



Preparing for Small Group: Read the passage below, and answer the following questions.

- (1) What do these verses tell me about God?
 - (2) What do these verses tell me about sinful humanity?
 - (3) What do these verses tell me about Jesus?
 - (4) What does God want me to know?
 - (5) What does God want me to do?
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“In the End”
Esther 5:9-7:10

Main Point: God’s plans for His people prevail.

Truths about God’s plans that prevail:

In the end, sin is always a deceptive path to destruction (5:9-14).

Emotions connected to circumstances in life can be deceiving. Haman was joyful, thinking that the invitation to the banquet with the king was the queen’s plan to honor him rather than her plan to expose him. Pride and sin have a way of doing that, blinding the heart from seeing the danger that’s ahead. However, even Haman’s joy was short lived because it was tied to his circumstances and to the expectation that things must go his way. Haman’s joy was taken away as soon as he saw Mordecai. Haman was living for himself and looking for joy in his circumstances, which always leads to disappointments in this fallen world. Haman was so consumed with anger and hate that murder was the key to making him happy. If that’s not insane enough, Haman’s wife and friends suggested that very thing — killing Mordecai — as the solution that would give Haman joy in his life at that time. Haman was happy to agree! Sinful plans will always lead to the unforeseen, destructive consequences of sin.

1. Have you ever allowed anger and hate to overshadow all of the things that you had to be joyful and thankful for in life? Are you doing that now? Share, and discuss.
2. Have you ever experienced the way that sin deceives, leading you to believe that what you are planning to do will result in happiness while turning out — in the end — to result in hurt? Share your testimony, and discuss how God used that experience in your life.
3. Read Philippians 2:1-4. Discuss how God’s specific design for your heart towards others is different than Haman’s heart towards Mordecai.
4. Are you allowing sin to control your emotions or guide your plans and actions towards others? Share confessions, and pray for victory and strength in the mind of Christ in your group.

In the end, God’s plans always overrule the plans of people (6:1-14).

While Haman was having a sleepless night plotting his revenge on Mordecai, the king also was having a sleepless night. Since the king couldn’t sleep, he had servants read from the chronicles of the kings. As they are reading, they happened to cover the story of Mordecai saving the king’s life. When the king found out that Mordecai was not honored for saving his life, the king immediately began to make plans to correct that oversight. At that very moment,

Haman entered the outer court with the hopes of talking to the King about executing Mordecai that very day. The king called Haman into his presence to ask him what he would do to honor someone in the kingdom. Haman thought that the king was talking about him, so Haman presented the king with a very public and opulent plan to show royal honor to someone special in the kingdom. Ironically, of course, Haman's plan is applied to Mordecai, and Haman is the one who had to recognize and to honor Mordecai in the way that he himself had proposed! Rather than hanging on Haman's gallows that day, Mordecai found himself sitting on the king's horse that day, being honored before all the people in the city of Susa. People makes plans, but God's plans prevail.

1. Do you believe that God's plans always prevail in the end? If so, how should this impact your planning as a follower of Jesus and the plans of our faith family in the work of Jesus?
2. Has God ever overruled your plans or the plans of someone else, which in the end protected you from hurt and harm? Share, and spend time in prayer as a group, thanking and praising God for His plans that prevail for the good of His people and for His glory.
3. Since it's true that God's plans don't always provide physical deliverance for his people here-and-now, how is it true that God's plans in the end always prevail? Why is this perspective so important to understand for the follower of Jesus?
4. Do you know someone who is in a place where they need hope from knowing that God's plans prevail? How can you encourage them this week with God's truth from His Word?

In the end, God's enemies always face His justice while God's people receive His salvation (7:1-10).

Queen Esther's feast finally came. And as she had planned, Haman and the king were present. The king asked for her request, and Esther presented it clearly. Her desire was that the king would save her life and the lives of her people, who had been put under a death sentence by none other than Haman. In her plan, Esther's motivation was to deliver her people, which was starkly different than Haman's motivation to hurt Mordecai and his people. When the king discovered the consequences of Haman's plot, he was furious. Haman, in desperation, begged Queen Esther for mercy, and in the process, he got too close to her, which stirred up the king's anger even more. Upon being told that Haman had built a gallows for Mordecai, the king ordered that Haman be executed on the very gallows that he built. In this incredible turn of events, God executed justice on His enemy Haman, and He preserved the lives of the Jewish people. From an eternal perspective, God always executes justice on His enemies and provides salvation for His people.

1. Is there a difference between Esther's motivations towards Haman, and Haman's motivations towards Mordecai? How can you use this knowledge to examine your motivations towards others? Why does this matter?
2. Does God's justice always come at the time we think it should? If not, how do we justify saying that God's enemies always face His justice?
3. Do God's people always receive physical protection and deliverance at the time they think they should? If not, how do we justify saying that God's people always receive His salvation?
4. Look through Revelation chapters 20 and 21. Discuss how these truths about the future bring an eternal perspective of hope into our lives as God's people.
5. Knowing God's justice against His enemies and His salvation for His people, how should these truths about God impact your priorities, your actions, and your words this coming week? Pray for opportunities this week to encourage one another with the hope of the gospel and to share the truth of the gospel with those without hope.