

ESTHER

GOD'S STEPS TO STEPPING UP FOR GOD

ESTHER 5

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(Esther 5)

Every Christian must wonder why it is that God keeps us living in this world after Christ saves us. I mean, why doesn't God just transport us to Heaven once we submit our lives to the Lord Jesus as our God and Savior? It would seem to be so much easier! But easier isn't always best. The truth is, God uses this *earthly life* to help shape us for fully experiencing our upcoming *eternal life*. This means that the Lord has in mind for you and me, like the Biblical Queen Esther of old, to step up for Him in a world that has tragically *stepped away* from Him. We are saved to make a difference in this lifetime that will make a God-honoring impact for all of time to come! Seriously, that's a big deal! But how do we do this sort of thing? In Esther Chapter 5, we'll see how the Holy Spirit (working behind-the-scenes) led Esther to accomplish this in her day (2500 years ago) and how we can take those same "God steps" and step up for God, in our day!

DISCERN YOUR ...

(Esther 4:14)

GET TO ...

(Esther 4:15-16a)

CALCULATE ...

(Esther 4:16b)

WAIT ...

(Esther 5:1-2)

STEP THRU THE ...

(Esther 5:2-3)

STAY SENSITIVE TO THE ...

(Esther 5:4-8)

TRUST GOD TO ...

(Esther 5:9-14)

FOR THOUGHT & TALK

In your small group take 5-10 minutes to review the main points of Pastor John's message. Discuss the following questions, taking your time as the Spirit leads, realizing you don't have to cover them all.

1. At the beginning of his message, Pastor John identified the three most prominent false gods of our time ... **Secularism, Science & Self**. What are the teachings of these three false gods? How are they misleading people and what are the effects they are having upon our culture in terms of families, education, money, health, time commitments, priorities, etc.? Note: It is important to clarify that **science**, when not deified, is a gift from God for learning about the wonders of Creation that God has put into place. It is also important to state that a healthy self-image is a very good understanding to possess when we do not deify ourselves, but realize we were made in the *Imago Dei* (the image of God).
2. **Esther 4** depicts Queen Esther deciding to put secularism behind her and embracing her identity as a daughter of God. **Esther 5** shows her putting the decision into action as she **steps up** for God in a world that had **stepped away** from God. How easy was this for Esther to do? What do you suppose her thoughts and emotions were as she did all this? How difficult is it for you to be bold for Jesus and step up for Him in a setting where most have stepped away from Him? Can you personally identify with her feelings and thought process?
3. Esther was learning "God's steps for stepping up for God" by living them in the moment. We are learning them as we study her life and bridge these principles into our own experience. Which one or two of the steps Esther took most challenged you or encouraged you to step up for the Lord? Can you see how all the steps are important and fit together? What are some of the areas where the Holy Spirit is leading you to personally step up in faith?
4. Read aloud **Ephesians 5:18** from a couple of different versions. What does it mean to let the Holy Spirit **fill** you? How often are we to ask the Holy Spirit to fill us? Why would Pastor John say (and he tells NCCF this all the time) that being controlled by, and sensitized to, the Holy Spirit is the 2nd most important truth of the Christian life? How does the Spirit's filling tie in to our ability to believe that God is working behind-the-scenes on our behalf, even when we can't see it?