

GODLY LEADERSHIP

ESTHER

Pray and ask God to help you to know Him better as you study His Word.

Read the Bible passage (preferably without using commentaries).

Begin to answer the questions using your own words.

**Questions are based on New International Version (NIV)*

Lesson 6 • Esther 1 • October 27, 2010

1. What truth, verse or insight from last week's study of **Ezra 5 & 6** has helped you?

SECTION I: READ ESTHER 1:1-8

2. In **V1-2**, who was King Xerxes, and how extensive was his kingdom?
3. Describe the banquet in **V3-8**. Who was invited? How long did the party last? What were the festivities?
4. a) What do you think was the purpose of this grand celebration?

b) What does this opulent banquet say about King Xerxes—his character, his values, his rule?
5. Think about what you may have the tendency to put on display for others to see. What does this say about your character and values?

SECTION II: READ ESTHER 1:9-12

6. Describe the King's condition when he sent for Queen Vashti in **V10**.
7. What do you think was behind this command? Why would the King want to show off his Queen to the people?

8. a) What was the Queen's response in **V12**?
- b) How do you feel about Vashti's response to her husband? Was she right to refuse him? Explain.
9. In **V12**, what was the King's reaction and why?
10. In what areas are you prone to control or take advantage of someone you love for your own purpose?

SECTION III: READ ESTHER 1:13-22

11. a) Who did the King turn to for advice in dealing with Vashti's defiance?
- b) What do you think it means that these political advisors "understood the times" in **V13**?
12. a) In **V15**, what was the question the King asked these "wise men?"
- b) Why do you think the King sought political advice rather than take a more personal approach in dealing with his own wife?
13. a) According to Memucan, who else had been insulted by the Queen's action?
- b) In **V17-18**, what was he afraid would happen because of Vashti's refusal?
14. a) In **V19**, what advice did Memucan give the King?

b) What was unique about royal decrees of Persia and Media?

15. In **V20**, what purpose would this course of action serve?

16. In **V21-22**, what was the final outcome?

17. Memucan's advice to King Xerxes had a huge ripple effect. To whom or to what do you turn for advice in the challenges you face? What ripple effects have you seen from your source(s) of advice?

18. With this week's lesson in mind, form a prayer request to share with your table. (For ideas see questions 5, 10 or 17)

DIGGING DEEPER

1. Both Esther 1:13-22 and Ephesians 5:21-33 discuss wives' submission to their husbands. How are the criteria for respect different in the Persian court than the Godly response outlined in Ephesians 5?

2. The human tendency to abuse power and the danger of absolute power are revealed in the first chapter of Esther. In the gospel of Matthew, Jesus resists Satan's temptation to use His power for personal ends. Read the following passages and summarize Jesus' teaching about the correct understanding of leadership and power:

Matthew 4:8-10 _____

Matthew 20:25-28 _____

John 13:3-16 _____

