

**FINDING GOD  
IN THE MESSINESS  
OF LIFE**

Studies in Esther

**~January 7-13, 2007~**  
**“The Insatiability of the  
Success Syndrome”**  
Esther 5:1-14



Life Groups

**Welcome** to UPC's study of the story of Esther entitled "Finding God in the Messiness of Life." Each week this discussion guide will help you reflect upon the Sunday sermon and apply its content to your life. Whether you work through these lessons on your own, with a friend, or in your family or LIFE Group, we believe they will help you become better acquainted with the God who "in all things works for the good of those who love him" (Romans 8:28). If you ever miss a sermon, you can always listen to it online at [www.upc-orlando.com](http://www.upc-orlando.com).

**LISTEN**

*Record your insights and observations from this week's sermon:*

## SHARE

a) How do you define success?

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b) In light of your definition, do you feel you are taking the right steps to become successful? Why or why not?

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c) What are some of the pitfalls or dangers involved in seeking success?

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## REFLECT

a) What do you suppose were the different emotions Queen Esther was feeling as she approached King Xerxes in verses 1-2?

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b) Why did Esther invite the king and Haman to not one, but two banquets (verses 3-8)?

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c) Take a deep look into Haman's heart (verse 9). What is "the sin underneath the sin" of Haman's rage against Mordecai? That is, what's the real source of his frustration?

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d) In Esther 5, Haman's mood quickly changes from happiness to anger (verse 9), then to boastful self-satisfaction (verses 10-12), and finally back to happiness (verse 14). Why is Haman so tossed about by his circumstances?

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## APPLY

a) In what way(s) do you sometimes behave and feel like Haman, as he is presented in Esther 5?

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b) Why is that? In other words, what is “the sin underneath the sin” of your own anger, resentment, jealousy, or self-satisfaction?

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c) Think of one thing God requires, which you feel you do quite well. Have you ever boasted about this? Have you criticized someone else because they do not do it as well as you? Have you used it to “balance” out in your own mind something that you are doing wrong, or not doing at all? Write this example down:

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d) Now think of something God requires at which you always seem to fail. How many times have you excused this behavior? Defended yourself? Ignored it? Minimized its seriousness? Compared yourself with someone who was doing even worse than you? Write this example down also:

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e) Read Galatians 6:14. What practical steps might you take in order to boast more and more in the cross of Jesus Christ instead of your own success (or instead of constantly lamenting your failures)?

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f) Read the excerpt in the box below. What does this mean for you?

“Jesus is our perfect righteousness. When we come to Him we need no other. The struggle for righteousness is over and He becomes our reputation and glory. We need not fear to come to the sinner’s place, for when we do, it is to cease from our own works, to stop trying to be what we are not and admit instead what we are. At that point we accept Christ’s own righteousness; we are justified before God and enter into peace. This is God’s basic blessing for us, and the only true way of peace and joy.” (from *The End of the Struggle*, by Stanley Voke)