

FEBRUARY 2024



Bible Study | Faith in Action

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Prepare

- Bible
- Journal
- Pen/pencil

Get Started

What does being courageous mean?

We may think being courageous means we do not feel fear, but courage does not always come with a lack of fear. In fact, it's quite the opposite. Being courageous involves taking action while feeling fear.

Esther is someone who embodied courage. Her story is a prime example of how God worked in the lives of His people then and works in believers' lives now. As you study Esther's life, reflect on the ways God is asking you to step out in faith and be courageous in your life.

Study and Learn

Read Esther 1–3.

Esther lived during the reign of King Xerxes (or King Ahasuerus as you will sometimes see him called) of Persia. The events in these chapters take place shortly after the Babylonian exile, and the Jewish people have begun to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem. Esther was raised by Mordecai, a family member who adopted her and raised her as his daughter after her parents died. Esther was a young woman of exceptional beauty. She was brought to the palace after the previous queen, Queen Vashti, was banished. Out of all the young women there, she became favored and was selected as queen.

Esther had a Jewish heritage, and Mordecai advised her to tell no one because he knew it could potentially put her in danger with the king. As we keep reading in Scripture, we see why Mordecai wanted Esther to keep this secret. One of the king's advisors devises a plan to exterminate the Jews, and Esther soon becomes her people's only hope.

Read Esther 4:1–17.

This moment was a matter of life and death for Esther. She did not know how the king would react to her request, but she was willing to fight for her people even though she was unsure what the result of her actions would be.

God brought Esther to her royal position at this exact time for this moment. She was ready and willing to accept the outcome, whatever it may be. She embodied courageousness.

At the end of Esther's story, the king grants Esther's request and decrees a new edict that saves the Jewish people. Mordecai becomes a favored and trusted ally for the king, Esther exposes the evil advisor's plot, and the king has him executed. God had not only a plan for Esther but a plan for all His people, and He saved them through her. She courageously surrendered to that plan and moved forward in faith.

Apply

Perhaps God has put something on your heart to do for Him. Are you afraid to take the next step because you do not know the outcome? When you are walking in God's direction, He will equip you one step at a time.

- What would being courageous at this time in your life look like?
- What does being made for such a time as this mean for you?

Follow Up

Read the rest of Esther's story (chapters 5–10). Notice the many ways Esther was courageous.

- What is holding you back from doing what God has asked you to do?
Spend some time with God reflecting on this and praying about your next right steps to take in faith.

Commit to Memory

Verse: **Esther 4:14**

Challenge: **Esther 4:12–16**

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Martha has an autoimmune disease. She lives by herself, and cooking meals for one is difficult. Her back and legs hurt when she stands in the kitchen for more than a short time. Most of her meals are now warmed-up cans of soup, cheese, and peanut butter crackers.

Every community has men and women similar to Martha. They may be elderly, living with a disease or disability, or otherwise struggling to cope with the physical and mental task of meal planning. They can also often be lonely and in need of someone to spend time with them. Consider how your myMISSION group could impact someone's life by establishing a meal delivery day.

Determine the need.

Consider what your group could handle. This may mean helping one individual or a small group of individuals. If a weekly meal is more than your group could handle, set up a monthly or twice-a-month schedule. Then connect with the person in need of assistance. Does someone in your church you already know need support? Or maybe someone in your church knows of a member of the community who needs help. Compile a list of those individuals, and contact them to make sure they are willing to accept meal deliveries. Also ask about any food allergies and limitations your group should be aware of.

Plan meals.

Brainstorm healthy and delicious meal options that meet all dietary restrictions. If you are serving more than one person, look for recipes that make abundant amounts to share among those being served, like barbecue, chili, chicken and rice casserole, or meatloaf. If your church serves Wednesday night dinners, your group could easily coordinate to provide meals from your weekly church menu.

Establish a delivery plan.

Plan for at least two people to deliver to each person, if possible. One person can drive, and the other can hold and

manage the food. Be sure the individual knows when to expect you.

Give more than food.

When deliveries are made, give more than just food. Spend time with each person. You may be the only people they talk to all day. Listen to them. Find out whether they have other needs. Share your life with them. Pray with them.

Continue to serve.

Make a commitment to continue to serve and create lasting relationships. Provide special meals and treats for birthdays and holidays. Each person is more than just a need to be met—all of these people are dynamic individuals with purpose and a place in God's plan.

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