

## A Little Respect Esther 1

**Purpose:** To demonstrate that respect between individuals grows from mutual understanding and appreciation, rather than being imposed through authority or control.

**Group Discussion:** Consider one person who has earned your respect. What qualities do they possess, and what specific behaviors led to your high regard for them?

**Personal Reflection:** Think about your own life. What qualities or actions might lead your friends to respect you? On the flip side, what might cause them to lose respect for you?

1. If you were a guest at this lavish banquet, what overwhelming sights, sounds, and aromas might stand out to you?
2. Who are the key players we meet in Esther 1, and how would you describe them?
3. What possible conclusions can we draw about the king's motivations given the sheer extravagance of the 6-month exhibit of his wealth and his party? (vv. 2-8)
4. What do you think were the primary concerns or ethical considerations that informed Queen Vashti's response to the king's order? What would have been at stake for her? (v. 12)
5. Reflect on a past experience where you were put in a position that felt awkward or uncomfortable. How did that situation make you feel and how did you react?
6. What connections did the wise men draw between Vashti's personal act of refusal and its potential threat to the stability of the entire kingdom? (vv. 16-20)
7. What contrasting approaches to earning and keeping respect do we observe in the actions and attitudes of Xerxes, Vashti, and the wise men? How do their beliefs about respect influence their decisions and interactions? (Choose only one person when sharing your response)
8. Reflecting on your own experiences, can you identify any past or present attempts to earn respect that you now recognize as unhelpful or not aligned with biblical principles?
9. What's one thing that you can do this week to show someone respect?

**What to pray for:** Thank God for those in your life who you respect, or pray that God will help you show respect to those around you.