



May 11, 2014
**The Blessing and
Curse of Beauty**
Esther 2

Leader option: “*Sharing Your Story*” as part of sharing God’s story of grace and mercy.

Discuss:

Is there anyone who you consider beautiful, but by the world’s standards would not be considered beautiful? What is it that makes that person beautiful to you?

The story so far:

God’s people are in exile in Persia, where the culture does not know God and lives in rebellion against Him. Nearly four years have passed since Queen Vashti was deposed by King Xerxes for not appearing on command. There is no queen and according to historians, Xerxes has suffered a devastating defeat by the Greeks.

Read Esther 2:1-7.

In Hebrew narrative, the attributes described when a character is introduced are key to understanding his or her role in the story.

[Q] What are the defining attributes of Mordecai? (v. 5-6)

[Q] What are the first things revealed about Esther? (v. 7) Who does she please and how does she accomplish this?

Read Esther 2:8-18.

[Q] Describe the experiences Esther went through in verses 8-18. Would it have been an exciting adventure or a terrifying ordeal? Why do you think that?

[Q] What do you suppose Mordecai was thinking or feeling in verse 11?

[Q] Proverbs 31:30 says, *Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.* (ESV) Why is it so hard for us in our culture to remember this?

[Q] Read the following verses. What do you learn about the ways to pursue true beauty?

1 Peter 3:3-4

³ *Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes. ⁴ Rather, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight.*

1 Timothy 2:9-10

⁹ *I also want the women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, adorning themselves, not with elaborate hairstyles or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, ¹⁰ but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God.*

Psalm 34:5

Those who look to him are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame.

It has been said that “True beauty is to behold and reflect the beauty of God”*. Isaiah 53:2 states, regarding the Messiah, *He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.*

[Q] What makes Jesus beautiful?

This week:

[Q] How will you “behold and reflect” Christ’s beauty?

[Q] How will you encourage the women in your life regarding their value and true beauty?

The rest of chapter 2:

In Esther 2:19-23, Mordecai happens to uncover a plot to assassinate the king while he is “sitting at the gate” (which refers to holding an official position in the court). He tells Esther who in turn reports it to the king. The conspirators are executed and the event is then recorded in the annals of the king. No explanation is given why Mordecai’s loyalty goes unrewarded as would be the norm.

Pray

**True Beauty* by Mahaney and Whitacre.