

Facilitator

1. Open with Prayer

2. Welcome any newcomers

3. Read Esther 7 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
November 9, 2014**

Title: Turn Out the Lights, the Party's Over

The other night Fox News Channel ran a short piece about a bus driver who submitted a urine specimen to ensure he was drug-free and could keep his job. He signed a statement saying the specimen was his, but he substituted his wife's, knowing his recent drug use would be detected. "Are you certain this was your specimen?" his employer asked when the lab results came back. Sticking to his story, he swore it was. "Are you sure?" Again, he said it was. "Well congratulations! You're pregnant."

The story bears out the adage taken from Numbers 32:23, "Be sure your sins will find you out." As we unpack Esther 7, keep in mind that there is a bit of Haman in each of us. We sin. When we do, we may not be found out right away, but like an infection festering below the surface, sin will erupt eventually. Humbly bring your sins to the Lord. Confess them. Make a conscious decision to turn away from them in repentance and pray for the strength to stay on the path to renewal in Christ.

Question: Using the definition of discernment Peppy gave us—knowing when to act and when to wait, knowing when to speak and when to listen, and knowing when something is right and when it is wrong—find ways anywhere in the book in which Esther showed discernment. What about Mordecai? Was Mordecai discerning in what he said and did? Offer some examples.

Question: If discernment is knowing what is right, what is acting on what you know to be right? Is that just discernment, or is it something more? **Facilitator:** Refer to Proverbs 15:28 and Proverbs 16:23.

Question: What is failing to act on what you know to be right? **Facilitator:** Read James 4:17

Question: In chapter 4, Esther spoke courageously when she said, “If I perish, I perish.” She was discerning in her statement and courageous when she approached the king. Was she wise when she revealed she was Jewish in chapter 7? What if the outcome of Esther’s revelation was different and the king turned against her instead of Haman? Would she still be wise? Does wisdom depend on the outcome, or doing what is right regardless of the outcome?

Meditation: It’s easy to see how Haman’s pride destroyed him, but not so easy to see how our personal pride can ensnare and destroy us—until it does. In group discussion, describe how sinful pride can destroy—or has destroyed—our relationships, our witness and even life itself. In prayer, ask God to reveal the sin in your life—give you discernment—and give you the wisdom (James 1:5) to confess and repent of that sin.