CONNECT GROUP STUDY

As we continue to follow Esther's story, we see that she "won favor" with everyone around her. This was not only due to her personality and gifts; it was part of the plan of God to save his people.

Connect:

Do you have any funny or unique people-skills that you can share with the group?

Explore:

In three different places in the book of Esther (Est 2:8-9; 2:25; 2:17-18) the Bible says that Esther found favor with people. What was it about Esther that helped her to have such favor with people? Was it just her beauty or something more?

It is true that Esther was beautiful, but how did she use her intellect to help win the favor of the King? (Est. 2:25)

We know that in Esther God is never mentioned, but what role do you think God has in helping Esther to be put in the position to help her people?

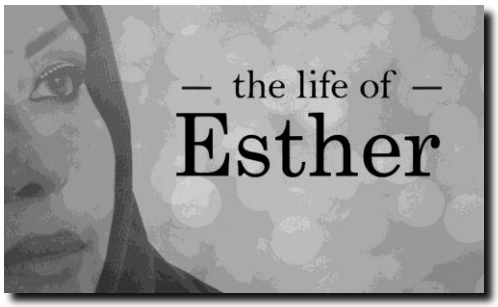
Apply:

Why do you think it is so easy to get jealous of other people's gifts?

God is a father who loves to give good gifts to his children, but sometimes we lose sight of what God has given us (Luke 11:9-13; James 1:17). What are some gifts/abilities/blessings that God has given you?

God gives us gifts and the grace to use them but if we don't act on them we cannot be used to build his kingdom. What talents or abilities is God asking you to put to work in his kingdom?

Prayer:
We all want to be used by God. Pray that God would give us the strength to put the many blessings he has given to us to work for the betterment of the church and the world.



DSM FIRST
October 26, 2014
Dave Beroth, Lead Pastor

Big idea: God's favor is purposeful.

Esther 2:8-9 *[8] When the king's order and edict had been proclaimed, many young women were brought to the citadel of Susa and put under the care of Hegai. Esther also was taken to the king's palace and entrusted to Hegai, who had charge of the harem. [9] She pleased him and won his favor. Immediately he provided her with her beauty treatments and special food. He assigned to her seven female attendants selected from the king's palace and moved her and her attendants into the best place in the harem.*

Esther 2:15 *[15] When the turn came for Esther (the young woman Mordecai had adopted, the daughter of his uncle Abihail) to go to the king, she asked for nothing other than what Hegai, the king's eunuch who was in charge of the harem, suggested. And Esther won the favor of everyone who saw her.*

Esther 2:17-18 *[17] Now the king was attracted to Esther more than to any of the other women, and she won his favor and approval more than any of the other virgins.*

A. TYPES OF FAVOR

"Favor" - *something done or granted out of goodwill, rather than from justice or for remuneration; a kind act: A gracious, friendly, or obliging act that is freely granted:*

1. _____ **Favor**

2. _____ **Favor**

✓ _____

✓ _____

a) God had a plan for Esther. He wanted her to succeed – so he gave her favor.

- What is your response when you see someone else receiving favor? Are you jealous? Resentful? Critical?
- What if, instead, you saw their favor as part of God's plan to use them? How would that change your attitude?
- When someone else receives favor, we tend to assume that it comes at our expense. But the truth is that God is always at work and often uses other people to affect the lives of many others, including our own.

b) God has plans for you. He wants you to succeed – so he has given you favor.

- God does not only give favor to others; he gives it to us as well. But when God gives gifts, they are not merely for our own enjoyment. He gives us gifts for a purpose. Do you sometimes have trouble believing that God has given you favor?

c) Satan hates God's plan for you and he wants you to fail – so he tries to hide God's favor from you.

- The Enemy doesn't need to take our favor away – he simply needs to convince us that it isn't there, or that we don't deserve it, or that it isn't enough. What lies do we tell ourselves about the favor of God in our lives?

➔ **God has given you favor. What is keeping you from walking in this truth today?**

➔ **Where have you been passive and need to get active?**

Action Steps:

Galatians 5:22-23 (NIV) [22] *But the fruit of the Spirit is*

Love: How will I show love to someone? How will I affirm God's work in them?

Joy: How might I bring joy to others?

Peace: How will I bring peace into my environment?

Patience: With whom do I need to be patient and how will I demonstrate that patience?

Kindness: How and to whom will I exhibit kindness today?

Goodness: Think through the steps you need to take to put goodness into action in a specific instance, such as learning to be good to people who are rude to you or not letting your circumstances get in the way of the way you treat others?

Faithfulness: In what situation do I fail to have Faithfulness? How will I become faithful even in times of uncertainly and stress?

Gentleness: What are the things that cause you to be rough and course with others? Think through the steps you need to take to put gentleness into action in a specific instance.