

# ESTHER: A WOMAN OF STRENGTH AND DIGNITY

## Esther's Finest Hour

Esther 5

# SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

STUDY



### LET'S BEGIN HERE

Without warning, life sometimes prods us down a path that forks into two roads. Even though both choices appear to end with a cliff, we're forced to choose because time doesn't stop. When this happens, all we can do is wait on the Lord, seek His face, and proceed in faith.

If you're going through difficult situations, Isaiah recorded several promises for you:

*Yet those who wait for the LORD  
Will gain new strength;  
They will mount up with wings like eagles,  
They will run and not get tired,  
They will walk and not become weary.* (Isaiah 40:31 NASB)

Do you see the four promises in this passage? God will give us new strength, a better perspective, greater energy, and a determination to persevere. Esther needed these promises, so she turned to the Lord and received them. Let's explore Esther 5 with Chuck Swindoll and learn from Esther's example in order that we, too, may turn to the Lord during the trials of life.



### YOUR TURN IN THE SCRIPTURES

Before delving into our study today, you may want to refresh your memory of the book of Esther by perusing our brief [introduction](#) to the book and glancing at Insight for Living Ministries' overview chart.

Proverbs teaches us wisdom to help us navigate the vicissitudes of our years. It says,

*Trust in the LORD with all your heart;  
do not depend on your own understanding.  
Seek his will in all you do,  
and he will show you which path to take.* (Proverbs 3:5–6)

## Quotable

*When you wait on  
the Lord, it doesn't  
mean that you do  
weird things.*

*You go on with your  
activities focusing  
more fully on  
the Lord.*

— Charles R. Swindoll



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Record a prayer in response to this passage requesting God's Spirit to provide you wisdom and strength through this study.



### Observation

Chuck's four-step Bible study method begins with observation. Observation does not necessitate a sophisticated college degree nor a Sherlock Holmes aptitude for deduction. Observation merely requires that we slowly examine what the text says, reading the lines rather than reading *between* the lines.

With that in mind, take a moment to concentrate on the words of Esther 5. Read the passage a few times, and write down components that strike you as important. Look for the who, what, where, when, why, and how of the passage.

What did Esther's requests contain that indicate her deference to the king (*Esther 5:4, 7–8*)?

How did Mordecai express his displeasure with Haman, and how did Haman let this pique his pride?



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What did Haman's wife Zeresh and Haman's friends counsel him to do?



### Interpretation

During interpretation, we move beyond the words of the text to discern the author's meaning. Because the Bible is a book about God and God's ways, we must examine how He worked in the past to know how He works today.

#### A Calm Yet Wise Plan—Esther 5:1–8

Notice the text says, "On the third day of the fast" (Esther 5:1). On that day, Esther didn't procrastinate in fear, nor did she waiver in doubt. She coupled her prayer with action. Based on Esther 5:4, what do you imagine Esther did during the three-day fast prior to her meeting with the king?

In this passage, how did Esther display patience before making her request of the king (5:1–4)?

While drinking wine at the banquet with Haman and King Ahasuerus, how did Esther display self-control (5:5–8)?



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*Esther 5*

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Imagine sitting across from the man who wants to pilfer and eliminate your entire race. With poise resulting from her repose in God, Esther ate her meal and engaged in conversation before Haman and the king. She awaited the right time to reveal Haman's diabolical plan. Her dependence upon God gave her the wisdom to determine the right time to make her request and strengthened her with unyielding self-control in the presence of an enemy. What God did for her, He can do for you.

### A Proud and Sinister Response—Esther 5:9–14

Haman's swollen pride required all to serve him in fear—just one snub popped his egotistic balloon right after the banquet with Esther and Ahasuerus. How did the author of Esther build tension and elevate urgency for God's intervention in Esther 5:9–14?

Haman and Esther, in Esther 5:1–14, exemplify two contrasting character traits: pride and humility. How does faith in God promote humility like Esther's? How does a lack of belief in God demonstrate pride like Haman's?



### Correlation

During correlation we compare the truths of our passage with other biblical passages to expand our understanding. Passages connect when they speak on a similar topic—whether historical (like Israel's exile), theological (like God's mercy), or practical (like how we handle money).



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### *Esther 5*

Our text focuses primarily upon God's sovereign work for the good of His people—as seen in Esther's patience and trust in Him. Slowly read and meditate on Psalm 121, a psalm about God's sovereignty and care for His people.

*I look up to the mountains—  
does my help come from there?  
My help comes from the LORD,  
who made heaven and earth!  
He will not let you stumble;  
the one who watches over you will not slumber.  
Indeed, he who watches over Israel  
never slumbers or sleeps.  
The LORD himself watches over you!  
The LORD stands beside you as your protective shade.  
The sun will not harm you by day,  
nor the moon at night.  
The LORD keeps you from all harm  
and watches over your life.  
The LORD keeps watch over you as you come and go,  
both now and forever. (Psalm 121)*

Can you imagine Esther affirming this psalm after she approached the king and lived? After reflecting on Esther 5 and Psalm 121, write a statement in your own words defining God's sovereignty as it relates to you personally.



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### Application

During the last step of Chuck's Bible study method, application, we incorporate into our lives the truths we've learned so that we might think and live differently. Chuck has provided four excellent principles to help us use the truths from Esther 5 in all seasons of life:

1. *When preparing for an unprecedented event, wait on the Lord before getting involved.*
2. *When dealing with an unpredictable person, count on the Lord to open doors.*
3. *When working through an unpleasant situation, trust the Lord for enduring patience.*
4. *When standing against an unprincipled enemy, ask the Lord for invincible courage.*

Which principle is most important to you in your current season of life? Take a moment to describe how you would like to implement that principle. What kind of doors would the Lord need to open? Or what would it look like if you demonstrated invincible courage? Remember to be specific—specificity is the first step toward clarity and action when accomplishing what God commands and believing what God promises.

Do you know someone—a friend or family member—who's going through one of the situations mentioned above? Take a moment to write a prayer for that person. You may even share Psalm 121 in a letter or e-mail, expressing how you're praying for him or her.

### A FINAL PRAYER

*Father, thank You for taking care of the unknowns in my life. I confess that I want to control everything, and I ask that the vice grip of anxiety and worry on my heart would loosen that I may rest well. I know You're working in countless places because this world is about Your glory and Your purposes rather than me and my wants. Only You can give me the peace and faith I seek, so I humbly ask for those things. I pray this in the strong name of Jesus, amen.*



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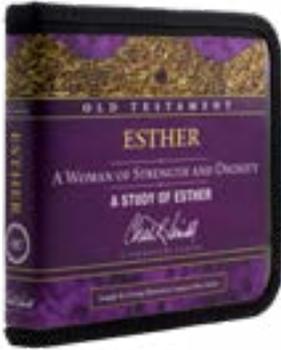
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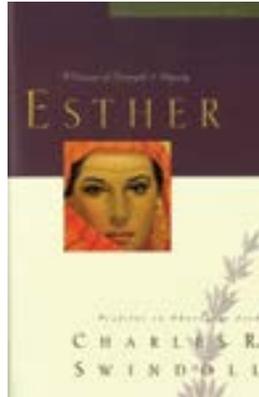
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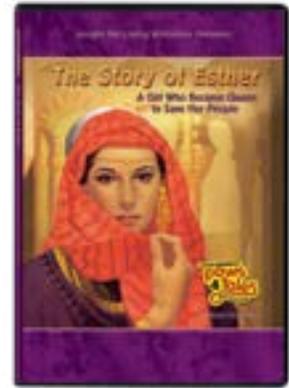
### Tools for Digging Deeper



**Esther: A Woman of Strength and Dignity**  
by Charles R. Swindoll  
CD series



**Esther: A Woman of Strength and Dignity**  
by Charles R. Swindoll  
Softcover book



**The Story of Esther: A Girl Who Became Queen to Save Her People**  
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For the 2018 broadcast, this *Searching the Scriptures* study was developed by Aaron Massey in collaboration with Bryce Klabunde, executive vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and sermon transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages.



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