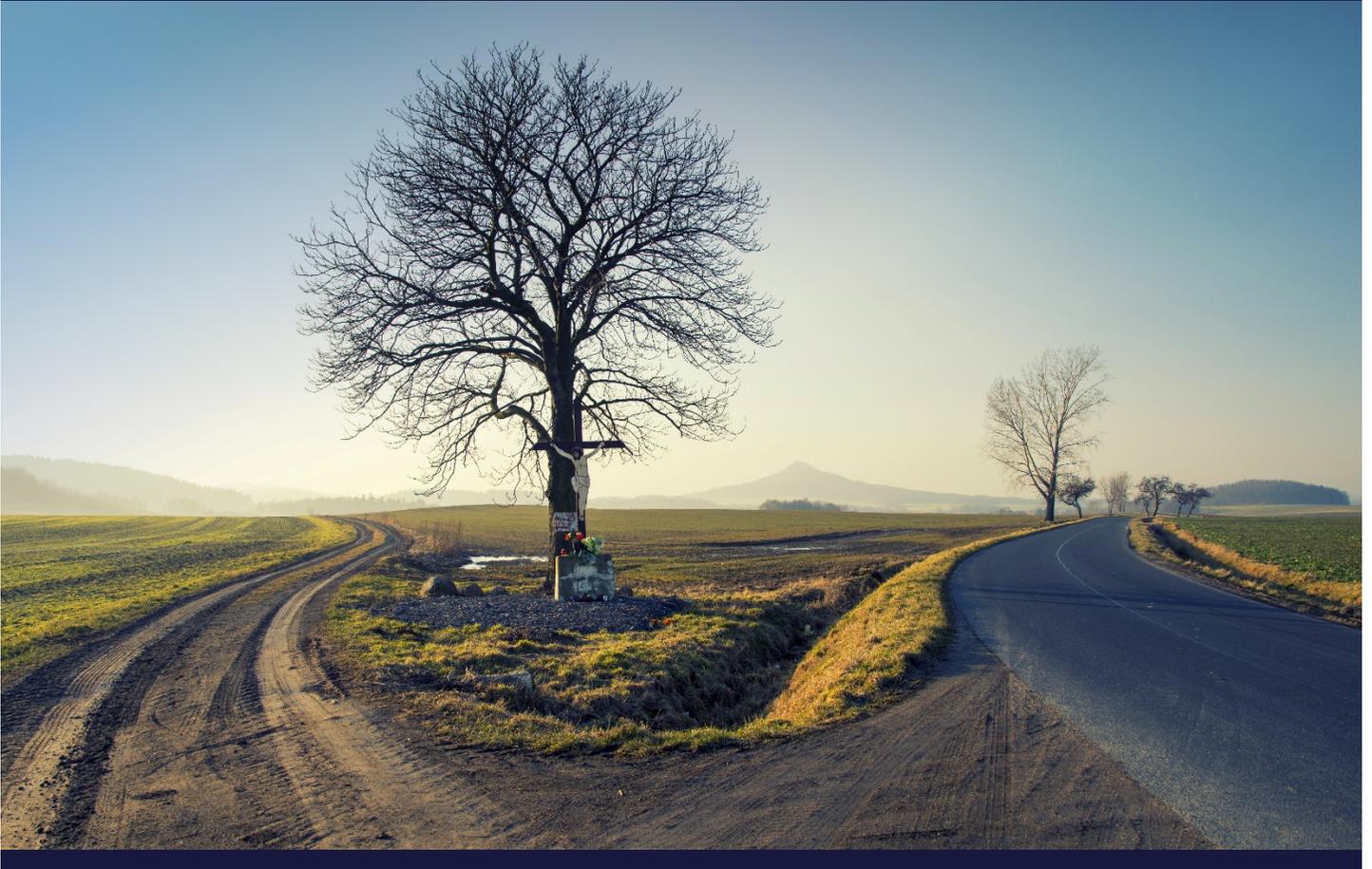




Curriculum



SAMPLE ***Esther: Fulfilling Life's Mission***

With Clarity
With Courage
By Overcoming
In Faithfulness

A sample study from the Esther volume begins on the following page.



LEARN: Overview

Biblical Business Training (“BBT”) equips people to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ and empowers leaders in a small-group Bible study setting to apply Biblical principles at work. Our mission is [Faith for Work](#) – and our vision is [Leadership for Life!](#)

To find out more, visit www.B-B-T.org.



Curriculum: The *BBT 1-2-3™* Format

BBT curriculum is rooted in Scripture and applicable the day you study it. The *BBT 1-2-3™* format enables the group to have a consistent Biblical basis for discussion.



1 Agenda – Introduces applicable Biblical principles



2 Group Leader Guide – Facilitates discussion and allows for shared leadership



3 Recap – Encourages community and application



LIVE: Sample Esther

Have you ever wondered if God is really involved in the circumstances of your life? We all know what it feels like to be terrified to speak up for what we believe in, to be at a cross-road of decision making. It may mean sacrificing our pride, our reputation, or creature comforts, but it may also mean playing a role in God's mission. God will accomplish His plans, but if we listen and recognize, we can have the privilege of being part of His plan.

Volume includes:

1. **With Clarity**
2. **With Courage**
3. **By Overcoming**
4. **In Faithfulness**

No book is needed.



LEAD: Start a small-group Bible study

Start leading today! [Learn more.](#)



PRAYERS



LEARN

The Flounder

We will flounder without a clear mission for life. John Ortberg shares this story: Some time ago, I went on a retreat and one of the topics was how we are all created for a mission; everybody was made for a reason, for a purpose, but if we don't embrace that purpose, we have what one speaker called a shadow mission. We're made for a mission, but the danger is that, on default mode, we're tempted to let our lives center around something self-serving. One of the guys who had thought about this a lot said that his shadow mission was to watch TV and engage in a destructive, addictive habit while the world goes to hell. And he put this in kind of raw language, and the guys laughed nervously when he said it. And I'll never forget this; he said: "Now I'm going to say this one more time, only this time nobody laughs. My shadow mission is to watch TV and engage in this habit." And we all sat there, struck by what a sad thing it is that life can easily deteriorate into the pursuit of a shadow mission. We were made for a mission, but we all have this temptation of a shadow mission. The Book of Esther is a story of characters given a choice – numbers of them – between a mission and a shadow mission. And people choose, and destinies get forged, and the world gets changed.

The girl

The story of Esther takes place during the reign of King Xerxes (Ahasuerus) of the Persian Empire, who ruled the area from what is now India to the northeast portion of Africa, including the Middle East and Egypt. This showy, ostentatious king we find has no strength of spirit at all. Enter by circumstance a young Jewish orphan girl plucked from living in exile to living in the splendor of Persian wealth and becoming the king's wife. Her common Jewish values of modesty and restraint are directly opposed to this pagan king's boastful pride.

The God

Although much is implied about the sovereign authority of God in the book of Esther, it is the only book in the Old Testament that never actually mentions the word, "God". Yet, He is still the main character. Have you ever wondered if God is really involved in the circumstances of your life? If so, you may wonder why life is such a struggle. This book demonstrates how God works in the lives of His people even in exile – no Jerusalem, no temple, no Sanhedrin – unseen, unknown, unnamed; and in unlikely ways – in dangers, on crosses, in carpools, in cubicles. God is present everywhere and He is at work for you, just as He was for Esther.



LIVE

Discussion questions: Read the text and scriptures below, and prepare to answer the questions.

1. Read [Esther 1:1-9](#). What observations can you make about Xerxes' leadership?
2. Read [Esther 1:10-12](#). What strikes you about the behavior of the king and queen?
3. Read [Esther 1:13-22](#). What is the motivation behind King Xerxes response and that of his advisors?
4. Contrast this king with your eternal King, Jesus. How does this compare to what God asks you to do?

Application Question: How will you keep from getting side-tracked by a shadow mission?



PRAYERS

Prayer Requests & Closing Prayer



PRAYERS

Opening Prayer & Prayer Requests



LEARN

Before you begin, read the AGENDA LEARN introduction together and review the APPLICATION QUESTION from the previous meeting's RECAP.



LIVE

Discussion Questions: Have someone read each Bible verse aloud and then ask the corresponding question. Be sure everyone has enough time to find the Scripture before the verse is read.

1) Read [Esther 1:1-9](#). What observations can you make about Xerxes' leadership?



King Xerxes was vain, self-indulgent, intimidating, controlling and impulsive.



The first time we meet King Xerxes is at a banquet displaying his immense power and wealth. There are three banquets mentioned just in these first few verses of the book. The banquets were held to show his nobles, officials and even the common people that his future efforts to wage war and gain additional wealth and power would not be a problem. They were planning banquet strategies, indulging themselves and it even mentions drinking to excess. Notice the author's words of the banquet scene – "vast wealth... splendor and glory of his majesty" and the descriptions of the opulent couches, pillars, and goblets.



Facilitate a brief discussion. You might ask, "When have you felt that your value or dignity was threatened by someone with greater power than you? How do you handle it?"

Notes:

2) Read [Esther 1:10-12](#). What strikes you about the behavior of the king and queen?



The king and his court were displaying values of vanity and drunkenness, yet the queen was trying to hold fast to Persian customs of modesty and restraint.



King Xerxes had been showing off all his possessions and now he wanted to show off his beautiful wife. However, his rash request based on selfish desire placed queen Vashti in a difficult position. It was against Persian custom for a woman to appear at a public gathering of men. Yet the king, also her husband, is making this request of her. She courageously stood by her values and maintained the customary restraint.



Facilitate a brief discussion. You might ask, "When have you experienced a conflict of values in your workplace? How did you respond?"

Notes:

3) Read [Esther 1:13-22](#). What is the motivation behind King Xerxes response and that of his advisors?



Motivated by his shadow mission, the king is completely derailed and seeks council that will ultimately confirm what he already believes rather than thoughtfully stopping to consider if he acted rightly.



Queen Vashti's refusal to compromise on her values threatened to expose to everyone how lost the king had become in his shadow mission. His advisers did not contradict him and maintained that the queen's behavior would cause all women to disrespect their husbands. They advised that a law must be made to send a message and have her replaced. Maybe, they too were just as lost in a shadow mission of advancing their position in the kingdom. Maybe they were afraid of repercussion because of the king's anger, or they too may have been motivated by a desire for respect and authority.



Facilitate a brief discussion: Queen Vashti's decision to disobey the king led to a new decree in the kingdom. You might ask, "Have you ever been involved in an organization with whose direction or policies you did not agree? How did you respond?"

Notes:

4) Contrast this king with your eternal King, Jesus. How does this compare to what God asks you to do?



When you have experienced the grace, forgiveness, mercy and unconditional love of the Father, you want to fulfill His mission for your life.



Our lives are aimless without a mission and can lead to shadow missions that entertain or numb ourselves. This may lead to damaging relationships, forgetting our responsibilities, and missing out on doing anything meaningful, even for God.



Consider how God made you, gifted you and created you for so much more. Take time to think, pray and share what your overall mission might be.

Notes:

Application Question: How will you keep from getting side-tracked by a shadow mission?



PRAYERS

Prayer Requests & Closing Prayer



LEAD

Ask Yourself: How has God gifted me to carry out a mission for Him and what distracts me from it?



PRAYERS

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LEARN

Esther and Vashti both clung to their values instead of the ever-shifting values of Xerxes and his court. Xerxes let his emotions and temper rule over him, ensuring that he could not keep to his mission, but was constantly distracted by the shadow mission of showing off his wealth and opulence. Xerxes is a weak and poor king because he sees the trappings of his royal position but does not understand his position.

Scripture References for this study: [Esther chapter 1](#)



LIVE

- Clarity in values
- Clarity in decisions
- Clarity in position

Application Question: How will you keep from getting side-tracked by a shadow mission?



LEAD

Ask Yourself: How has God lifted me up to carry out a mission for Him and what distracts me from it?

Sample