**Listening Guide**

**Esther…a heart that waits**

**Esther’s Story:**

* Takes place somewhere between 483 - 473 B.C., when most Jews were living in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, rather than Jerusalem.
* Esther’s story is found in an Old Testament book, which bears her name.
* Theme of the book of Esther is the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of God - “The means by which God directs all things-both animate and inanimate; seen and unseen; good and evil – toward a worthy purpose, which means His will must ultimately prevail—the way God is directing the universe and moving it toward tomorrow.”
* Romans 8:28 (Amplified Version) - “And we know [with great confidence] that God [who is deeply concerned about us] causes all things to work together [as a plan] for good for those who love God, to those who are called according to His plan *and* purpose.”
* Esther was a Jewish woman, who was forced into the harem of King Xerxes and eventually selected to be his queen.
* When Haman becomes outraged at Mordecai (a Jew), Haman \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the king and a decree to kill every Jew in the land is issued.
* Esther, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for God’s timing, risks being killed to inform the king of the plot.
* Eventually, Haman’s plan is uncovered, the king issues a new order which saves the Jews, and Haman and his family are executed.

**Esther’s Character:**

* When Esther learns of the plan to kill all the Jews, she asks all to join her in a three-day fast.
* Demonstrates faith to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the Lord, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Him to answer, and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for His guidance before responding.
* Rather than reacting, Esther \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ with the wisdom she received from the Lord.
* Lessons from Esther:
	+ We should take our fears, concerns and problems before the Lord \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
		- Often we go to family or friends first because we are looking to satisfy the need for an \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ solution.
		- Immediate answers rarely consider the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
		- Jeremiah 29:11
	+ After seeking God, put \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to your faith.
		- In Godly wisdom, Esther responded to her circumstances and stepped out in faith.
		- Make yourself \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to God’s plan.
	+ Be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_in waiting for proper timing.
		- Four things that happen when we wait (Isaiah 40:31):

 1. We gain \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ strength.

 2. We get \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ perspective – we rise above our problems and

 see things from a higher perspective – a Godly one.

 3. We store up \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ energy.

* We aren’t exhausted working in our own strength.
* Trying to manipulate outcomes can be exhausting.
* Waiting for God to work brings \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

 4. We deepen our determination to persevere.

* When we wait, we learn that God is in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**Waiting on the Lord:**

* Life is filled with sustained periods of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
	+ God’s times of silence are just as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ as when He speaks.
	+ Listen for His voice.
	+ God is at work in you – whether you feel Him or not.
* The turning points of life, the significant events, are often subtle.
	+ God’s silence doesn’t mean \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
* God’s silences:
1. He is very \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in the way that He works in your life.
	* Wait on Him to show you His answers and give you His wisdom.
2. The workings of God are not related to our \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_; they are related to our \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
* Keep focused on the Lord because we panic when we lose sight of His promises, His presence and His power.

 3. As we wait, the temptation is to doubt or to deny that He is at work.

* “There is not pit so deep but that He is not deeper still. There is no heart so hard that He cannot change it. There is not writing so permanent that He cannot erase it. There is not scene so dark that He cannot brighten it.” - Betsie ten Boom

**Application:**

* When difficult events of life come, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ on the Lord before getting involved.
* When dealing with an unpredictable person, count on the Lord to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ doors and hearts.
* When working through an unpleasant situation, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the Lord for enduring patience.
	+ Don’t react in emotion, respond in Godly wisdom.
* When standing against an unprincipled enemy, ask the Lord for invincible \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
* We are like Queen Esther:
	+ Arrayed in white robes of righteousness
	+ Invited into the presence of God because He finds you holy and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
		- Not conditional on what we have done
		- Unconditional love and acceptance based upon His grace
* Hebrews 4:16
* When things seem to be spinning out of control, the question is not “is God in control of the world?” but “is God in control of my \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_?”
* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and give Him complete control of your life.
* “Esther’s path of wisdom can be yours too. Nowhere in the ten chapters of Esther’s story will you find anger or agitation, violence or panic, brashness, or reaction. Esther knew that out-of-control emotions do not accomplish God’s will….Relying on God’s wisdom enables you and Him together to accomplish His will in His way.” Elizabeth George

A Heart After God

“Esther – a heart that waits”

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