

Devotional Calendar

APRIL 2020

Unit 11. God Promises a Just Kingdom

5th

Meditate: Psalm 98

Listen: "Lord, We Rejoice" by Darwin Hobbs
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IGzrygt-DUc>

Pray: Express to the Mighty God that You Rejoice in Him



19th

Meditate: Luke 19:11-26

Listen: "Celebrate the King" by Ricky Dillard
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4BFt7M7KUwE>

Pray: Express to God that He Is the King of Your Life



12th

Meditate: Isaiah 53:4-12

Listen: "Celebrate (He Lives)" by Fred Hammond
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XcplHtZzQe8>

Pray: Thank the Living God for All that He Has Done for You



26th

Meditate: Isaiah 42:1-9

Listen: "Your Spirit" by Tasha Cobbs Leonard (featuring Kierra Sheard)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BZT8jqsc8lQ>

Pray: Ask the Lord to Bring Justice across Our Nation by His Spirit



How to Do a Devotional

Daily devotionals are important to help you grow in your relationship with God. Pray, meditate, and read the Word of God, and you will grow spiritually. Devote ten minutes at the beginning of your day to clear your mind and heart and prepare to receive God. Daily devotions will prepare you for any obstacles that may come your way. Take time each morning to hear from God. Even Jesus used time in the morning to be with God. "Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed" (Mark 1:35, NIV).

Background Scripture: Esther 3; 5; 7 • Print Passage: Esther 7:1-10

KEY VERSE: Queen Esther answered, “If I have found favor with you, Your Majesty, and if it pleases you, grant me my life—this is my petition. And spare my people—this is my request.” (Esther 7:3)



Kendrick is a four-hundred-meter, star sprinter for his middle school track team. Last year, as a seventh grader, Kendrick was in trouble all the time. He frequently provoked fights with others and rarely even attempted to finish his schoolwork. Kendrick was angry most of the time and the people who hung out with him seemed to be his friends only because they were afraid not to be.

At the end of the seventh-grade year, Kendrick was invited by one of the track coaches to try out for the school team. Kendrick did like to run, so he accepted the coach's offer. During the tryouts, everyone was impressed with Kendrick's speed and natural running abilities. Kendrick even surprised himself. For the first time in a long time, Kendrick felt good about himself and that good feeling helped him

to make some very positive changes in his life.

A student at Kendrick's school was gaining a reputation for being a troublemaker. Most of the kids stayed away from Montie because he was quick-tempered. He often bragged about getting into fights. When Kendrick looked at Montie, he remembered how he used to act before he joined the track team. One day, Kendrick decided to talk to Montie.

“Hey, man, you got any speed?” Kendrick asked.

Montie replied, “I got enough speed to beat you. What's up, then?”

Kendrick said, “Hey, calm down. Why don't you put that speed to good use and join the track team?”

Montie said, “Man, Coach Thomas is not going to let me on the team. He does not like me.”

“We need you, man. Let me talk



to him,” Kendrick said. Later that afternoon, Kendrick talked to the coach about adding Montie to the team. Kendrick reminded the coach that he was just like Montie a year ago. Coach Thomas had coached Montie's older brothers and agreed to give Montie a chance on the team.

Coach Thomas said, “I am proud of you, Kendrick, for standing up for Montie. Well done!”



WORD UP

Esther 7:1-10

1 So the king and Haman went to Queen Esther's banquet, 2 and as they were drinking wine on the second day, the king again asked, “Queen Esther, what is your petition? It will be given you. What is your request? Even up to half the kingdom, it will be granted.” 3 Then Queen Esther answered, “If I have found favor with you, Your Majesty, and if it pleases you, grant me my life—this is my petition. And spare my people—this is my request. 4 For I and my people have been sold to be destroyed, killed and annihilated. If we had merely been sold as male and female slaves, I would have kept quiet, because no such distress would justify disturbing the king.” 5 King Xerxes asked Queen Esther, “Who is he? Where is he—the man who has dared to do such a thing?” 6 Esther said, “An adversary and enemy! This vile Haman!” Then Haman was terrified before the king and queen. 7 The king got up in a rage, left his wine and went out into the palace garden. But Haman, realizing that the king had already decided his fate, stayed behind to beg Queen Esther for his life. 8 Just as the king returned from the palace garden to the banquet hall, Haman was falling on the couch where Esther was reclining. The king exclaimed, “Will he even molest the queen while she is with me in the house?” As soon as the word left the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face. 9 Then Harbona, one of the eunuchs attending the king, said, “A pole reaching to a height of fifty cubits stands by Haman's house. He had it set up for Mordecai, who spoke up to help the king.” The king said, “Impale him on it!” 10 So they impaled Haman on the pole he had set up for Mordecai. Then the king's fury subsided.



Today's lesson features King Xerxes, Queen Esther, Mordecai, and Haman. In the Background Scripture, after King Xerxes's first wife, Vashti, was removed from her position as queen for refusing an order from her husband, Esther was selected to become the new queen. Mordecai was Esther's cousin. He held a high government position among the Jewish people. Haman was the king's right-hand man. He was boastful and evil. One day, Haman commanded Mordecai to bow down before him. Mordecai refused, which made Haman so angry that he vowed to kill Mordecai and all the Jews. Haman developed a plan to persuade the king to sign a new law that would

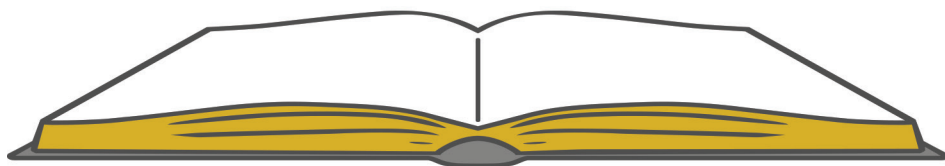
authorize the killing of all the Jews. Mordecai told Esther about this cruel plan and asked her to tell the king about her Jewish ancestry and to ask for his help in blocking Haman's wicked plan. Esther fasted and prayed to gain courage to go before the king

with her request.

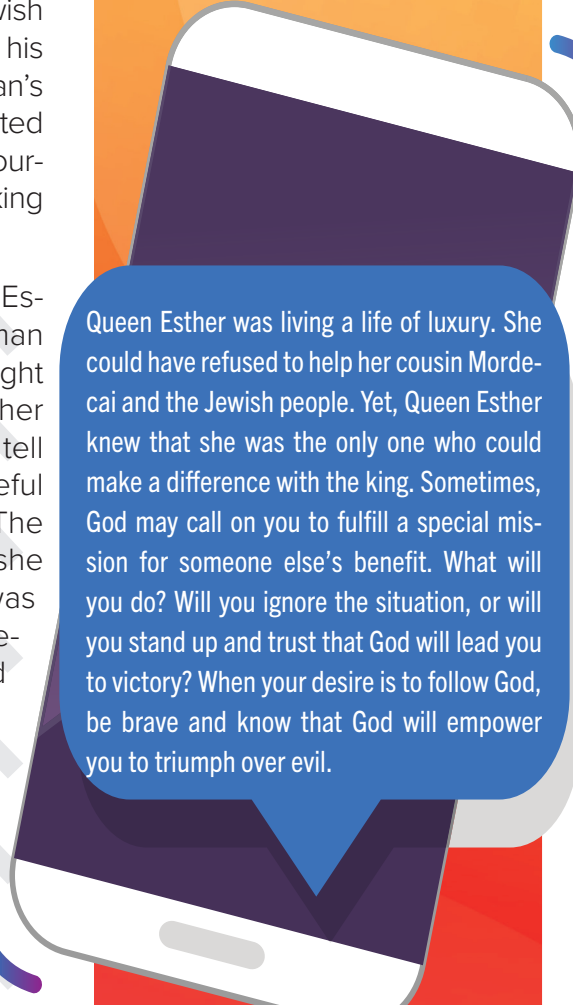
In today's Scripture passage, Esther invited the king and Haman to two banquets. Haman thought he was to be honored, but Esther was only building a plan to tell the king about Haman's hateful plan to destroy the Jews. The king loved Esther, so when she told him about what Haman was planning to do, the king believed her. The king ordered that Haman be hanged on the same gallows that he built for Mordecai's hanging. Esther's bravery and favor with the king saved her and her people from being destroyed.

INSIDE OUT

Chances are you have probably encountered a situation before when you needed courage to stand for justice on someone else's behalf. It is not always easy to know what to do in cases when you must prove your point or let others know the truth about a situation. In times like these, call on God to help you. Believers never have to worry about fighting life's battles alone. God is a constant and present help in difficult, troubling times.



There's an App for That!



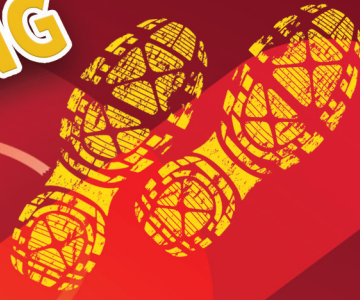
Queen Esther was living a life of luxury. She could have refused to help her cousin Mordecai and the Jewish people. Yet, Queen Esther knew that she was the only one who could make a difference with the king. Sometimes, God may call on you to fulfill a special mission for someone else's benefit. What will you do? Will you ignore the situation, or will you stand up and trust that God will lead you to victory? When your desire is to follow God, be brave and know that God will empower you to triumph over evil.



Walk Out

Queen Esther found favor with the king because of their personal, loving relationship. When you have positive relationships with others, people are willing to stick up for you in times of trouble or despair. Pray and ask God to help you to be a good friend to others, so you can count on others to be a good friend to you.

STEPPING OUT!



When Queen Esther decided to talk to the king, she waited and found the right time and method through which to express her concerns. Think of a time when you had a problem. Did you react quickly without thinking through the problem? Vow to follow these steps whenever you must confront a difficult person or problem: (1) stop; (2) pray; (3) listen; and then (4) react. Sometimes, just taking some time to think about the situation will lead you to a better outcome.

It's Game Time!

Play the game “Practicing Justice.” Below, write down three ways in which you can stand up for justice by helping people in your community who may have a special need. (For example, “I can donate gently used clothes to a community agency that collects clothes for the less fortunate.”) Write down your ideas and then decide how you will accomplish each goal.

Idea #1 _____

Idea #2 _____

Idea #3 _____

Media Mission

JustServe is a service where organizations can post their volunteer needs and volunteers may find opportunities to serve others, help the needy, and enhance the quality of community life. Visit <https://www.justserve.org/about> and learn how you might assist others in your community. Happy serving!

