

I am Queen Esther. I am here to offer the gift of political savvy. I doubt that is what you had in mind, but I want to be completely honest with you. My life has been a strange series of events that led me to places I never dreamed I would be. Certainly, as a little girl, I never dreamed that I would someday be Queen.

I am going to tell you, though, that when I found myself in the King's harem awaiting his decision on who would be the next queen, I decided that I could change my life forever by being as smart as I could be. We had all seen what happened to poor Vashti just because she refused to allow all those men to stare upon her body as if she were an object. She was the king's wife and one night when he and his friends had been drinking, he called her into court. She refused, so he banished her.

As sad as it is there are certain things we have to do in order to get what we want. The laws were clear. Disobeying the king meant certain death. And, I wasn't clear on what would happen to all those girls who were in the harem and not chosen to be queen, either.

It took patience and endurance. For a whole year, we underwent what they called "cosmetic treatments." I know this sounds nice, but it got old after a while – people scrubbing me with oils, pulling on my hair to straighten it, pouring perfume all over me – I was ready to be outside running in a field! But, I knew if I could remain patient and use that time to get to know those closest to the king that I could position myself in such a place to be favored. It's not what you know, but whom you know!

Is this making you uncomfortable? I understand that there may be some of you who wonder how someone like me can speak of politics in such a way. Using my position, my charm, even my beauty to get what I wanted may seem wrong to you. I don't think that I can argue the point except to say that I never did anything that I believe was wrong. I followed the laws of the land as best I could and used my savvy for the rest.

Had I not worked to be in the position that I was, I would not have been able to use the same political savvy to save my people. I'm sure my king was shocked when I finally revealed that I was Jewish, but I had waited until the right time, knowing just when that information would be the best use to me and to all of the Jews in the area. My cousin, Mordecai, was my sounding board. He offered a lot of advice and helped me to see what I could accomplish.

Imagine a woman like me even thinking she could do such things! But, somehow I did. I could see the vision of what could be. And, so, I worked in the places that I found myself to get what would do me and my people the most good. In fact, I choose to believe that it did the most good for all people. After all, that is what politics should be about, right?

Discussion Suggestions - Esther

Keeping in mind the theme for this year, “Gifted To Serve,” consider how God prepares us to serve others in our lives.

In her monologue, Esther speaks about the year of preparation that she and the other women had to go through in order to become candidates for the next queen. A yearlong beauty treatment may sound like heaven to some of us, but think of how monotonous that was bound to become. Surely the thought, “Why go through all of this when the outcome is so uncertain?” crossed not only Esther’s mind, but all the other women as well.

Invite the women to respond to these questions:

- ✦ What preparations does God take us through so that we are prepared and ready to serve where we are called?
- ✦ What is the importance of God’s timing in our lives?
- ✦ What hinders people from walking in God’s plan for their life?
- ✦ What are some situations around you at this time (in the world, nation, community, church, family, job, etc.) in which you feel God is calling you to serve? What do you feel your purpose is in the midst of these situations? How has God, or how is God, preparing you to serve in those situations?

PRAYER:

Esther’s story shows us that remaining respectful and humble, even in difficult, if not humanly impossible, circumstances often sets us up to be the vessel of untold blessing for both ourselves and others. Have each person take a few moments to write a prayer or a poem expressing their desire to trust God more in the situations of day-to-day life. Invite several women to share their prayer in closing time. (*Leader: make sure that you provide pens or pencils and paper for this closing activity*)

After the Session:

Consider going together for pedicures or manicures. OR – get together at a member’s home and do that spa treatment for each other. This will make a nice, memorable fellowship activity. You could also include teen girls in the activity, which they would LOVE! It would also provide a wonderful opportunity for you to invite neighbors and friends who are searching for meaning in their lives.