

The Sovereign: Episode 4 Discussion Guide



Read Together

We're in a series called *The Sovereign: An 8-Episode Series on God, Esther, and the Rest of Us*. It's the story of young Jew, exiled from her homeland, wrestling with her identity as she rises from orphan nobody to Persian royalty—just in time to save her people from genocide.

- Can anyone recap the story so far in less than two minutes?
 - Episode 1: “The Refusal” (Esther 1:1-22)
 - Episode 2: “The Contest” (Esther 2:1-18)
 - Episode 3: “The Letter” (Esther 2:19-3:15)

This week, we're in Episode 4: “The Awakening” (Esther 4:1-5:8).

- **Can someone read this week's episode for us?**
- When we're finished, **can some recap (or paraphrase) the episode in your own words?** If you miss a few details or leave anything out, the rest of the group can jump in at the end.

Discuss Together

It's okay if you don't get through all the questions. As discussion leader, your job is to follow the lead of the Holy Spirit and facilitate a conversation that leads people toward everyday life like Jesus. Feel free to add additional questions of your own. If you have a big group, it can be helpful to discuss some questions in groups of 2-3 before opening it up to the whole group.

- **What is something that struck you from an initial reading of the text?**
- In Esther 4:1-3, we see Mordecai's response to the letter about the destruction of the Jews. **How might you respond if you saw a letter like this one—threatening to destroy you and anyone else like you just because of who you are?**
 - **What are some ways you've seen other groups respond when they've been affected by a profound injustice?**
- Esther goes through a few stages of responding to Mordecai's cry for help. **What are the stages of Esther's response to Mordecai?**

- First, she tries to ignore it by sending Mordecai some clothes to quiet him (4:4). **What are some reasons it's easier to just *ignore* an injustice someone (or a whole community) is experiencing?**
- Second, she makes excuses for why she can't help (4:10-11). **What are some of the excuses she makes? Do these seem valid? What are some reasons we make excuses instead of doing something?**
- Finally, Esther agrees to help after a final plea from Mordecai (4:12-13). She's only the one in a position of influence to do anything about it.
 - **What are some things you notice about Mordecai's final plea to Esther?**
 - **What about this do you think pushed Esther over the edge?**
- The phrase "for such a time of this" (4:13) is the most famous line in Esther. It's a reminder that God can providentially create moments in our lives that require us to take action.
 - **How would keeping that in mind change how you approach everyday life?**
 - **Do you have a "for such a time as this" moment in your life?**
- On Sunday, Pastor Dennis Allan encouraged us to see ourselves not in the "hero" of the story but in the people in need of being rescued.
 - **How is our *spiritual* condition similar to that of the Jewish people in this story? (In other words, what's the spiritual problem we were facing and in need of a rescuer?)**
 - **How is Jesus like Esther but even better?**
- **What other questions or thoughts do you have from this week's episode?**

Pray Together