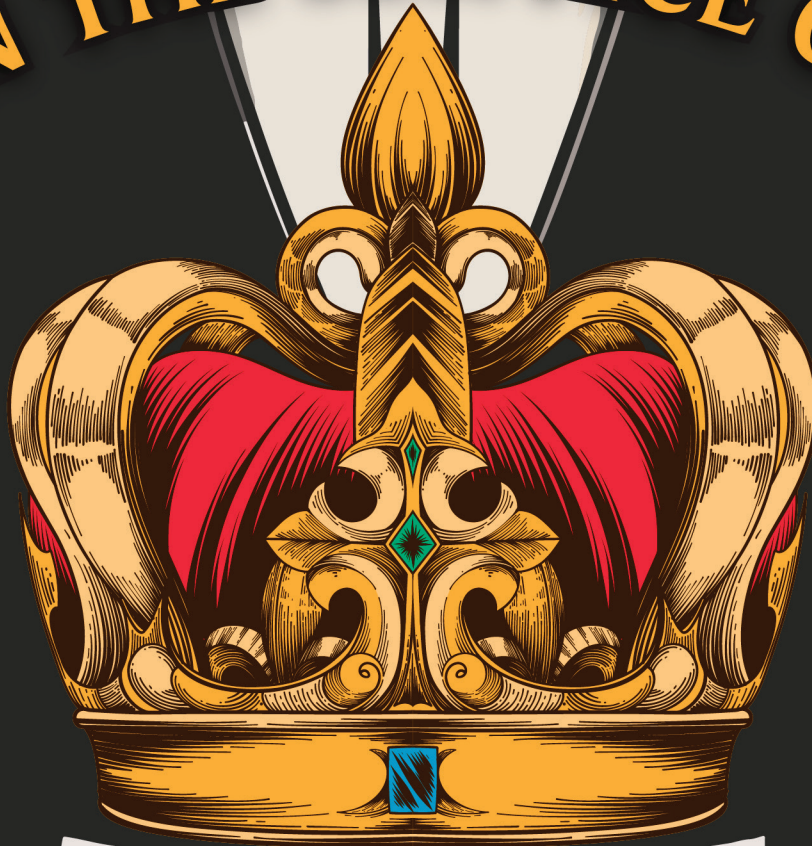




FAMILY LIFE  
RESOURCES

IN THE SERVICE OF



THE KING

ESTHER & NEHEMIAH





## FAMILY LIFE RESOURCES

Growing Together, Rooted in Faith - Colossians 2:7

We understand the challenges of busy schedules at home, which is why we offer resources that support you and your family which are easy to use, relevant and most importantly honor God. We pray these resources for your home along with the classes and services at First Church make an eternal difference in the lives of families like yours.

Blessings,  
First Church of the Open Bible

### **Colossians 2:6,7**

So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.



**FAMILY LIFE  
RESOURCES**

## **In the Service of The King**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Many Old Testament heroes made their fame working for a king. God was able to use their position and their faith in Him to help his people.

- **Moses was in Pharaoh's court.**
- **Joseph managed the king's household.**
- **David played the harp for King Saul.**
- **Isaiah's grandfather was a king.**
- **The prophet Elijah counseled King Ahab.**
- **Daniel interpreted King Nebuchadnezzar's dreams.**

There were two more heroes of faith who obeyed God and submitted their service to an earthly king. God used them in mighty ways to help His people.

When God's people turned away from him and worshiped idols, they were sent into a foreign nation. They lived there many years and continued to pray to God during these difficult times.

The two additional servants of kings we will focus on in this lesson are **Esther** and **Nehemiah**.

## LESSON 1

# Nehemiah - Cupbearer to the King

**Parent's Passage:** Nehemiah 1:1-11

**Family Reading:** Nehemiah 2:11-18

**Key Verse:** Nehemiah 1:11

*"Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of this your servant and to the prayer of your servants who delight in revering your name. Give your servant success today by granting him favor in the presence of this man."*

## **Nehemiah was the Cupbearer to Artaxerxes - King of Persia.**

He served the king daily in his palace. He held an honorable position as a trusted servant who verified the safety of the food and drink served to the king of the empire.

But Nehemiah was also the son of Hacaliah, an Israelite. The Israelites had been in a foreign land for many years.

Some of Nehemiah's friends returned to their homeland of Israel. Nehemiah wanted to help his fellow country men.

## **Nehemiah makes his plans**

His first step was to ask God for help.

*"Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of your servant, and to the prayer of your servants who delight in revering your name. Give your servant success today by granting a favor in the presence of this man (the King) as I am the cup-bearer to the King. (Nehemiah 1:11)*

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His second step was to continue with his responsibility to deliver a cup of wine to the king. The king noticed that Nehemiah was troubled about something. They talked about the difficulties Nehemiah's people were facing in rebuilding the city of Jerusalem.

Because of Nehemiah's good standing with the king, it was agreed that Nehemiah himself should go to Jerusalem and check on the progress of the rebuilding. The king and queen offered to send supplies with Nehemiah, as well as the cavalry to protect him.

***"Because the gracious hand of my God was on me, the king granted my requests." (Nehemiah 2:8b)***

## **Making walls out of rubble**

Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem. He spent a night assessing the damage to the walls around the city. Then he gave a report:

***Then I said to them, "You see the trouble we are in: Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been burned with fire. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and we will no longer be in disgrace." I also told them about the gracious hand of my God on me and what the king had said to me. (Nehemiah 2:17-18)***

Even though the builders faced opposition, Nehemiah encouraged and led them to complete the wall in 52 days.  
Nehemiah 6:15

***So the wall was completed on the twenty-fifth of Elul, in fifty-two days.. (Nehemiah 6:15)***

## **FAMILY ACTIVITY**

Nehemiah was used by God to rebuild the city of Jerusalem. Tell the story of Nehemiah using a children's Bible or by picking out key passages from your preferred translation. Talk together about the steps Nehemiah took.

**STEP 1- Seek God in prayer**

(Nehemiah 1:4-11)

**STEP 2- Continue on with your responsibilities**

(Nehemiah 2:1-4)

**STEP 3- Trust God for the outcome.**

(Nehemiah 2:8b)

**STEP 4- Do the work God sets before you to do.**

(Nehemiah 2:11-12.)

Talk together as a family about how you can implement Nehemiah's plan regarding something you are concerned about. Look at the example of our missionaries as they work to help the people they are ministering to.

Go to the missions section of the Open Bible website ([openbible.org](http://openbible.org)) for more information or talk to our missionaries at First Church:

**Roger and Connie Cox**

*Lifesong Learning Center in Cambodia.*

**Linda Wilson**

*Open Bible orphanages in India*

God listens to our concerns as we pray to him. He will help us when we trust him. He will provide for us as we diligently do the work He sets before us. (Ephesians 2:10 NIV)

## THE KING'S COURT

Read the verses about each of the listed characters in your Bible. Find the description that fits each character, and put the letter of the correct one in the answer column.

CHARACTER	VERSE REFERENCE	ANSWER
<b>JOSEPH</b>	Genesis 41:38-42	_____
<b>MOSES</b>	Exodus 2:8-10	_____
<b>DAVID</b>	1 Samuel 16:16-23	_____
<b>"</b>	<b>" " " " "</b>	_____
<b>ELIJAH</b>	1 Kings 18:15-21	_____
<b>ISAIAH</b>	Isaiah 1:1	_____
<b>DANIEL</b>	Daniel 5:5-29	_____
<b>ESTHER</b>	Esther 4:12-17	_____
<b>NEHEMIAH</b>	Nehemiah 1:1-11	_____

### ANSWERS -

- |                                 |                        |                    |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>A)</b> Adopted by Princess   | <b>D)</b> Queen        | <b>G)</b> Advisor  |
| <b>B)</b> Overseer              | <b>E)</b> Cupbearer    | <b>H)</b> Harpist  |
| <b>C)</b> Interpreter of Dreams | <b>F)</b> Armor Bearer | <b>I)</b> Grandson |



## LESSON 2

# Esther - Royal Leader

**Parent's Passage:** Ephesians 2:10

**Family Reading:** Esther 2:8-17

**Key Verse:** Esther 4:14

***"For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?"***

Whether you ask for leadership or you are "voluntold," being a leader bears much responsibility. If you ask anyone who has been in a leadership position, I'm sure they have tales of times when leadership was uncomfortable, stressful, and/or difficult.

The book of Esther opens with the story of Queen Vashti. Her husband, King Xerxes wanted her to join him at a banquet he was holding to celebrate the wealth of his kingdom. The Bible doesn't tell us why Queen Vashti denied the king's summons. Maybe she was tired - after all, the banquet had been going on for seven days! Or maybe she was having too much fun with her friends.

Regardless of her reasons or whether we agree or disagree with the results, her decision as a leader, a queen, to refuse the king had great consequences. The wisemen that served the king believed she would set a bad example for others:

***"This very day the Persian and Median women of the nobility who have heard about the queen's conduct will respond to all the king's nobles in the same way. There will be no end of disrespect and discord,"*** (Esther 1:18)

Ultimately, this one decision ended her position as queen.

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Next, let's look at Esther's responsibility. At first, the Bible tells us she **"gained favor in the eyes of everyone who saw her"** (Esther 2:15). This would serve her well later on.

In the meantime, King Xerxes honored a noble named Haman above all others. Haman got angry with a Jew named Mordecai (who happened to be Esther's uncle) because Mordecai wouldn't bow to him. You see, Mordecai's great-grandfather lived in the time of Nebuchadnezzar, so I'm sure he heard the stories of the three Jewish men who refused to bow to Nebuchadnezzar's golden statue (you can learn more about that in Daniel 3!)

Ultimately, Mordecai refused to bow to Haman because Mordecai loved God and desired to follow God's commandment that **"You shall have no other gods before Me."** (Exodus 20:3).

Haman allowed his anger for Mordecai to change how he felt about Jewish people altogether and he convinced King Xerxes to send a decree that would destroy the Jewish people.

Just like Vashti, Queen Esther had an important decision to make about whether to approach the king. For Queen Esther, though, she was not invited to see the king and in those days, her decision to approach him uninvited could have fatal consequences. Because of her role as queen, Esther was in a critical position to save her people.

Could you be in a similar position? Do you know that when God is Lord over your life, you too are a royal leader and an example to others? You are a son or a daughter of the Lord Most High!

***"Yet to all who did receive Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God"***  
(John 1:12)

Because of your position and your relationship with those you love, you too can have great influence that can help save your unbelieving friends and family. And whether good or bad, as children of the Lord most high, we also set an example.

## CONCLUSION

Although their kings could be kind from time to time, both Esther and Nehemiah had to be careful not to offend their king and had to follow strict rules even to speak with them.

Doesn't this make you appreciate even more the King we serve?

There are so many examples to choose from, but here are a few differences to consider and praise God for:

Kings in Nehemiah or Esther	Freedoms through Jesus our King
"Before a young woman's turn came to go in to King Xerxes, she had to complete twelve months of beauty treatments. . ." <b>Esther 2:12</b>	"Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus . . . let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water." <b>Hebrews 10:19, 22</b>
"She could only see the King once unless he summoned her by name." <b>Esther 2:14</b>	"I am going there to prepare a place for you . . . I will come back and take you to be with me." <b>John 14:2-3</b>
"But he went only as far as the king's gate, because no one clothed in sackcloth was allowed to enter it." <b>Esther 4:2</b>	"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." <b>Matthew 11:28</b>
Nehemiah prayed to have favor with the king ". . . Give your servant success today by granting him favor in the presence of this man." <b>Nehemiah 1:11</b>	"Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need." <b>Hebrews 4:16</b>
The king allowed his leaders to be a burden to the people "The earlier governors . . . placed a heavy burden on the people. . ." <b>Nehemiah 5:15</b>	"Casting all your anxieties on Him, because He cares for you." <b>1 Peter 5:7</b>

## PRAY AS A FAMILY TOGETHER:

***Father God, lead me to be a better example for those around me. Please show me that person that I can share your story with and Lord, I ask you for the courage to do just that! Thank you for being my Lord and Savior. And just like Esther, guide me to lean on you through prayer because it is You who strengthens me to do the good work You have prepared for me. (Ephesians 2:10)***



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