

Facilitator

1. Open with Prayer

2. Welcome any newcomers

3. Read Esther 2:1-18 and give a five-minute review of the sermon using Peppy's sermon notes.

Facilitator: Please don't feel you have to cover every question. Try to keep your discussion to an hour and a half at the most.

CONNECT Group study questions, Esther 2:1-18

September 14, 2014

Title: Promotion Comes From the Lord

Have you ever thanked God for the prayers He didn't answer? A Garth Brooks country song, called "Unanswered Prayers" tells the story of meeting an old high school flame and walking away grateful God didn't answer those nightly prayers "that God would make her mine." That's an example of one of those occasional privileges God grants us to look back and see He really is in control, that He cares for us more than we know to care for ourselves, and that He's God and we're not.

Question: Share a time or two when God didn't give you what you wanted—gave you what you didn't want, perhaps—but gave you what you needed instead.

Question: Mordecai and Esther were Jews trapped in a pagan culture. In what ways are we as Christians trapped in a pagan culture? Or are we?

Question: Perhaps you've heard it said, "Everything happens for a purpose." It's one of those little bromides people throw around that sounds a lot like Romans 8:28, but not really. Read Romans 8:28 in context, taking note of verses 25 through 30. What is Paul talking about—what's his topic? Verse 28 is reassuring, but comes with conditions. What are they?

Question: Philippians 4: 6-7—read it—offers prayer as a cure for worry, anxiety and stress. It says, "Let your requests be made known unto God. And" What does God give us in response to our requests? Is peace more important than getting what we want? Why, or in what way?

Question: Where else in the Bible do we see the hand of God manipulating the evil schemes of men to accomplish His purpose and bless those who love Him? You'd be right if you said everywhere, but give specifics. **Facilitator:** The stories

of Joseph, Daniel, and David are examples, but see what the group can come up with first.

Question: The evil schemes of men touch us personally and touch people we know. They affect our nation and the world around us. In what ways do you see the hand of God manipulating what men intend for evil to accomplish His purpose? Can you give personal testimony to Romans 8:31?