

Victoria Fellowship Church
International & Interdenominational
Bible Study Worksheet – February 5, 2023

Theme: Servant Leadership Topic: The Cost of Servant Leadership

Main Texts: Esther 3:8- 4:17

Key verse: Esther 4:16b *"I will go in to see the king; and if I perish, I perish."* (NKJV)

INTRODUCTION: Our study today underscores what should be the mindset for all servant leaders doing our Master's will. This means that we seek God's glory (1 Peter 4:2,11), no matter the cost. In Esther 3:1-6, we meet Mordecai again. Because of his relationship with Queen Esther, Mordecai had become a notable face around the palace. Also, this relationship with the Queen elevates him to be a leading figure among the Israelites in Babylon. In this account, Mordecai's uncompromising commitment to his heritage and his God throws him into conflict with Haman, a vindictive high-ranking officer; and King Ahasuerus, a despot, who also is carefree about happenings in his domain. These three strongly contrasted figures come together to form the basis for our lesson today on **the cost of servant leadership**.

1. **Read Esther 3:1-8; Daniel 3:13-18. (a) Suppose you were in Mordecai's shoes, what is it about this decree by the king that will cause you to hesitate in compliance or even outrightly refuse to comply? (b) If Mordecai had anticipated such a response from Haman and the king, should he have managed the matter differently? Why or why not? (c) What does Mordecai's response as a servant leader tell us about compromise in obvious life-threatening situations?**

The level of respect which King Ahasuerus had decreed for Haman was not as simple as it would appear. That level of respect was akin to worship. And Mordecai saw it for what it really was – worship which, for him, was meant for God alone. Whether he could have anticipated such a backlash from his simple devotion to his God is immaterial. Assuming he did, it must have pained him to have to still refuse to conform, despite the pressure, for *'the other officials in the royal service asked him why he was disobeying the king's command; day after day they urged him to give in, but he would not listen to them.'* (Esther 3:3-4 GNT). Though a servant leader is expected to be adept at managing crises, he is guided by such fundamental attributes as: hope in God, faithfulness to God, and staying true to who you are. Without these attributes, Mordecai would have bowed to Haman's earthly power and influence. Instead, he stood strong, with grave consequences. Servant leadership comes with serious costs!

2. **Read Esther 3:1-11; 4:1-3, 8-14; Daniel 3:1-6; Ephesians 6:12 (a) Let participants identify some of the forces and cost which Mordecai and Queen Esther had to confront; and which all who seek to be servant leaders must confront resolutely. (b) What was the mindset that attended both Esther and Mordecai in their faceoff with these forces? (c) Let participants briefly share examples of how we can model same mindset in confronting the forces against faithful servant leadership in VFC and in our society today.**

If Mordecai did not anticipate the backlash to his non-conformist stance, Queen Esther was fully aware of hers. And she bravely embraced it when she said, *"... though it is against the law, I will go in to see the king. If I must die, I must die."* (Esther 4:16b NLT). In Matthew 16:21-27, Jesus makes a call to all would be servant leaders. Jesus' call is not an invitation to careless abandonment of life. Rather, Jesus is calling all servant leaders to surrender self, rejecting a lifestyle weakened by indulgence, and a striving after worldly advantage. Haman and King Ahasuerus typified all these! Such surrender means that a servant leader comes to see death or life in the service of the Master as all good! (Philippians 1: 21)

3. **Read Esther 4:15-16; John 12:25-26; Romans 14:7-8, and Philippians 1:21. (a) What was the source of confidence expressed in these passages? (b) How would a pre-occupation with "life" have impacted the responses of the leaders mentioned in these passages? (c) Let participants share instances where such a preoccupation is affecting our leadership; and mention the adjustments we need to make as servant leaders.**

Prayer: Dear Father, grant that as servant leaders, we may subdue our hearts until it agrees with Your plan for our lives in service to You and others. Help us to serve as people who believe completely in who You are. Amen