

ESTHER

A WOMAN OF STRENGTH AND DIGNITY

STUDY SIX

Esther's Finest Hour

Esther 5

*When you wait on the Lord, it doesn't mean that you do weird things.
You go on with your activities focusing more fully on the Lord.
—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll*

WITHOUT warning, life sometimes prods us down a path that forks into two roads. Both choices appear to end in the unknown. We're forced to choose, but which way is best? How do we know what God wants us to do? All we can do is wait on Him and seek His face until He makes the way clear.

The time spent waiting, however, is not wasted time. In fact, Isaiah recorded several promises for those who wait on the Lord:

*Those who wait for the LORD
Will gain new strength;
They will mount up with wings like eagles,
They will run and not get tired,
They will walk and not become weary. (Isaiah 40:31 NASB)*

Do you see the four promises in this passage? While we wait, God gives us new strength, an eagle's-eye perspective, greater energy, and a determination to persevere. Our waiting makes room for God to work in us and behind the scenes on our behalf.

Esther desperately needed what these verses promised, so she turned to the Lord and waited on Him. While waiting, she received the strength, perspective, confidence, and determination that only God can provide.

In the passage for this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study, we'll find Esther standing at the crossroads of her life-or-death decision. We'll watch each step she takes and learn from her how to gain the Lord's strength as we wait on Him during our precarious times.



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SEARCHING
THE
SCRIPTURES
BIBLE STUDIES

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PREPARE YOUR HEART

Esther lived what this proverb teaches:

*Trust in the LORD with all your heart;
do not depend on your own understanding.
Seek his will in all you do,
and he will show you which path to take.* (Proverbs 3:5–6)

Record your prayer requesting God's Spirit to fill you with wisdom and strength from this study.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

King Ahasuerus hadn't called for Esther in a long time. Mordecai urged her to barge into the throne room and speak to the king on behalf of her people, but that was risky. "Anyone who appears before the king in his inner court without being invited is doomed to die," she replied (Esther 4:11).

Mordecai's second appeal, however, breached the walls of Esther's fear: "Who knows if perhaps you were made queen for just such a time as this" (4:14). God had been moving in all the events of Esther's life to bring her to this point. Her heartache as an orphaned child, her upbringing in Mordecai's home, her beauty, her favor before the king—it all made sense to her now.

With her new calling, a wave of courage swelled in her heart. She fasted. She waited on the Lord. And then, when the time was right, she resolutely declared, "I will go in to see the king. If I must die, I must die" (4:16). This would be Esther's finest hour.

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Observation: Esther Enacts Her Bold Plan

Observing a passage is simply examining what the text says.¹ As you read, look for key words and phrases, significant turns of event, and the logical flow of thought. Read *Esther 5* a few times and write down key components that strike you as important.

What character qualities did Esther display? What did her requests contain that indicate her deference toward the king in 5:4, 7–8?

How did Mordecai express his character, and how did Haman let his actions pique his ego?

What did Haman's wife Zeresh and Haman's friends counsel him to do?

That's why we admire a woman like Esther. She not only says she will do it, she does it. She doesn't talk theory and then deliver trash. She does what she says she will do, not knowing if she would live to see that evening's sunset.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

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Interpretation: Esther's Courage, God's Work

Because the Bible is a book about God and God's ways, let's focus on how He worked through Esther's bold plan and even Haman's hateful retaliation scheme.

A Calm Yet Wise Plan—Esther 5:1–8

Notice the text says, “On the third day of the fast” (Esther 5:1). On that day, Esther didn't procrastinate in fear nor did she waver in doubt. She coupled her prayer with action. Based on [Esther 5:4](#), what do you imagine Esther did during the three-day fast prior to her meeting with the king?

Don't think for a moment that God is whiling away His time, busy with other things. During the period of fasting, God is at work. That's the beauty of His invisibility. Not only is He invincible, He is invisible. He can be moving in a thousand places at the same time, working in circumstances beyond our control. You see, during a waiting period, God is not only working in our hearts, He's working in the hearts of other people. All the while He is giving added strength.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

In this passage, how did Esther display patience before revealing what troubled her ([5:1–4](#))?

While drinking wine at the banquet with Haman and King Ahasuerus, how did Esther display self-control ([5:5–8](#))?

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Imagine Esther's anguish as she sat face-to-face with the evil architect of the genocide of her people. With poise resulting from her repose in God, Esther ate her meal and engaged in conversation before Haman and the king. She awaited the best moment to reveal Haman's diabolic plan. Her waiting upon God gave her the wisdom to determine the right time to make her request and strengthened her with unyielding self-control in the presence of an enemy. What did God do for her?

Notice what Esther doesn't do. She doesn't tell everything that's troubling her. She doesn't point a finger at Haman. She doesn't play on the king's emotions by bursting into tears and manipulating him to do what she wants him to do. She determines not to do it her way. The Lord is having His way. She is virtually invincible in the nucleus of God's plan. That's the beauty of this whole story.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

A Proud and Sinister Response—Esther 5:9–14

The banquet with Esther and the king puffed up Haman's pride to the breaking point. It took only one snub to pop his inflated ego. How did the author of Esther build tension and elevate urgency for God's intervention in [Esther 5:9–14](#)?

What contrasting character traits do Haman and Esther exemplify?

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How does faith in God develop character like Esther's? How does a lack of belief in God produce Haman's lack of character?



Correlation: God's Sovereignty in Action

Our text highlights God's sovereign work for the good of His people, as seen in Esther's patience and trust in Him. Slowly read and meditate on Psalm 121—a psalm about God's sovereignty and care for those He loves.

*I look up to the mountains—
does my help come from there?
My help comes from the LORD,
who made heaven and earth!
He will not let you stumble;
the one who watches over you will not slumber.
Indeed, he who watches over Israel
never slumbers or sleeps.
The LORD himself watches over you!
The LORD stands beside you as your protective shade.
The sun will not harm you by day,
nor the moon at night.
The LORD keeps you from all harm
and watches over your life.
The LORD keeps watch over you as you come and go,
both now and forever. (Psalm 121)*

You can imagine Esther affirming the truths in this psalm after she approached the king and survived. Reflect on Psalm 121 in the context of the events of Esther 5 and write a statement in your own words defining God's sovereignty as it relates to you personally.

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Application: Steps to Waiting on the Lord

Pastor Chuck Swindoll offers four excellent principles to help us use the truths from Esther 5 in all seasons of life:

1. *When preparing for an unprecedented event, wait on the Lord before getting involved.* Even more important than what we wait for is the work God does while we wait—in us, in others, and in our circumstances.
2. *When dealing with an unpredictable person, count on the Lord to open doors.* Amazing things happen to our courage. Instead of becoming more afraid of our enemy, we become more confident in God.
3. *When working through an unpleasant situation, trust the Lord for enduring patience.* Timing is as important as action—sometimes more so. Patience helps you stay calm while you wait.
4. *When standing against an unprincipled enemy, ask the Lord for invincible courage.* He can give you the nerve to do what seems risky and the boldness to take a step when the moment is right.

Which principle is most important to you in your current season of life? Take a moment to write out how you would like to implement that principle. What kind of doors would the Lord need to open? Or what would it look like if you demonstrated invincible courage? Remember to be specific. Specificity is the first step toward clarity and action when accomplishing what God commands and believing what God promises.

Do you know someone—a friend or family member—who's going through one of the situations mentioned above? Take a moment to write a prayer for that person. You may even share Psalm 121 in a letter or e-mail, expressing how you're praying for him or her.

Esther 5 ends with a cliff-hanger. When will Esther reveal her true identity? Will Mordecai survive Haman's revenge? Will Esther stop the genocide train barreling down the railroad tracks and threatening to wipe out her people? We'll find out in our next *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study!

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Reflective Wrap-Up

Write one sentence to *summarize* this lesson.

Write one thing to *remember* about God.

Write one way you can *respond* to God's Word.



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, thank You for taking care of the unknowns in my life. I confess that I want to control everything, and I ask that the vice grip of anxiety and worry on my heart would loosen so I might rest well. I know You're working in countless places because this world is about Your glory and Your purposes rather than me and my wants. Only You can give me the peace and faith I seek, so I humbly ask for those things. I pray this in the strong name of Jesus, amen.

ENDNOTE

1. To learn more about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* Bible-study method, go to the web page, "[How Does Pastor Chuck Swindoll Study the Bible?](#)"

For the 2026 broadcasts, this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study was developed by Aaron Massey, senior vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, and revised by Bryce Klabunde, vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages. Copyright © 1989, 2018, 2026 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide. Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

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