

# CONNECT GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE — WEEK 05

# GLIMPSES OF GOD

## Let's Talk

Has there ever been a time when you had to make a weighty request? How did you prepare yourself? Did you have a plan, or base it off intuition in the moment?

## Let's Study

Read Esther 5:1-2.

Esther put on her royal robes to enter the hall where the king was on his royal throne. What is the significance of wearing these garments in the king's presence? What does she do in this moment to get his attention and why do you think that pleased him?

The king holds out his gold scepter to Esther. What is the significance of this? What would happen to Esther if the king did not extend the gold scepter? How do we see the hand of God working behind the scenes?

Read Esther 5:3-5.

Before Esther even speaks, the king asks her of her request and offers her "up to half the kingdom". Why would the king offer her this honour? Is it a reflection of the king's lofty willingness to relinquish his power to others? Is this a weakness or a redeeming quality?

Esther invites him to a banquet. The king immediately responds to Esther's request; he summons Haman and they go to the banquet Esther had already prepared. How does Esther set the dynamic of this scene to her advantage? What does she learn about the king? Her position as queen? The faithfulness of God?

Read Esther 5:6-9.

Do you find Esther's 2nd request unexpected? What does this suggest about the presence of God during her 3 days of fasting?

We see an abrupt change in Haman's mood as he leaves the banquet. How does this impact your concept of him? How much effect could the alcohol have on this sudden burst of rage?

Read Esther 5:10-14.

Haman resisted acting in his rage when he saw Mordecai, but he carried his anger home with him. How does he attempt to distract himself from his indignation? How can we understand this as a warning for how the enemy works?

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Haman's wife suggests he have Mordecai impaled and he was delighted. What parallels do you see about the influence of Zeresh and Esther on their husbands? Why are Haman and the king so susceptible to their female counterparts? Are there any other passages in the Bible where we see this? How does God use this powerful dynamic between men and women to carry out his purposes?

Read Romans 13:1-7.

These verses refer to governing authorities as being established by God as God's servants. How does this passage impact your understanding of the events of Esther chapter 5?

## Lets Apply

Though God is silent throughout this book, we see his hand at work constantly. Sometimes in our own lives we feel like God is distant, that we are alone as we make our big requests and play the long game.

As God's children, we are called to "run with endurance the race God has set before us" (Hebrews 12:1); we are to play the long game faithfully for the ultimate goal. While King Xerxes offers Queen Esther half the kingdom, through Jesus, we are offered the whole Kingdom. We can be sure that God will meet us in those moments of fasting and prayer and work together with us to "carry out his good plans for us that he started long ago" (Philippians 1:6) and that "when our endurance is fully developed, we will be perfect and complete" (James 1:4). Where in your life do you need to put this into practice this week?

In what areas of your life is God building endurance?

Share with the group any particular ways of thinking that have been challenged by what you're learning from this series.

## Let's Pray

Dear God, you are the Lord of Heaven's Armies. We know that anything is possible through you and that you are in control of all things. Even more, you are for us. Help us to turn our hearts to you in obedience and endure whatever you ask us to, for we know that whatever you ask is good, will bring you glory, and prepare us for eternity. Give us the grace, willingness, and faith of Esther, Lord God. Thank you for your Word. Thank you for your Spirit. Thank you for your glorious presence and your eternal plans. Amen.