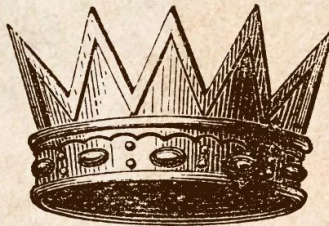


# LIFE GROUP

Participant Guide

SEPTEMBER 2024



# WAYMAKER

*The Story of Esther*



NAME \_\_\_\_\_

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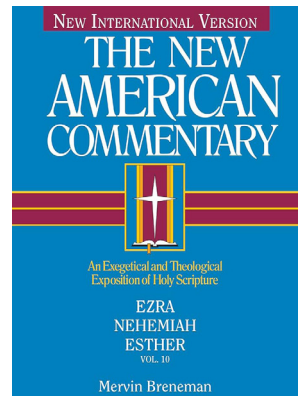
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COMMENTARY FOR THIS ESTHER STUDY



# LETTER FROM KEITH

Throughout 2024, WCC has been focused on the idea of being bold—bold in our faith, bold in our actions, and bold in our devotion to God. I can't think of a better person to study than Queen Esther. If you've ever read this story or seen it portrayed, you know what I'm talking about. Esther has been given an opportunity to save the Jewish people, to rescue them from destruction, but she will put her life on the line!

Here's the crazy thing—God is never mentioned in the story. However, His hand, His providence, and His sovereignty are all over it! God moves and acts in so many ways, all of it for the good of His people, the Jews. He is the ultimate “waymaker,” the One who makes a way. Even when we don't see Him at work, He is working (yes, I took that from the song!).

The good news is that He also continues to do this in our lives. God continues to work for our good and His glory. Romans 8:28 is a powerful word to all Christians, “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.” Now, that doesn't mean that we will never go through trials or hardship; it really just means that we can trust God to work things out and be with us through the ups and downs of life. That's good news!

All of us make choices every day; many are insignificant (what's for lunch?), but there are times and opportunities for us to act in such a way that it may well impact our lives or the lives of others. An opportunity to help someone, to serve them, leads them to Christ. An opportunity to speak up for others, keeping them from being harmed. A chance to take action, to give, to share, to love in such a way that it changes the course of someone's life. Right now, God may be working in your life “for such a time as this.”

Blessings,  
Keith Comp  
Senior Minister

# SEPT 8 | WEEK 1 | THE RISE OF QUEEN ESTHER [ESTHER 1-2]

## CONNECT QUESTIONS

1. Go around the room and introduce yourself! Share your name, where you live, and how long you have been attending WCC.
2. Finish this statement: this year in life groups will be successful for me if...
3. What circumstances and people led you to join this life group?

## COMMUNITY DISCUSSION

1. God has you here for a reason. This time of weekly connection is an opportunity for God to do something powerful in us and through us over this next year. Today, we are going to talk about the opportunity that Esther found herself in. At the end of Esther 2, she finds herself as Queen of Persia. But what led her to this opportunity? Divide into two groups and assign these two chunks of text. Read the verses in your smaller group, summarize and explain your text to the whole life group, and answer this question: What circumstances and people led to Esther becoming Queen?
  - a. Esther 1:1-21
  - b. Esther 2:1-11
  - c. **Commentary from Commentaries:** *Vashti's courage must be acknowledged. She defied her king and her husband by refusing to shame herself in public. Whatever else may be said of her, she was brave. She was willing to give up her status and position as queen in order to do what was right. Her dignity was more important than her place in society. Her act of courage in refusing to present herself before the king is equaled by that of Esther, who entered the king's presence without permission (5:1). Both Vashti and Esther made plain that the king was not in charge; rather, human dignity and all things right were in charge. The king suffered from his obsession with manipulative power, while Vashti and Esther exhibited the power of rightness.*

2. **This sermon series is called Waymaker. Eventually, Esther learns that the Lord has called her to royalty so that her people can be saved. God would use her to make a way for the Jews. At the end of chapter two, though, she has no idea why she's been given this opportunity. Can you think of a moment in your life when you were given an opportunity by God, but you weren't sure why?**
3. **Read Esther 2:15-16 and 19-23. How do we see Esther maximizing her opportunity in the place God had her?**
4. **Esther's wisdom and character elevated her in the eyes of the king, which in turn gave her more opportunities to be used by God. What opportunity is God laying before you right now? How can you use wisdom and godly character to maximize that opportunity for God?**
5. **As Keith mentioned during the sermon, even though God is never mentioned in Esther, His hand is all over the book. The same thing is true for your life! What emotions come to mind as you think about God working behind the scenes of your story?**

## **PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER & THE MISSION OF THE WEEK**

### **Mission of the week: LOVEtheLOU**

LOVEtheLOU is a community development initiative that connects resources to the needs of St. Louis. During the constant process of growth and development, they strive to see St. Louis restored through transforming actions. LTL is proud of the progress in St. Louis and are excited about what will continue to happen as they grow and develop. [lovethelou.org](http://lovethelou.org)

# SEPT 15 | WEEK 2 | FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS? [ESTHER 3-4]

## CONNECT QUESTION

1. If our culture had to create a list of the most memorable villains in books, movies, and television, which villains do you think they would pick? What makes those villains so memorable?
2. With the villains you just mentioned, how did they bring about hard times in the world they were living in?

## COMMUNITY DISCUSSION

1. Today, we are going to meet the villain in Esther's story. Read Esther 3:1-11. Who is the villain, and how are they bringing about hard times for Esther and her family?

*Commentary from Commentaries: Haman is introduced as "the Agagite," an intentional reference to the tension between the Israelites and the Amalekites. This enmity stems from the time of the exodus when Israel fought with Amalek in the wilderness. Exodus 17:15 foretells that the Lord would be at war with them from "generation to generation."*

2. Haman viewed himself as a god and used his power to persecute others. What examples of people like Haman do we have throughout Scripture and history? How did they bring about hard times for the people around them?

3. In Esther 4:1-3, the Jewish people respond to this genocidal news with weeping and fasting. They are crying out to the Lord during this hard time. Read Psalm 121. How can this Psalm help God's people who are experiencing hard times?



4. In Esther 4:13-14 Mordecai says to Esther, *“Do not think that because you are in the king’s house you alone of all the Jews will escape. For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place.”* **What do we learn about God from these statements? How do these words about the Lord bring comfort when we are experiencing hard times?**
5. Mordecai concludes by saying to Esther in verse 14, *“And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?”* **God brought Esther into her role to bring hope to the Jewish people. God may have you in a certain role or relationship for that same reason! Is there someone you can provide hope for who is experiencing a hard time?**

## PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER & THE MISSION OF THE WEEK

### MISSION OF THE WEEK: Jireh India Missions

This ministry in India shares the good news of Jesus with those who have never heard His name. They provide homes and education for orphans at House of Peace, teach widows to sew so they can provide for their children, provide bread for much of their community through Five Loaves Bakery, and work with a leper colony. They strive to fulfill Psalm 82:3 — Defend the poor and orphans; do justice to the afflicted and needy.

## CONNECT QUESTION

1. A plot twist is defined as “Unexpected development in a book, film, television program, etc.” What are some of your favorite plot twists? What are some of your least favorite plot twists you’ve seen or read?
2. What was a moment in your life when things unexpectedly changed? Your answer could be positive or negative!

## COMMUNITY DISCUSSION

1. So far, the book of Esther has been a slow spiral downward. Esther has been pulled from her home and family and forced to live with an impulsive and dangerous king. The evil Haman is being honored by that same sinful king. Haman is using his powers to exterminate the Jews, which includes Esther’s people. And if Esther approaches the king about stopping this plot, she could lose her life! Things aren’t looking good and unfortunately, it gets worse. Divide chapter five into sections and have your group read the fourteen verses out loud. How are things getting worse for Esther and Mordecai?
  - a. Commentary from Commentaries: *Why did Esther make the king wait? The delay adds suspense to the story. It certainly was a risk, for the king’s mood could have changed. Many explanations have been attempted. We must take into account Oriental custom and protocol. Conversation and preparation are essential in any important transaction. We can also see an indication of God’s wisdom given to Esther. She sensed that the time was not right for her important request. In God’s providence time was needed for some other details before Esther made her request. We need to be sensitive to God’s timing and not be impatient with delays.*



2. Esther needed a plot twist. She needed the story to change if Mordecai and the Jews were to survive. Pick three people to read these verses aloud and answer this question collectively: how could these verses comfort Mordecai and Esther in the pit?
  - a. Isaiah 41:10
  - b. Psalm 9:9-10
  - c. Philippians 4:6-7
3. What words or phrases stuck out to you from those three sets of verses? How do they apply to your story?
4. Read Esther 6:1-10. While God uses Esther and Mordecai directly at different points, God is working behind the scenes in these verses. He keeps Xerxes awake, leads him to the chronicles, and directs his focus to Mordecai. It's good to remind ourselves that God works behind the scenes when it feels like we are in the pit. Can you think of a moment in your story when God worked behind the scenes for your good?
5. Have your group write down a list of struggles, hurts, and trials your members are currently facing. Conclude the session by praying over each request. Pray that the person would remain faithful and that their situation would change according to God's timing and will. As the leader, you can be the one praying, or you can have the entire group pray. The key is that each request gets prayed over specifically.

## PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER & THE MISSION OF THE WEEK

### MISSION OF THE WEEK: Habitat for Humanity

Habitat for Humanity of St. Charles County believes that everyone deserves to have a safe and affordable place to live and raise a family. To that end, they build more than homes; they build communities and provide educational programs and support to ensure homeownership sustainability. We partner with Habitat to help build homes in our communities.

# SEPT 29 | WEEK 4 | BAD DAY FOR HAMAN/GOOD DAY FOR JEWS

## CONNECT QUESTION

### [ESTHER 7-8]

1. How would you define the word bravery?
2. Share a time when you had to be brave using the definitions just given.

## COMMUNITY DISCUSSION

1. Today, we are going to look at moments of Esther's bravery. Before we do, though, let's talk about the risk Esther is facing. Going back to chapter one, what happened to the former Queen Vashti; why was King Xerxes upset with her? How could this same situation apply to Esther if she approached the King?
2. This series has been called Way Maker. We have been talking about moments of God making a way. Read Esther 7:1-2. How did God make a way for Esther to approach the king boldly?
3. Esther faced two pressing issues. The first was Haman and his mission to destroy the Jewish people. The second issue was the edict that was signed and distributed among the kingdom, giving Persians the freedom to annihilate the Jewish people on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month. Break into two groups, read the text below in your smaller group, and answer this question: "How did God make a way to overcome this issue?" Once everyone is finished, share your answer with the larger group.
  - a. The Issue of Haman - Esther 7:3-10
  - b. The Issue of the Decree - Esther 8:3-14
4. Esther entered that second banquet, not knowing what would happen to her life or the lives of her people. All she knew was that God was calling her to be brave and speak out. Share a moment in when God called you to be brave amid uncertainty.
5. The story of Esther is filled with moments of injustice. Unjust laws were being signed and lives were put at risk due to sin within broken leaders' hearts. Where is injustice around you and how can you be brave like Esther and speak against it?

## NOTE FOR NEXT WEEK:

God used Esther's bravery and the Jewish people were spared. In response to this mighty work of God, Mordecai declared an annual holiday called Purim for the Jewish people to celebrate. Next week, you will be celebrating Purim with your life group. Here's what you'll need:

- Come to the life group next week dressed up! Historically, the Jewish people dressed up to distinguish this day from others. It could be business casual or semi-formal; decide together as a group!
- Feast together! Purim was celebrated with a meal and we would love to see that in your life group next week. Assign different people to cook the appetizer, main course, sides, desserts, and drinks.
- Purim was also celebrated through the gift-giving of food. With that in mind, we'd love for you to do a snack exchange next week. We recommend that you discuss everyone's favorite snacks as a group THIS WEEK. Then, everyone randomly draws the name of someone in the group. Next week, bring the favorite snack of the person you drew!
- Purim was also a day on which God's people generously gave to the others in need around them. We want to celebrate Purim by donating to Hope Food Pantry. Go to [wentzvillecc.org/events](http://wentzvillecc.org/events) to get a list of food items to bring in.
- Take a picture of your group during the night and send it to: [alex@wentzvillecc.org](mailto:alex@wentzvillecc.org).

### In Summary, Bring Three Food Items Next Week

1. Your part of the meal (main course, appetizer, etc.)
2. The favorite snack item of the person you drew.
3. Items from the Hope Food Pantry

## PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER & THE MISSION OF THE WEEK

### MISSION OF THE WEEK: Daniel & Kelsey

Pray for this couple, their 2 children, and that the Holy Spirit will continue to work through them as they serve in North Africa.

**1. Read this verse and summary aloud to your group.**

**Esther 9:20-22b**, *“Mordecai recorded these events, and he sent letters to all the Jews throughout the provinces of King Xerxes, near and far, to have them celebrate annually the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month of Adar as the time when the Jews got relief from their enemies, and as the month when their sorrow was turned into joy and their mourning into a day of celebration. He wrote them to observe the days as days of feasting and joy.”*

**Purim is a holiday celebrated by the Jewish community every year on the 14th of the Hebrew month of Adar (late winter/early spring). It's a holiday where God's people remember the story of Esther and how the Lord rescued His children from destruction. Today, we are going to celebrate that same holiday, participating in many of the same activities that generations of Jews have done throughout history. Let's start as Esther 9:22 instructs us. Let's feast!**

**2. Participate in the meal as a group.**

**3. At some point in the meal, discuss this question. Purim is a day when we reflect on God's faithfulness to His people. How have you seen God be faithful in your life?**

*Extra Credit: As a group, you can read the entire story of Esther aloud as you eat. This is a Jewish tradition. Another fun Jewish tradition is to boo whenever Haman's name is mentioned.*

**4. Read this segment from Esther 9:22 aloud. Then, read the following statement that goes along with it. “He wrote them to observe the days as days of feasting and joy and giving presents of food to one another.” Gifts were given during Purim to demonstrate the unity among God's people. Today, we are going to give food gifts to one another to show our unity and friendship as a group.**

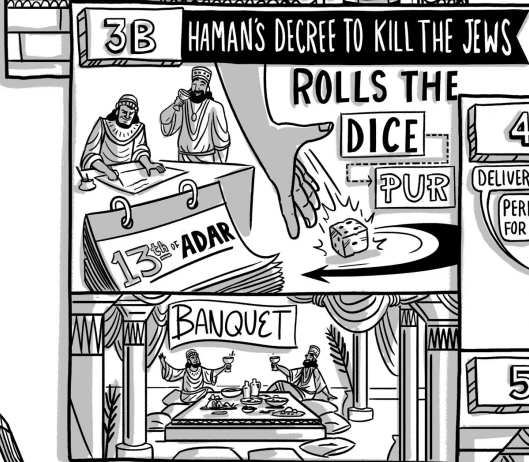
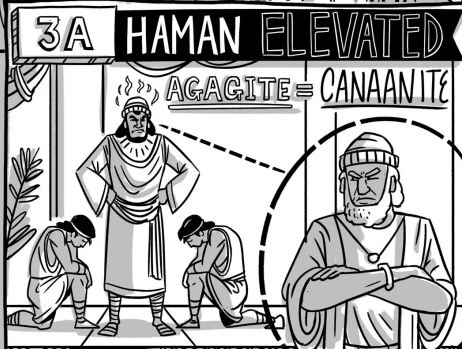
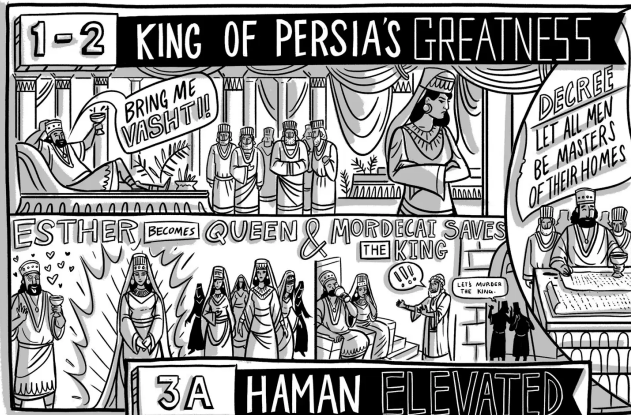
**5. Go around the circle and pass out gifts.**

6. Discuss this question. Why do you think Mordecai emphasized unity as a part of the Purim celebration? What about the Haman experience prompted this moment of togetherness?
7. Read this segment from Esther 9:22 aloud. Then, read the following statement that goes along with it. “He wrote them to observe the days as days of feasting and joy and giving presents of food to one another and gifts to the poor.” Purim is also a moment where God’s people get to address injustice. Tonight, we are going to collect food for Hope Food Pantry. This is an organization in Wentzville whose mission is to reach the community in emergency times of crisis with supportive services like food.
8. Collect the food.
9. Discuss these two closing questions.
  - a. Why was generosity toward the poor an emphasis in the celebration of Purim? How does this generosity relate to the story of Esther?
  - b. Looking back at Esther’s story, what was one major takeaway you had from the series?
10. Pray and dismiss!

## PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER & THE MISSION OF THE WEEK

### MISSION OF THE WEEK: Love in the Name of Christ (LINC)

LINC’s mission is to provide support and direction for disadvantaged families and individuals in the community, helping them to set goals and objectives that will empower them to become productive citizens within the community. This week the food that was gathered will go to the Hope Food Pantry. The Hope Food Pantry is housed within the LINC Community Center!





# HER

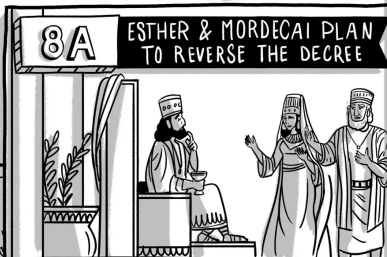
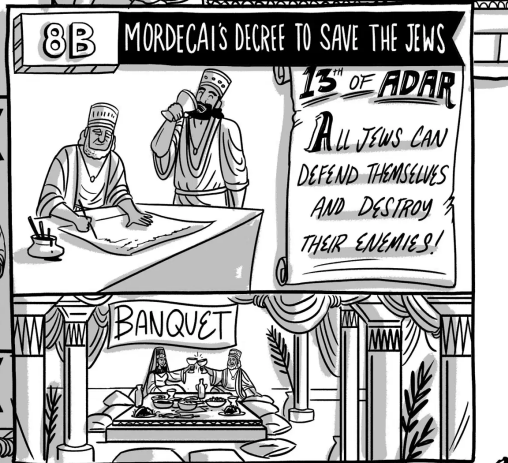
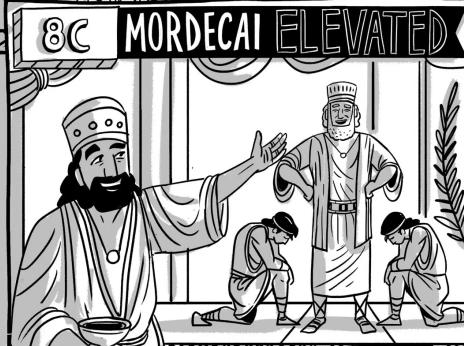
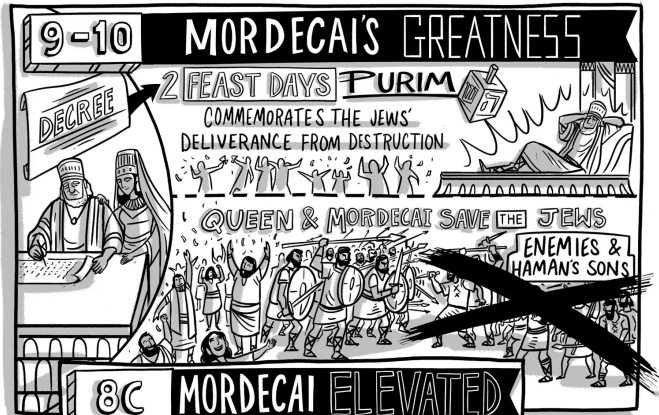


## MORAL AMBIGUITY:

- A LOT OF DRINKING, SEX AND MURDER
- VIOLATION OF **TORAH** COMMANDS

## THE POINT:

ESPIE EXILE, "GOD'S ABSENCE" AND ISRAEL'S MORAL COMPROMISE, GOD HAS NOT ABANDONED HIS PROMISES



## CHIASTIC STRUCTURE OF ESTHER



GATHER 2024

WOMEN OF THE

Spirit



Worship - Teaching - Fellowship  
September 28 | 9am-4pm  
Register at [wentzvillecc.org/gather](http://wentzvillecc.org/gather)

## UPCOMING EVENTS AT WCC:

Make sure to check out the Events page to see all the upcoming events at WCC. Our regular Fall Programming begins the week of September 8, including Life Groups, GriefShare, WSM Nite for High School and Middle School, and Preteen Small Groups. More information about all these and more can be found at [wentzvillecc.org/events](http://wentzvillecc.org/events).



CORNHOLE  
TOURNAMENT &  
CHILI COOK-OFF



October 5 | 11am-2pm | [wentzvillecc.org/men](http://wentzvillecc.org/men)

WOMEN'S  
*246 groups*

**246 Groups are based off of Acts 2:46**

where the first century Christians met in each other's homes for meals and discipleship.  
You'll come together once a month

for 2 hours, discuss 4 questions, with 6 women.

We will be diving into what it looks like to be Women of the Spirit

Register before  
October 6



[wentzvillecc.org/women](http://wentzvillecc.org/women)



**TRUNK OR TREAT**

@ WENTZVILLE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

- GAMES
- DANCING
- BARREL TRAIN
- FOOD TRUCKS
- CANDY
- AND MORE!

OCTOBER 20  
6-7:30PM  
@ WCC

[WENTZVILLECC.ORG/TRUNK](http://WENTZVILLECC.ORG/TRUNK)



2024 Dinner Theater production of  
the  
**Charitable Sisterhood**  
★ **Christmas** ★  
**SPECTACULAR**

Thur Dec 5th 6PM  
Fri Dec 6th 6PM  
Sat Dec 7th 12PM  
Sat Dec 7th 6PM

Tickets on Sale September 17  
[wentzvillecc.org/cdt](http://wentzvillecc.org/cdt)

