

BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, September 10, 2006

Passage: Psalm 121

Memory Passage: Psalm 121:1-2

TODAY: *From your study this past week, what is one thing that impressed you that can be of help in your life?*

DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Esther 1-2.** *This week will begin an overview of the Book of Esther. Each day, you will be reading two chapters to gain a “bird’s-eye view” of Esther. As you read this week, keep a record of how many times God is mentioned. Summarize what this book says about God after this week.*
- (b) Additionally, as you read this week, keep track of all the miracles in the book. Make a list here of all the miracles that you find in Esther. What is the significance of this?
- (c) Summarize what happens in the first two chapters of Esther? What is the status of the Jews in Persia at this time? What do you learn about King Ahasuerus? Queen Vashti? Mordecai? Esther?
- (d) Read Ephesians 1:11. On what basis does God make His decisions about what He allows to happen?
- (e) Read Isaiah 55:8-9. What did God say about His decisions and our understanding of them? What are some of the reasons that this is so?
- (f) *Family:* Read Esther 1-2 together along with Isaiah 55:8-9. Discuss the providence of God. What does providence mean? How can it be seen in this world? Can we understand what God is doing in our lives? How should we respond when we cannot see or understand what God is doing? Pray that each of you will trust the wisdom of God plan and purposes for your lives.

DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Esther 3-4.** What difficult situation arises related to Mordecai? How does this affect Haman?
- (b) Read Hebrews 12:15. What happens to us when we do not deal rightly with our anger? How does anger affect Haman?
- (c) Read Ephesians 4:26-27 and Matthew 5:21-26. What are we told to do with our anger? What will happen to us if we do not deal with anger in a biblical manner?
- (d) Read Esther 4:16. What did she understand might be the outcome of obeying the Lord and doing what was right? What did Mordecai tell her that encouraged her to do what was right in the Lord’s sight (Esther 4:14)?
- (e) Compare this to Acts 5:29-41. What happened to the disciples? What did they conclude? How did God intervene in this situation? What did Gamaliel conclude in Acts 5:39? How should this comfort us when we face persecution?
- (f) *Family:* Read Esther 3-4 together. Discuss how we should handle difficult people. Will they always respond properly to us? What was Esther’s attitude? How does this attitude help us to overcome the fear of being persecuted? Pray together for suffering believers around the world. Pray that they will be able to stand in their faith just as the apostles did in Acts 5.

DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Esther 5-6.** What is Esther’s fear? How has she been strengthened to overcome this fear (Esther 4:16-17)?
- (b) Read Proverbs 16:18 and Proverbs 18:12. How is this proverb being worked out in Haman’s situation? What affect does pride have on our actions, especially our sinful actions?
- (c) Read Isaiah 57:15 and 1 Peter 5:5-7. What is God’s attitude toward the proud? How does He respond to the humble? What should we do in such difficult times (1 Peter 5:7)?
- (d) How does God in His providence intervene in Esther 6:1-11? What insignificant details were very essential to the divine plan of God to deliver Mordecai? What does this teach us about the hidden providence of God?
- (e) Read Psalm 121. Where does our help come from? What does God never do?
- (f) *Family:* Read Esther 5-6 together and discuss the affect that pride has on us. How does God respond to those who are proud? How does He respond to the humble? How do Haman and Mordecai fit into these categories and how does God work in each of them? Pray that you will begin to see the hidden providence of God in every event of life.

DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Esther 7-8.** What happens in these two chapters? How is the hidden providence of God revealed?
- (b) Read Proverbs 26:27. How was this proverb fulfilled in Haman’s situation?
- (c) How did God protect the Jews? Was this a miracle or the hidden providence of God? Which happens most often? Why is this important for us to understand?
- (d) Read Psalm 31:14-15. What confidence did the psalmist have? How can we have that same confidence (Romans 8:28-31)?
- (e) Read Daniel 4:34-35. What did Nebuchadnezzar learn about the sovereignty of God? What does Psalms 22:28 remind us?
- (f) *Family:* Read Esther 7-8. How did God protect the Jews from destruction? How does He protect us? Is His protection always physical? Read Psalm 31:14-15 and pray that you might be able to entrust your time into God’s hands too.

DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT**READ THE PASSAGE**

- (a) **Read Esther 9-10.** How are the Jews protected and delivered? How do the sovereignty of God and the actions of man work together?
- (b) Discuss the feast of Purim. What is it? When is it celebrated today? Why is it so important in the history of salvation?
- (c) Read Esther 10 and Genesis 41:39-43. What similarities do you see here? How is this also another instance of God protecting His people?
- (d) Read Psalm 37:7-13. What are we tempted to do when we are treated wrongly? Why should we trust in the Lord? What will the Lord do to those who seek to harm us? When will this take place?
- (e) Read Psalm 73:22-26. What foolish attitude had the psalmist taken regarding his struggles? What did he come to understand about God's hidden presence (verse 23)? How did that affect his outlook?
- (f) *Family:* Read Esther 9-10. Discuss how God has delivered His people throughout history. Why does He do this? How can this encourage us as believers? Read Psalm 73:22-26 and talk about the hidden providence of God. Pray that your eyes might be opened this week to see the ways God is working for His glory and for your good. Spend some time thanking Him for His perfect providence.

DAY 6 – ASK FOR INSIGHT**READ THE PASSAGE**

Think back through what you have learned each day this week. Read Psalm 121 and discuss the hidden providence of God. How is God revealed in the book of Esther? Pray for worship services tomorrow, that those who worship tomorrow might realize that God is present and that He is at work in human lives.

DATE: September 10, 2006

PASSAGE: Psalm 121

God's Hidden Providence
"My help comes from the Lord..."