

YOU WERE MEANT FOR

THIS

LESSON 1

TIME

God has placed a very specific call on your life, a role to play or a job to do or a task to accomplish that only *you* can do. It isn't just *anything* or *something* or *a* thing to be done at a random time in a nondescript location with whoever is around for no apparent reason. No, there is a very specific thing you are called to do in THIS time, THIS place, with THIS group of people, for THIS reason. You weren't meant for just *any* thing. You were meant for THIS.

Each one of us has a very specific "THIS," and over the next four lessons we're going to talk about those four facets of your personal calling: the specific time, place, person, and reason that God has meant for you. To help us, we'll be using a story from the Bible to help us understand this concept, the story of Esther. Each week, you'll read two chapters in preparation for the questions that follow. It's a powerful story that would (and did!) make an awesome Hollywood movie! There's love and murder and betrayal and suspense. So, let's dive in!

Question 1: Let's kick it off with a warmup question! If you could live in any other time period, what would it be and why?

Sadly, we haven't figured out how to time travel, so you're stuck in THIS time. (You know what, it's still a pretty awesome time. I mean, we have Netflix. Just sayin'.) But here's the good news: God *is* going to use the specific time in history in which you find yourself for a very specific purpose, just as he did for Esther.

Read Chapters 1 and 2 from the book of Esther in the Bible. (If you're doing this as part of a small group, you can make this homework. There will be quiz next week, though... just kidding.)

Here's the movie trailer, just so we're on the same page for today's discussion. (Don't worry, no spoilers.) Esther is born around 500 B.C., at a time in Israel's history when the kingdom has been conquered by the Persian Empire and King Xerxes, (pronounced Zerk-zees. Ever see the movie, "300"? Yeah, that guy. Your Bible might say, "King Ahasuerus." That's just what they called him in Hebrew. Same dude.) The current queen, Vashti, stands up for herself and is deposed, sending King Xerxes on the hunt for a new queen. Esther becomes one of those candidates. Now, every good story needs a bad guy. Enter Haman. (You'll meet him in Chapter 3.) Haman hatches a plot to kill all the Jews in Persia because of Mordecai, Esther's cousin. (You refuse to bow to one guy, and suddenly he wants to kill everyone. Sheesh!) Hoping to save his people, Mordecai goes to Esther (who won the "Who Wants to Be Queen?" Contest), now the wife of Xerxes and Queen of all Persia, to ask for her help to save their people.

Modecai says this,

"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?" (Esther 4:14 NIV)

"For such a *time* as this." God used Esther's time in the history of her people for a very specific call on her life... to save her people from genocide. She wasn't born in the time of Moses or Noah. She wasn't alive in the time of Jesus or today. She was born in the 5th century B.C., and God was going to use her in this specific time.

Question 2: The age or era in which we are born is one thing about ourselves we have no control over. What are other characteristics or aspects of your life that make up who you are that you have no control over, like race or family or physical attributes? Write them down. If you're using this in a small group setting, share with each other. And be specific! (For example, don't just write, "my family." Write their names, conflicts, relationships, and which one you'd mail off to Abu Dhabi if given the chance.)

Esther had no control over the heritage and culture into which she was born. She had no control over her parents dying and being taken in by her cousin. She had no control over the time in history in which she lived. And yet, God used all these things to reveal a very specific purpose in Esther's life.

Question 3: How might God use the things you wrote down in Question 2 for a specific purpose? What unique perspective do they give you? What privileges or advantages do those things afford you? What disadvantages or challenges do they present that you might use to identify with others? What is something you may have been looking at as a negative, that God might turn into a positive for your "THIS"?

Esther found herself at a specific time in her people's history where she would be used by God to fulfill a very specific call on her life. God has the same thing in mind for you. There are things about you and your life that are not within your control. But we have a powerful God who wants to use those things to help you achieve THIS thing he has set aside for you to do. This week, look for ways to use those things about you, as God begins to unfold your "THIS."