

New Start

Esther



Small Group Study, week commencing 15th January 2024

For starters

On a scale of 1-10 (where 10=*extremely adaptable* and 1=*completely set in my ways*), how adaptable would you say you are? Do we become less adaptable with age, or is that an urban myth?

Introduction

We don't always start something new by choice. There are times when a new start is forced upon us, and it can be something that causes us joy (for example, you have been made redundant with a great redundancy package from a job you were keen to leave) or something that causes us pain (for example, the death of a partner). However, we might feel about the forced new start, it is likely to require some change of us to adapt to the new situation.

Esther is known as the woman who went from obscurity to become the queen of King Xerxes. Even today, Jews celebrate the two-day festival of Purim (Esther 9:26) which commemorates her part in averting a national disaster. This study prompts us to think about her ability to adapt to her sudden change in circumstances.

Read

[Esther 2:1-18.](#)

Study

1. Have you ever been forced to make a dramatic new start? What was it? How did you feel?

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2. How do you imagine Esther felt in these circumstances:

- (a) being taken to the king's palace (verse 8)?
- (b) during her year of preparation (verse 12)?
- (c) on being chosen to be queen (verse 17)?

3. What advice did Esther follow in preparing for her "interview" with the king (verses 10,15)?

Whatever her feelings must have been at the start of the process, it is clear that having been 'taken to the king's palace' she wanted to succeed in this new opportunity, because she took advice from the right people (in this instance, her family and her 'employer').

4. How good are you at (a) asking for advice? (b) taking advice? Where do you go for good advice?

5. Read [Proverbs 15:22-33](#). What do these verses have to teach us about advice and wisdom?

6. Esther's transition from orphan to queen was remarkable, but just as remarkable perhaps is her successful adaptation to her new role, as the rest of the book bears out that she flourished and proved herself to be wise and influential. How can we develop a mindset that is "up for change" and ready to adapt to unforeseen circumstances?

Pray

Think about any new circumstances you are aware of that are facing you, your family and friends, or the church. Pray for the people involved in those circumstances, that they will seek and receive good advice, and adapt well to the change.

"Christ Jesus ... has become for us wisdom from God" (1 Corinthians 1:30).