Right on Cue

Scope and Sequence
Old Testament Book Study: The Book of Esther

Lesson Objective
Students will be encouraged to choose daily obedience to God’s plan.

Sticky Statement
Stick to the script

Key Verse
Isaiah 6:8

Definitions
Sovereignty: supreme authority and rule of God

Checklist
1. A PowerPoint is available for this lesson.
2. Print out the two soliloquies for the dramatic reader.
3. Recruit, in advance, someone to share a brief story of personal grief.

Resources
1. Matthew Henry’s Commentary

Lesson Overview

Sovereignty means “supreme authority and rule of God.”

I. God Has A Plan
   A. Accomplishing God’s Plan May Require Sorrow – Esther 4:1-4
   B. Accomplishing God’s Plan Will Require Courage – Esther 4:5-16
      “I would ________, but I’m afraid of ________.”
II. God **Invites** You to Be a Part of His Plan

A. Accomplishing God’s Plan Starts with **Faithfulness** – Esther 2-4

Having the desire to have a leading role in life is great, but obtaining the lead role comes from faithfully playing the smaller parts you have been given.

B. Accomplishing God’s Plan Requires **Action** – Esther 4:8

At times, God may request that you play the lead role, but He is looking for those who will be faithful in every role He gives; not just the lead role.

“Future guidance always comes in terms of present obedience. If I am doing what I know God wants me to do today, I can be sure I'll be where God wants me to be tomorrow.” – George Murray

**Stick to the script.**

---

**Hook**

**Teacher’s Note:** Consider using the video on YouTube from the Gospel Project called “Read Scripture: Esther” [https://teachersource.wol.org/resource/SBS18/25-1/](https://teachersource.wol.org/resource/SBS18/25-1/) (9:13) instead of the soliloquy. The video is over nine minutes long, but it will be necessary to stop the video at the four-minute mark.

**Teacher’s Note:** Prior to the lesson, choose a female student or leader to open the message with the following soliloquy. Be sure she is a very good reader and instruct her to read it in a Shakespearean style as if she is under great distress. Inform her that she will open the lesson without any introduction from the teacher. When it is time to begin the lesson time, give the reader a cue to begin her soliloquy. Toward the middle of the lesson, the same reader will return for a concluding soliloquy.

**Esther’s Soliloquy**

“To go, or not to go – that is the question:

In which do I find more logic?
To appear before the king uninvited
Or in contrast remain silent.

At the foot of the throne awaits – but death for me.

In doing nothing, I survive,
But is that life?

With haunted cries of death no life exists.
Thus silence is but living death for me.

The king, I have not seen these thirty days.
To go before him now will seal my fate

Those who will die, are kindred – all – to me
I, from this law of death, find no escape. 
The purpose of my life might be in this 
If but the scepter is to me outstretched.

So if I go I find a chance at life 
All other options bring some form of death.”

As the curtain opened on the Book of Esther, we were introduced to a cast of characters who dealt with great change. By the time the curtain had fallen on the second act, a conflict had arisen that threatened to annihilate the Jewish people. In those first two acts of our Biblical drama, we have learned that change doesn’t change God’s plan and that resistance to God’s plan is no threat to His sovereignty. Sovereignty means “supreme authority and rule of God.”

In the midst of all the changes and conflict, many times it is difficult to see the purpose. Since we can’t see the future, we must trust that the One who has been to the future and will providentially direct our path to the appropriate outcome. Our best course of action is to stick to the script.

Teacher’s Note: Prior to the lesson, recruit one student to act as a narrator throughout the lesson. Each time that a passage of Scripture is to be read, have the narrator read it. Be sure that the narrator is a good reader. Have a specific place on stage for the narrator to stand or a stool for him to sit on throughout the lesson.

I. God Has A Plan

A. Accomplishing God’s Plan May Require Sorrow – Esther 4:1-4

As the curtain fell on Act II, the mournful cries of the Jews echoed across the stage. The conflict that God allowed caused great distress for His people (Esther 4:1-4). In the theater, the conflict part of the plot can cause the actors to be filled with great emotion. Even when God’s plan for your life includes great sorrow, it is best to stick to the script.

[Ask the narrator to read Esther 4:1.]

Can you relate to this feeling? Have you ever cried yourself to sleep? Have you ever been so overwhelmed by emotion that you were sick to your stomach?

Teacher’s Note: Story of Grief: Have someone share a brief story of a circumstance that caused great sorrow. Be sure to recruit this person well in advance. It is not recommended that you spontaneously ask someone in the room to share. It is recommended that you hear the story prior to the teaching time so you can respond appropriately and tie the grief of the story with the lesson. Allow no more than three minutes for the testimony. Thank the person for their testimony and use it as a connecting statement to relate how Mordecai must have felt.
When Mordecai found out that Haman’s evil plan had become law, it caused him great distress. Queen Esther tried to console him by sending him a change of clothes, but he refused the gift. An outward change of appearance could do nothing for the inward sorrow. Have you ever been so sad that you just stayed in your pajamas all day and laid around the house? For Mordecai, changing clothes could not change the law of death that hung over the Jewish people.

B. Accomplishing God’s Plan Will Require **Courage** – Esther 4:5-16

In many plays, when there is great conflict, characters are forced to face the conflict head on. When God allows a conflict to be part of your story, you will need to find the courage to face both the conflict and fear.

When Esther wanted to know why Mordecai was so sad. Mordecai sent a messenger who told her about the law of death that Haman had created. [*Ask the narrator to read Esther 4:7-8.*]

When she found out about the law, she didn’t pretend it didn’t exist. Many times it is just easier to ignore the conflict and pretend it isn’t there. Esther thought through the implications of the conflict both for the Jews and for herself. She faced the fact that her people were condemned to death.

Not only did Esther face the conflict head on, she also faced her fears. When Mordecai asked her to go to the king, he was asking her to **stick to the script** and she immediately realized the possible implications.

[*Ask the narrator to read Esther 4:11.*]

For Esther to **stick to the script** God had written for her life, she would have to put her life on the line. She would have to be willing to die. She understood that an appeal to the king was the only way to stop the law of death for the Jews, but appearing before the king without being summoned was a law of death for her. If it truly was a time to speak, Esther would have to risk her own life.

Many times we fail to do what we know God wants us to do because we are unwilling to face our fears. Fear may stop us from telling someone about Jesus. Fear may stop us from accomplishing great things for God. Fear may stop us from accomplishing God’s plan. Don’t allow fear to control you. **Stick to the script.**

If you had the courage to face your fears, what would you attempt for God? Would you tell a family member about Jesus? Would you become a follower of Jesus? Would you give your life to God to become a missionary or pastor? What are you afraid of? On the student notes, take a minute to fill in the blanks provided.

“I would ____________________________, but I’m afraid of ____________________________.”

If you are going to accomplish God’s plan for your life, you are going to have to be courageous. But you’re not alone. It’s God Himself who invites you to be part of His plan.
II. God **Invites** You to Be a Part of His Plan

In the midst of the conflict, Esther was invited to play the lead role in defeating the villain.

Haman posed no threat to God's sovereignty. God could have dropped him without anyone's help, but God seeks human volunteers through whom He can magnify Himself.

Mordecai chose to believe that the way God would providentially protect the Jewish people revolved around the fact that Esther was queen. He believed that God had providentially placed Esther in her current position so she could fulfill this specific task of saving the Jews from death. Esther would have to decide to **stick to the script**.

God seeks for someone to stand in the gap. (Ezekiel 22:30). God's going to do what He's going to do, but He looks for volunteers. When God asks, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us" (Isaiah 6:8), He is simply waiting for the response, “Here am I; send me” (Isaiah 6:8). God's request for Esther to participate came through the voice of Mordecai. When she heard the call, Esther volunteered to take the lead role in God's plan to save the Jews.

A. Accomplishing God’s Plan Starts with **Faithfulness** – Esther 2-4

Many people look to the fourth chapter of the Book of Esther to prove that Esther accomplished God’s plan for her life. She finally was given the chance to have the lead role. At last, she could make a difference in the world. This was her time! The spotlight was on her.

How many of you have ever thought, “When will it be my time to shine? When will I know my purpose for living?” Raise your hands if you've ever thought something like that. **Having the desire to have a leading role in life is great, but obtaining the lead role comes from faithfully playing the smaller parts you have been given.**

Consider Esther's faithfulness. When she was commanded to be part of the royal beauty pageant, she just obeyed (Esther 2:8). When Mordecai told her to keep her heritage a secret, she just obeyed (Esther 2:10). When an assassination plot was revealed to her, she faithfully reported it to the king (Esther 2:22).

Esther had already demonstrated that she would **stick to the script** in the seemingly insignificant parts of God’s plan for her life. Without her faithfulness in a “support cast” role, she would have never received the chance to have the leading role. She was placed in each of these positions “for such a time as this” (Esther 4:14).

The beauty pageant was her time. Keeping a secret was her time. Exposing the plot was her time. Since Esther had been faithful, God knew she would **stick to the script** if He gave her a leading role.
B. Accomplishing God’s Plan Requires **Action** – Esther 4:8

*[Ask the narrator to read Esther 4:8.]*

If Esther was going to accomplish God’s plan for her life, she was going to have to act. Mordecai instructed her to “go” to the king. If she chose to stay silent, he was convinced that God would deliver the Jews in another way (Esther 4:14), but Esther would miss out on playing the lead role of the drama.

Esther’s faithfulness had led her to one of the biggest roles of her life. Mordecai was convinced that Esther had “come to the kingdom for such a time as this.” Would she act? Would she be willing to lay her own life on the line for a chance to save her people? Mordecai’s reminder that God could quite possibly have made her queen for this exact moment echoed in her ears as she decided her next step.

**Teacher’s Note:** Prior to the lesson, instruct the reader of the soliloquy to come back on stage at this point in the lesson. As the teacher, quietly walk off stage and let her complete the soliloquy. The reason for the repeat of the beginning is to give the audience the feel that we are back to where the lesson began and will now get the rest of the story. If you used the video on YouTube from the Gospel Project called “Read Scripture: Esther” [https://teachersource.wol.org/resource/SBS18/25-1/](https://teachersource.wol.org/resource/SBS18/25-1/) then skip the soliloquy.

**Esther’s Soliloquy (Continued)**

“To go, or not to go – that is the question:

In which do I find more logic?
To appear before the king uninvited
Or in contrast remain silent.

At the foot of the throne awaits – but death for me.

In doing nothing, I survive,
But is that life?

With haunted cries of death no life exists.
Thus silence is but living death for me.

The king, I have not seen these thirty days.
To go before him now will seal my fate

Those who will die, are kindred – all – to me

I, from this law of death, find no escape.

The purpose of my life might be in this
If but the scepter is to me outstretched.

So if I go I find a chance at life
All other options bring some form of death.
Before I go, I spend three days in fast
Then to the king I make my grand appeal
If death, for me awaits, in throne room grand
Then death will be my purpose to fulfill.

After the time of fasting, Esther put on her royal robes and made her way to the inner court of the king (Esther 5:1). This was Esther's time for action. This was the purpose behind all the twists and turns of the plot. After all of the changes she had faced and in the midst of seemingly insurmountable conflict, the tension reached a climax when the king saw Esther standing in the court.

Teacher's Note: Ask the narrator to read Esther 5:1-2 in slow, dramatic style, pausing for effect right before the phrase, “That she found favor in his sight.”

In the theater, scenes like this are accompanied by ominous music that climaxes in a crescendo. The audience is held breathless as they await the anticipated response. Would the king hold out his scepter and grant her life or would Esther face the wrath of a power-hungry king?

[Ask the narrator to continue reading the remainder of Esther 5:2.]

The rising action of the drama comes to a climax as the king held out his scepter and granted her life. Esther was given the opportunity to make a decision that would impact, not only the Jews that were living in her time, but also all of humanity. She became the heroine of the story because she chose to stick to the script.

Once again the providence of God was at work. No human being could have possibly known that Queen Vashti’s refusal to appear before the king would set up the scenario for Esther to appear before the king uninvited. No human being could have possibly known that Esther’s Jewish heritage would play a huge role in the deliverance of many Jews.

No amount of changes could have changed God’s plan and no amount of resistance would be a threat to His sovereignty. All the changes and conflicts were just plot changes to bring the drama to its climax and reveal the sovereign control of God over the plans of the most evil men. It was Esther who was faithful to play a lead role in the salvation of Jews.

The events of the Book of Esther teach great truths about God. Whether we see Him or not, He is providentially controlling all things for our benefit and for His good plan. He cannot be changed and nothing is a threat to His sovereignty.

The events of the Book of Esther also teach us a great deal about the response He desires from us. God invites us to be a part of His plan. His plan may be for us to play a supporting role on the stage of life. At times, God may request that you play the lead role, but He is looking for those who will be faithful in every role He gives; not just the lead role.

In his classic commentary, author Matthew Henry expressed this wisdom in relation to each individual’s response to their purpose in life. “We should every one of us consider for what end God has put us in the place where we are and study to answer that end.”
Have you ever considered that God has you right where you are for a specific reason? You might be waiting for that “lead role” of life that will cause the spotlight to be on you. God is waiting for you to simply be faithful in the role He has currently given you. Jesus expressed this truth in His parable of the stewards, “He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much” (Luke 16:10).

The school you attend is His will for your life. Be faithful. The family you belong to is His will for your life. Be faithful. Your “for such a time as this” place can be found in the everyday events of your life. Be faithful in those and if you are ever given the lead role you will be more ready to take action.

You may not know the grand purpose for your life, but your responsibility is to be doing what you know God wants you to do right now. George Murray, former chancellor of Columbia International University said this, “Future guidance always comes in terms of present obedience. If I am doing what I know God wants me to do today, I can be sure I'll be where God wants me to be tomorrow.”

As the action of your life builds to the climax of your story, be faithful to do today the things that are faithful to the story He has written for you. **Stick to the script.**

### Decision

Will you choose to be obedient to God each day? When the curtain rises on our 15 minutes of divine fame, you will only be faithful if you already practice faithfulness. Will you recognize that you are where you are not by chance, but that this part of your life has a specific purpose? Pick a small area of your life in which you will commit to faithfulness. Choose a trusted friend and ask him to help keep you faithful.

### Sticky Statement

**Stick to the script**

### Small Group Discussion Questions

1. **What would you have to do in order to feel significant?** *(Possible answers: score the winning touchdown, make the game-winning shot, make the honor roll, get a girlfriend or boyfriend, change the world, etc.)*

2. **What are some areas of life that seem to be insignificant?** *(Too often students can be so focused on the future will of God that they forget their present circumstances. Help them to discuss the significance of where God currently has them.)*

3. **In what area of your life will you commit to remain faithful?** *(Be sure to write that area down and pray for the student who made the commitment. Make a point to contact the student during the following week to encourage faithfulness.)*
Esther’s Soliloquy

“To go, or not to go – that is the question:
In which do I find more logic?
To appear before the king uninvited
Or in contrast remain silent.
At the foot of the throne awaits – but death for me.
In doing nothing, I survive,
But is that life?
With haunted cries of death no life exists.
Thus silence is but living death for me.
The king, I have not seen these thirty days.
To go before him now will seal my fate
Those who will die, are kindred – all – to me
I, from this law of death, find no escape.
The purpose of my life might be in this
If but the scepter is to me outstretched.
So if I go I find a chance at life
All other options bring some form of death.”

Esther’s Soliloquy (continued)

Re-Read the Soliloquy above and add the final paragraph.

Before I go, I spend three days in fast
Then to the king I make my grand appeal
If death, for me awaits, in throne room grand
Then death will be my purpose to fulfill.”