

# The Gathering Community Group Guide

## Brave // Week 5 // Approach the throne

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Esther 5

Community Groups are used extensively as the primary vehicle for discipleship at The Gathering and run on a quarter system. There is one in the fall, one in the winter and one in the spring. During the summer weeks we don't meet in Community Groups but we still offer the Growth Guides as a tool to help you grow personally. The Growth Guides are designed to help you dig deeper into the weekly sermon on your own or with your family and are available each week along with the note sheets at church as well as online.

**COMMUNITY GROUPS ARE BETTER WHEN MEMBERS COME PREPARED. TAKE TIME BEFORE GROUP TO GO OVER THIS GUIDE.**

### Consider...

Use the summary and discussion below to review and apply this week's message:

#### Message Summary

After deciding at the end of Esther 4 to risk her life by approaching the king on his throne, we find Esther approaching the throne in chapter 5. But she isn't the only one, and as Paul pointed out, Esther and Haman are a great contrast in ways to approach the throne. It also leads to a very important question that all of us need the courage to answer honestly:

1. **Esther approached the throne as an advocate:** I love how Esther approached the king: with confidence, preparation, with purpose, expectation, and with patience. She wasn't just going to the throne for her own life (although I'm sure she wanted to live!), but for her people. She was an advocate who risked it all for the people she loved the most, just like so many of the mothers that we celebrate every year on Mother's Day.
2. **Haman approached the throne as an opportunist:** But on the flip side, the biggest shark in the water approached the throne very differently. He wasn't trying to use the king's power to help others, but rather to serve his own agenda and to remove people who irritated him.
3. **Do you have tunnel vision or funnel vision?** Tunnel vision sees only one thing (and usually that's MY thing) and it leads to idolatry. Funnel vision sees our part as a piece of God's plan and leads to the humility of being used by God to achieve that plan. People with funnel vision are marked by beauty and grace; people with tunnel vision are often marked by bitterness and rigidity.

#### Discuss

Use the following questions to review and apply the points learned in the message.

- What, if any, is your takeaway from this week's message?
- When you know you need to ask someone about something very important, how do you feel? How does the conversation typically go? What do you do to get ready for "the big ask?"
- Read Hebrews 4:14-16. What are some things that we know about Jesus and what he did for us from these 3 verses? How does what Jesus did give us confidence in approaching God?
- How could this one truth about Jesus making a way to the throne totally revolutionize how you view prayer in your life?
- In the last half of Esther 5, we find that Haman can't even enjoy the blessings in his life because of the bitterness that has been growing in his heart against one man. Have you ever experienced a bitterness that grew out of control?
- According to Hebrews 12:15, roots of bitterness are able to grow when we miss something. What is it? How does receiving grace (that is available at the throne because Jesus made the way) help us dig out bitter roots?
- Would you say that your life is marked more by intercession for others or indulgence for yourself? Do you relate more to Esther's approach or Haman's?