



## Sowing and Reaping

Session Seven

### Look Back at Last Week

- In his sermon on Esther 6, Pastor Curtis said, “Coincidences are God’s way of remaining anonymous.” When have you seen the invisible hand of God at work in “coincidences”?
- Frederick Beuchner wrote that “[t]here is no event so commonplace but that God is present within it, always leaving room to recognize or not recognize Him.” What are ways we can be intentional about finding God in the details and in the major developments of our lives?
- Chart out your life on paper by dividing it into intervals of ten years. In each ten-year segment, jot down at least three big and three small things that happened in your life during that time. Discuss (or consider individually) how this practice deepens your trust in God as the author of your life.

### Read Aloud

Passage for this week: **Esther 7**

### Head (15–20 Minutes)

#### OBSERVE THE TEXT AND THE AUTHOR’S MAIN POINTS

1. Everyone loves a happy ending where the antagonist is thwarted and ultimately falls subject to their own villainous plot. What is it that we find so compelling about seeing someone we dislike “receive a dose of their own medicine”?
2. How does Esther demonstrate courage and faith? What is the significance of Esther revealing her Jewish identity at this point in the story?
3. How does Esther 7 illustrate Proverbs 16:18?

### Heart (15–20 Minutes)

#### ENVISION HOW THE TEXT—WHEN APPLIED—MIGHT TRANSFORM YOUR INNER LIFE IN TERMS OF YOUR THOUGHTS, ATTITUDES, AND BEHAVIORS

1. Where have you seen the principle of reaping what you sow in your life?
2. Read Romans 12:17-19. What does this passage tell us about how to act in the face of injustice? What does this passage suggest about the difference between justice and vengeance?
3. Consider and discuss how your daily choices, such as standing up against gossip, supporting a friend, what you purchase, or where you volunteer, align with justice and courage.

## Hands (10 Minutes)

APPLY THE TEXT BY MOVING FROM INWARD REFLECTION TO OUTWARD ACTION LOOKING FOR WAYS TO LIVE THE TEXT OUT IN OUR LIVES TO SERVE OTHERS

- What can we learn from Esther and Haman in this chapter as it relates to the difference between pursuing vengeance and pursuing justice? How might this be applied in our lives?
- As we participate in the Lord's redemptive story, what are ways we can position ourselves to restore justice to situations of injustice?
- What steps can we take to be courageous like Esther when facing a challenging situation that requires standing up for justice?

### **Reaching Upwards:** Growing in Your Relationship with God

- Discuss the challenge of loving your enemy and leaving vengeance to God.
- Pray individually and as a group for the Holy Spirit to lead you to sow righteousness and guide you to use words carefully.
- Discuss how you have handled unexpected changes in your life. How has that impacted your relationship with God?

### **Reaching Outwards:** Investing in Your Neighbors

- July 11-14 - FPC Mo-Ranch: Pray for safe travels, a spiritually enriching time, and safety while there.
- Star of Hope Prayer Requests: On Thursday, June 27, FPC Staff and Covenant Partners toured the Star of Hope Women & Family Development Center. At the end of the visit, SOH identified these prayer requests for their clients and the SOH staff:
  - That God would help the clients forgive themselves and their pasts, so they are able to move forward and succeed in life;
  - For the clients to have courage to step outside of Star of Hope (outside of their safe haven) with courage;
  - That the clients will seek God's will and His wisdom in all their decisions;
  - For the Holy Spirit to comfort the staff and clients of the Men's Development Center because they recently lost a dear brother who was the Spiritual Life Coordinator and a long-time staff member; and
  - For the staff at all locations to have stamina, good health, spiritual protection, and healing for those who are ill.

### **Reaching Beyond**

- July 20 - Volunteer Training (8:45 am - 12:00 pm) at the Landing, a Ministry Partner that offers shelter and encouragement to human trafficking victims in Houston. Sign up by July 17 at the [landing.org](http://landing.org).
- For information about FPC Mission Partners and additional volunteer opportunities go to [fpchouston.org/serve/ways-to-serve/upcoming-opportunities](http://fpchouston.org/serve/ways-to-serve/upcoming-opportunities).
- July 25 - For the next Post-Alpha group meeting on July 25, pray that those who come feel welcome and continue their interest in and commitment to the gospel. Pray that those with unresolved questions about Jesus would sense His love and draw close to Him. For additional information contact Emmanuel Paulpeter, Pastor of Outreach, at [epaulpeter@fpchouston.org](mailto:epaulpeter@fpchouston.org).