

Facilitator

1. Open with Prayer

2. Welcome any newcomers

3. Read Esther 4 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

October 12, 2014

Title: For Such a Time As This

Have you ever wished you could have it both ways? Or perhaps at the point of decision, wished you could know the outcome of each choice before deciding which is best? I think we all have.

Robert Frost, an early 20th-Century American poet, expressed this wish in his poem, *The Road Not Taken*. Knowing he could only travel one of two roads that diverged in the wood, he chose one that seemed less traveled. His last line, "*And that has made all the difference,*" is an expression of irony, because he can never know what the other road had for him had he taken it. And he could never know if it made any difference at all.

Professional baseball player, Yogi Berra, known for his head-scratching witticisms, had this advice: "When you come to a fork in the road, take it."

So what are we to do? Flip a coin? No, not at all. What Frost and Berra missed was the biblical roadmap and spiritual GPS God provides for us so we can know the best path to take even if we don't know where it leads. Operating on God-given principles and insight from the Holy Spirit, we take one step at a time in faith believing God's choice is right, and ours means disaster.

Facilitator: If your group would like to read Frost's poem, here it is:

The Road Not Taken,

by Robert Frost

*Two roads diverged in a yellow wood
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;*

*Then took the other, as just as fair
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that, the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,*

*And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,*

I doubted if I should ever come back.

*I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.*

Question: Fiction writers like to play ‘what-if’ games to stimulate story ideas, but that’s fiction. Have you ever played ‘what-if’ in real life? Share some times when your ‘what-if’ may have turned out better or may have been worse. Should we even think ‘what-if’ if we live by Proverbs 3:5-6?

Question: As you read through Chapter 4, see how many expressions of faith—certainty that God is in control—you can find. **Facilitator:** Verse 14 is one, but look for others and encourage group members to discuss how they could use that kind of faith in situations they face every day.

Question: In the three verses Peppy included in this lesson, 2 Chronicles 16:9; Ezekiel 22:30; and Jeremiah 5:1, God is searching for people who live by biblical principles. Pick out the characteristics and principles in these verses and offer other Scripture passages that reveal the characteristics God would like to build in us. Also, what principles does He want us to live by? **Facilitator:** I see a blameless heart, one who builds and protects, a person of courage, a lover of truth and justice. God’s conditional promises (2 Chronicles 7:14) and fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22) are also places to look.

Question: Share with the group examples of how your world may be coming unglued. What character should you be equipped with and what biblical principles should you follow to face situations like unemployment, loss of healthcare, death of a family member, war, famine, disease, persecution, etc.

Facilitator: Remind your group that it can happen here and we would be wise to decide how we respond if and when it does.