anymore.

Esther 2 Xerxes must have felt better that he had punished the queen for her disobedience but soon after she left his palace, he began to miss having a wife. King Xerxes’ helpers saw that Xerxes might be missing his wife, Vashti. They came up with an idea. They told the king that he should bring all the beautiful young, pure women who have never been married to the city of Shushan and have a beauty contest. The woman who the king would choose would be the new queen.

The king thought this was a great idea. He had the beautiful young women from the cities in his kingdom brought to the city of Shushan so they could prepare for this beauty contest.

Esther the young Jewish woman lived in Shushan. Esther 2:7 says this about Esther: “Esther was lovely in form and features.” This means that Esther was physically attractive. She was chosen to be taken with the other young women to take part in the contest to become queen. This may not have been something that Esther wanted anything to do with. Maybe the thought of being Xerxes wife was not something she wanted to do at all. Not knowing what Esther’s feelings on this were we know that she obeyed and went where she was asked to go. She may not have understood but she chose to obey. God has a plan for His children, and He places them exactly where He wants them so He can use them for His plan. Acts 17:24-28

After all the women went before the King, he liked Esther best of all. He chose her to be his Queen. It must have been scary for Esther. King Xerxes didn’t always behave in a nice way. She must have heard stories of his parties and how Queen Vashti was fired. What kind of husband would Xerxes be? Even though Esther may not have understood why she was chosen to be queen, God did. He had a plan and as we listen, we will see how God uses Esther for His plan.

Before Esther became Queen. Mordecai told her it was important to not tell anyone that she was a Jew. The Bible doesn’t tell us why Mordecai asked this of her, but he did. Esther obeyed Mordecai because he was like a father to her, and she knew that God would want her to honor and obey the man who was as a father to her.

Mordecai loved Esther very much and he sat at the king’s gate to be near to where Esther lived. One time while he was sitting by the gate, he overheard two men planning to kill King Xerxes. He passed this information along to Ether and she told the King. The two men were put to death and Mordecai’s information about this plot was written down in the King’s history books.

The king had a helper who was wicked and cruel. He thought he was a very important man because he worked for the king. His name was Haman. King Xerxes promoted Haman to a position higher than the other officials in his kingdom. The king made a command that everyone should kneel and honor Haman when he was present.

Esther 3:5 One day as he walked by Mordecai he expected to bow down and honor him. Mordecai knew it was against God’s commandments to bow down to anyone but Him. He would not bow down to honor Haman. This angered Haman and caused him to hate Mordecai. He knew that Mordecai was a Jew, so that made Haman hate all Jews.

Because Haman hated all the Jews, he went to King Xerxes and asked the king to make a law that all the Jews to be killed. When he asked the king, he didn’t mention the Jews by name but said, “There are certain people who live in your land who do not obey the king’s laws. The king listened to Haman and made a law that in the month of Adar all the Jews, men, women, and children would be destroyed. Esther 3:12-14

Boys and girls, this was terrible news! God’s people the Jews were going to be destroyed because of wicked Haman’s plan. Haman was having every Jew killed because he hated them so much.

God loves His children and protects them from evil. He does not want His children destroyed. Esther 4:1-2 Mordecai found out about this terrible news that the Jews were going to be destroyed. The news broke his heart and caused him to cry out with loud cries and wailing. He put on sackcloth and ashes to show that he was mourning this horrible plot to destroy God’s people. He had messengers go and tell Esther that she had to do something to stop this wicked plan.

When Esther heard this news, she was afraid. She knew that if she went to the king without being invited, she could be killed right on the spot. Only people who were invited by the king could come and stand before his throne. Esther 4:12-13 Mordecai encouraged Esther and told her that it was for this time in her life that God had a plan to use her for His purposes. If she didn’t do something, God would use someone else to save His people.

Even though Esther might die, she decided that she would have others pray and fast with her. She would go to the king and tell him of this wicked plan to destroy her people. Even if it meant she might die doing it.

This took courage. God gave courage to Esther to go before the king. God gives courage to His children so that they can do the work He has for them.

After Esther and her people prayed and fasted for three days she went before the king. As she stood in the outer courts and King Xerxes saw her, she must have trembled on the inside. When she looked up at the king, she saw a smile on his face and him holding out his scepter for her to touch. This was what the king did to show a person it was ok to come into the room where he was.

Queen Esther was trusting God to show her what to do so when the King asked her what she wanted, she invited him and Haman to a banquet. At the banquet she invited the king and Haman to attend another banquet the next night.

Because Esther trusted God and His timing she didn’t rush to tell Xerxes about Haman’s wicked plan. Because she waited and acted only when the time was right, God was able to work in other events that would bring together His plan for this situation.

Haman was so proud of himself that he had been the only one invited to attend the King and Queen’s banquet that he left the banquet very happy. As he walked by Mordecai on his way home, he was furious that he would not kneel and honor him. When he arrived home, he boasted to his family about the events of the day and about his invitation to eat at the banquet with the king and queen. He also told his family about how much he despised Mordecai. Haman’s wife and his friends influenced him in a negative way. They told him that he should build a gallows so that Mordecai could be hung on it. Haman loved this idea, and he had the gallows built.

Meanwhile the night before Esther’s banquet, the king could not sleep. God is control over all things. It is not an accident that the king could not sleep. Since Xerxes was unable to sleep, he asked his servant to bring him a history book for him to read. It wasn’t an accident which history book was brought for him to read. As he read in this book, he reads about the account of Mordecai overhearing the plot to have him killed. King Xerxes realized that Mordecai had not been honored and rewarded for saving his life so as he was planning how he could reward Mordecai, Haman is coming to his palace to request that he might be allowed to hang Mordecai on the gallows he has made.

As Haman enters the King’s presence the king asks him, “What should be done for the man the king delights to honor?”

Pride is an ugly thing. Pride blinds us to the truly sinful person that we are. Haman was blinded by pride. He assumed the king wanted to honor him so he came up with the best way he would want to be honored. Imagine his horror when King Xerxes tells him to go and do to Mordecai all that he said about how to be honored!

It was now time for the banquet. Esther knew it was God’s time to tell the King that she and her people were going to be killed. Esther 7:5-8 She told the king that she was a Jew and there was a law that her people were going to be killed. The king was furious! “Who would dare to think about killing you?” The king loved his wife and the thought of her being killed made him angry. Esther pointed at Haman and said the enemy who wants to destroy the Jews is this wicked Haman!”

King Xerxes had Haman put to death on the gallows he had built for Mordecai as his punishment for his wicked plan.

God had used Mordecai and Esther to save His people from destruction. Esther went to Xerxes and pleaded with him to write a new law that would save her people. He agreed and made a new law that said on the day that the Jews were to be attacked that they could protect themselves from those who were going to attack them.

The Jews lives were saved because Esther was faithful and obeyed in the circumstance she was in. Many lives were positively affected because of her influence.

We have been placed on this earth at this time in history for God’s plans and purposes. He knows all that is going on around us and He will use us to be a Godly influence in the lives of others around us if we choose to follow and obey Him.

Maybe this morning you realize that you are not being a good influence in others’ lives. No matter how hard you try you still do things you know you shouldn’t. It may be that you have never been saved. When a person understands that they are a sinner and the only way that their sin can be forgiven is by believing that Jesus died on the Cross for their sins, was buried and rose again on the third day. When a person believes in Jesus, the Holy Spirit comes inside his/her heart and gives them the power to live a life that pleases God. It is only when the Holy Spirit lives inside of your heart that you can be a good influence on others’ lives. Today you can be saved. Please talk to one of us and we will show you from the Bible and pray with you how you can do that today.

If you have been saved you have all that you need to be a good influence on the lives of others. You have God’s Word. You must read it daily. You have the privilege to pray, you can pray and ask God to help you. You have the Holy Spirit to give you power to do what is right. You have other believers that you can ask to pray for you if you are having a difficult time being a good influence.

**Close in prayer.**

**Review Questions:**

1. Who has a plan for each of His children?
2. Who was Mordecai?
3. Why did the King have a beauty contest?
4. Who hated the Jews and made a plan to have them destroyed?
5. Why was Mordecai crying in the streets?
6. Why should we follow God’s instructions and trust Him for His timing in our circumstances?
7. How did God use Esther to save His people?
8. How can God use you in your circumstances to be a positive influence?

**SERIES CONCLUSION**

Life is full of trials that test our faith and resolve. The stories of Jochebed, Joseph, Esther, and Paul in the Bible teach us that perseverance through faith is crucial. These characters faced immense challenges but emerged victorious by trusting in God. When we face our trials, we must rely on our faith and persevere, knowing that God’s plan for us is ultimately for our good. As James 1:12 reminds us, *“Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.”* We can overcome any obstacle through faith and perseverance, finding strength and hope in God’s unwavering presence.

(Proverbs 3:5-6) says, if you trust in the Lord with all of your heart, lean not on your own understanding and acknowledge Him in all your ways- He will direct your path.

**Action Steps**

To help you apply these principles of perseverance and faith in your own life, consider these five simple action steps:

1. **Pray Daily**: Begin each day with prayer, asking God for strength and guidance to face the challenges ahead. Trust that He is with you, no matter the difficulty.
2. **Seek Wise Counsel**: When facing trials, remember the wisdom of seeking advice from trusted mentors or spiritual leaders. Their guidance and experience can provide the reassurance and direction you need to navigate your challenges.
3. **Stay Connected to Scripture**: Regularly read and meditate on Bible passages emphasizing perseverance and faith. Let God’s Word be your constant source of comfort and strength, guiding you through your trials.
4. **Take Proactive Steps**: Like Joseph, take practical steps to improve your situation. Whether reaching out to others for help or seeking new opportunities, act with faith and trust in God’s plan.
5. **Reflect on Past Victories**: Recall times when God has brought you through challenging situations. Let these memories bolster your faith as you face new challenges.

**Discussion Questions**

To further explore the themes of faith and perseverance, consider discussing these questions with a small group or in personal reflection:

1. Which biblical character’s story resonates most with your current life situation? Why?
2. How has your faith been tested during a recent trial, and what did you learn from the experience?
3. What role does prayer play in helping you persevere through difficult times?
4. In what ways can you take proactive steps to face a current challenge while still trusting in God’s timing?
5. How can recalling past instances of God’s faithfulness help you navigate future trials?

NOTES

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