

WEDNESDAY BIBLE FELLOWSHIP

Christ Church, Crouch End Hill

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No: 35

CHARACTER UNDER PRESSURE – **ESTHER**

In the book of Esther, we see the lives of several characters played out. There are those people who are selfish and proud, seeking only personal recognition, and there are those who risk everything for others and chose integrity in the face of great opposition. Esther is a book about developing godly character. In the midst of a culture which does not emphasize doing what is right, this book speaks to us in profound ways.

The events of this powerful book took place in Persia during the reign of King Xerxes from 486 to 465 BC. Esther's story presents the last major threat to the Jewish people in the Old Testament period. The Jewish festival of Purim which is still celebrated today, is established in Esther, which accounts for the books' popularity among the Jewish people.

Esther will stir us to examine our character. It will encourage us in taking a stand for what is right and give us courage that God is still in control.

Questions for Discussion

We would all like to be respected by others, and so we try many ways of gaining that respect. Some try to gain it through controlling others or by demanding it. However, one of the ways respect is gained is by appreciating others and showing them respect.

Read Esther Chapter 1

- Who are the principal characters we encounter in this chapter?

- Describe the celebration given by King Xerxes (vv. 2-8).

- Why does King Xerxes ask Queen Vashti to come to him (vv.10-11)?

- The King's request places Vashti in a difficult position. What factors would she have been weighing in her decision (v.12)?

- What can we observe about King Xerxes' character so far?

- Think of a time when you were placed in a difficult situation. What was your response?

- Why did the wise men perceive Queen Vashti's refusal to be so dangerous to the kingdom (vv. 16-20)?

- The wise men mention respect several times in this chapter. In their view how was respect gained and maintained?

- How does respect actually develop between people?

- In what ways can you show appreciation and regard to those around you?

- Describe one thing that you can do this week to show someone respect.
