

LESSON 6

MORDECAI AND HAMAN

BEFORE YOU TEACH

The King's Seal

Signet rings were used in ancient times as personal signatures. Such rings usually had a raised imprint made of metal or wood. The king had his own imprint, and official documents were sealed by pressing the king's ring into soft wax.

In the Book of Esther, these official documents or decrees issued by the king and sealed by his signet ring became "the laws of the Persians and Medes" (1:19). This describes the uncompromising nature of the laws that governed the Persian Empire.

Once a law was issued, it could not be revoked or changed, not even by the king himself.

Casting Lots

Casting lots (i.e., throwing dice) was commonly used in the past to make important decisions. It was believed that this practice would reveal the best solution.

Haman casts lots to determine the best day to carry out his plan to kill the Jews, including Mordecai. In the Book of Jonah and at the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, casting lots was also practiced to make decisions.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR STUDENTS

Hatred is something that can easily consume people. It may begin with not liking someone because of the way he looks or acts. Whatever the reason, hatred will only grow and corrupt the heart. Haman's heart was so full of hatred and bitterness for Mordecai that he formulated a plan to eliminate all the Jews living in Persia.

Your students will begin to develop certain dislikes at their age. Those things may include the disdain for vegetables, homework, or even certain people. The former two are usually brushed off and it is hoped that the students will outgrow them with age. However, the dislike for others should not be taken lightly.

Parents often laugh it off when their children say that they don't like boys or girls in general. That may be a normal part of growing up. But it is also common for children to form cliques and exclude others from their group. Gangs are not an uncommon sight in schools nowadays. They target people for many reasons: their race, their looks, their culture, or their gender.

It usually starts out on a small scale. Maybe your students will giggle knowingly or make faces amongst themselves when someone they do not like is mentioned. It seems like a game, a secret they share. But it can grow into something much worse if the attitudes are not corrected.

BIBLE TEXT

Esther 2:19-23; 3; 5:9-16; 6:1-12

BIBLE TRUTH

God blesses those who are humble.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. To learn to refuse to bow except to God; to be willing to stand up for God.
2. To remember to watch out for pride.
3. To understand that we must not have hatred in our hearts.
4. To know that God blesses those who are humble.

MEMORY VERSE

"God resists the proud,
but gives grace to the humble."

(1 Peter 5:5b)

PRAYER

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we pray. Lord Jesus, You are the only true God. We want to be obedient and humble, and follow the good examples of Esther and Mordecai by keeping Your commandments. Please watch over us and keep us from becoming proud and boastful, and from thinking of ourselves as better than others. Hallelujah! Amen.

In Hebrews 12:15, it warns us against "any root of bitterness springing up" that will "cause trouble, and by this many become defiled."

Remind your students that God commanded them to love their neighbors as themselves. They should not dislike anyone for any reason. Maybe they feel that they are pressured due to their need for friends and approval. Either

way, it is not acceptable and such an attitude does not please God.

It is important to ensure that your students have the correct attitudes growing up so that they can stand firm under any situation in the future. Remind them of the memory verse: "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

VOCABULARY

gallows: a wooden frame used for hanging people

decree: an official order

REVIEW

Last week, we learned about how a beautiful Jewish woman became the new queen of Persia. Her name was Esther. She was brought up by Mordecai, who had taught her to be obedient and to worship God.

Before she had been chosen, King Xerxes had been angry with his queen, Vashti, because she had not obeyed him. As a result, he banished her from the palace. Then he had to find a new queen to replace her.

The king's ministers selected the most beautiful women in the land and pampered them for one year to prepare them to see the king. When a year had passed, the women went in to see Xerxes one by one. When it was Esther's turn, the king was very pleased with her. He immediately crowned her as the new queen and held a great feast for everyone.

We learned that Esther was blessed by God because she was obedient. Even though she was a queen, she never boasted and always humbled herself.

BIBLE STORY

Mordecai Foils a Plot

After Esther became queen, she lived in the palace. Mordecai, her adopted father, was concerned about her and wanted to make sure that she was all right. Fortunately, Mordecai was always near the gates of the king's palace, so he was not far from her. Many times he would go near the palace courtyard to find out how Esther was doing.

One day, as Mordecai sat at the gates, he saw two men talking secretly to one another. Because he was sitting close to them, he overheard their conversation. They were plotting to kill the king! They said that the king had angered them and now they wanted revenge.

When Mordecai heard this, he quickly thought of a plan to stop them. He knew the best way was to tell Queen Esther, who could then report it to the king. So he sent a message to the queen. When Queen Esther heard the news, she immediately told her husband, King Xerxes.

The king wanted to be sure, so he sent his servants to investigate. When they reported that it was true, the two men were arrested and hung. This event was also recorded in the king's palace history books.

Now Mordecai was a humble man and he did not go around telling people how he had saved the king's life.

And because the king was so busy, he forgot to reward Mordecai. But Mordecai did not become angry because he was a good person and felt that it was a natural responsibility to help others.

The Proud and Evil Haman

Now around the same time, there was a very important official who worked for the king. He was the prime minister and his name was Haman.

Haman was very different from Mordecai. He was a proud man and liked it when people bowed down to him because he thought he was better than them. But whenever Haman passed by the king's gates, he noticed that Mordecai never bowed down to him. Mordecai knew that he could only bow down to God and not to anyone else.

Haman became very angry and began to think of ways to punish Mordecai. He knew that Mordecai was a Jew. The more Haman thought about it, the more enraged he became. Haman was so evil that he thought it would be best if all the Jews were killed. That way, Mordecai would be killed with them and he wouldn't have to make an extra effort or have it look like a personal grudge.

The Decree Is Issued

Haman decided to take action on his plan. He knew that he had to get permission from the king because there were many Jews in the land. Haman thought of a way to convince the king without raising suspicion about his real motive. When he was ready, he went to see King Xerxes in the palace.

"King Xerxes," said Haman, "There is a certain group of people in the land who are evil, and they do not follow your laws. It would be best if they were killed."

The king did not realize Haman's evil plan and just blindly trusted Haman's words.

"What should we do then?" asked the king.

Haman replied, "Let the king issue a decree saying that all these people, men or women, young or old, be destroyed on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, and their properties confiscated."

This proposal sounded good to the king so he signed a letter to seal the fate of the Jews. Haman had come up with this plot in the first month of the year. So there were still another eleven months before the Jews would be killed.

Haman was very happy about this new law. But since the end of the year was still a long ways away, he would still become angry whenever he saw Mordecai refusing to bow down to him. He always went home mad and complained to his family.

One day, Haman's family and friends tried to comfort him. They suggested that he build a gallows and hang Mordecai in public. That way, Haman could get his revenge. Haman thought that this was a wonderful idea and had the gallows made immediately. He could hardly wait till the morning when he would see the king and tell him about his plan.

Mordecai Is Honored

But God knew about Haman's evil plans and would not allow such an evil man to have his way.

Strangely, the same night that Haman came up with his

evil plan to hang Mordecai, King Xerxes could not fall asleep. The king did not understand why. So he got up and asked his servant to read the palace's history to him.

It so happened that the servant read about how Mordecai had saved the king's life some time ago. Then the king remembered that he had not rewarded him. But he could not think of a good way to thank Mordecai for his heroic actions.

Just as the king was thinking of what to do, Haman came into the king's court, wanting to speak to King Xerxes about hanging Mordecai. When the king saw Haman, he immediately asked him an important question.

"Haman, what should be done for someone I want to honor?" the king asked. He thought Haman might have a great idea.

When Haman heard this, he thought the king was speaking about him. So Haman gave the king an answer, picturing himself as the man to be honored.

"The king should give this man a royal robe to wear and have an official lead him in a parade through the streets on horseback. It should be announced that this is the man the king wants to honor so that everyone on the streets can hear it."

Haman was very excited about his clever idea, thinking that it was him the king wanted to honor.

The king thought that this was a good way to thank Mordecai, so he gave an order to Haman.

"Do as you say, Haman. Take the royal robe and horse and give them to Mordecai, who is at the gates. You will be the official that leads him in the parade."

Haman was so humiliated when he heard the king's orders. He did not realize the king was talking about his enemy. There was nothing he could do now except to follow King Xerxes' instructions.

Haman reluctantly did as the king ordered. He put the royal robe on Mordecai and led him out on the streets with Mordecai riding on the royal horse. Afterwards, Haman went home feeling worse than ever. His plan to hang Mordecai was ruined.

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

Fill In the Blank/True or False/Questions

1. Mordecai was a _____ (humble) man. He did not boast about saving the king.
2. _____ (Haman) was the prime minister in King Xerxes' palace.
3. The king wanted to _____ (honor) Mordecai for saving his life.
4. True or False: Haman came up with a plan to kill the Jews, including Mordecai. True.
5. True or False: Haman was a humble man. He was glad Mordecai was being honored. False.
7. Why didn't Mordecai bow down to Haman? He did not want to disobey God's commandment—ask students to which of the Ten Commandments this refers (the second).
8. What was Haman's plan for taking revenge against Mordecai? His plan was to destroy all the Jews.

MEMORY VERSE PRACTICE

Please reinforce the memory verse every week.
You can practice the memory verse with your students anytime during class.

"God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble." (1 Peter 5:5b)

SPIRITUAL TEACHING & LIFE APPLICATION

1. Refuse to bow, except to God, and be willing to stand up for Him.

Haman was the prime minister in Persia, and he had much power under the king. This made him a very arrogant and unlikable person. He liked to see people bow to him and pay homage as he passed. A lot of people tried to avoid him on the streets, but if they couldn't, they'd have to bow to Haman since they feared him. Nonetheless, there was one person who refused to bow to Haman. Who was it? [Let students answer.] His name was Mordecai. He didn't bow to Haman even once because he knew that it was against the law of God. Mordecai knew very clearly that only the true and living God deserves our worship and praise. Students, can you imagine how much courage it took Mordecai to do that? People around him probably thought that he was crazy. As much as they didn't want to bow to Haman, they did it anyways because they didn't want to get into any trouble with a government official. But Mordecai didn't care if it was embarrassing or dangerous; he wouldn't disobey God and bow to Haman. He didn't compromise nor give in under pressure. Instead, he did the same every time, glorifying God's name without fearing to be different.

Today, how can we also learn from Mordecai and take a stand for God? When faced with a choice between following man's law or God's law, the right decision is clear. The Bible does tell us to submit to our government, but when there is a conflict between the law of man and the law of God, the Bible makes it very clear to us that "we ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). Doing what is right in God's eyes may not always be easy, but when we obey and follow God without compromise, God will open up a way for us!

2. Watch out for pride.

In our story today, we learned that Haman plotted against Mordecai as well the Jews. What were his plans? [Let students answer.] He wanted to hang Mordecai and kill all the Jews in the land. Why did he want to kill so many people? What led him to even think about these horrible plans? The answer is very simple and not something new to us. It was his pride! Haman loved his power and authority. When he saw that Mordecai did not bow or pay him homage, his anger consumed him. If he weren't so arrogant, wanting everyone to bow to him, he wouldn't have been so angry to the point where he felt he needed to have all the Jews killed in order to feel better. He knew that all the Jews worshipped and honored their God rather than him and the king, so he wanted them all to disappear so that everyone would bow down to him. Can you imagine? He wanted the entire nation to be killed because of his own pride!

Students, pride is at the root of many sins because Satan knows that it is very easy for us to become proud. He uses our pride to take away the honor of God. As Christians, we understand that God blesses us with everything we have. Whenever we achieve something that makes us feel better than others, we tend to give ourselves all the glory and forget to honor God. If it weren't for God's blessings, we would not be able to achieve anything. Sadly, many people tend to look at their own achievements and think that they deserve all the glory. While God doesn't want us to be this way, Satan does! Satan wants us to feel so good about ourselves that we think we don't need God in our lives. This is probably how Haman felt. As a high official, he was probably very capable and rich. He could not understand why God is so important in people's lives.

So, how do we know we have pride? Firstly, do we acknowledge that we need God in our lives? If we do, we should count our blessings every day and give thanks to God for everything we have. That way, we won't leave a foothold for Satan to make us arrogant. Secondly, do we always think that we are better than others? If we do, we must be very careful. Remember that God gives us different talents and abilities to serve Him, not to compare with others. While you may be better at one thing, your friends are better than you at something else, too! We should not compare with others, but focus on using our talents to serve God and glorify Him. Lastly, never look down on others even though you are

better at something. When we do something well, it is not time for us to glorify ourselves but to glorify God by showing humility and possibly kindness to others whom we may be able to help. Let me share a very good example with you.

Emily is an excellent piano player. She knows how to play all the hymns and is the only one in her RE class who can do so. Sometimes, her RE teachers would ask her to help play the piano for hymn singing. Because of this, she has become very proud of herself. When Emily sees that there is no one to play the piano during RE class, she never volunteers to help. Instead, she waits for the teacher to ask her for help so that she can become the center of attention. After class every Saturday, she likes singing hymns with her friends, not because she likes to praise God but because she wants to show everybody that she can play all the hymns. In addition, she often asks her friends if they want to take turns to play the piano. Her intention is not to give other people a chance to play but rather to embarrass them since she knows that they don't play the piano as well as she does. Emily loves it when her friends say that they don't want to play because Emily is the best among them—it makes her feel good! Inside her heart, Emily looks down on her friends because they never learned all the hymns like she did.

One Saturday, Emily wanted to show off her piano skills again, so she suggested to her friends to sing some hymns. Suddenly, Emily felt a cramp in her forearm and she screamed in pain. After the cramp had gone away, Emily's arm felt very weak and sore. She couldn't play the piano. In her mind, she realized that it was God's punishment. She thought to herself, "I asked everybody to sing hymns together, but my mind wasn't trying to praise God. I was only trying to give glory to myself. God knew that and He punished me with a horrible cramp. God sees the pride in my heart, and I must remove it in order to please God." That day, Emily prayed for forgiveness and, from then on, she continually asks God to help humble her in her daily prayers. She is now very careful not to let pride enter her heart!

Students, the Bible tells us that pride leads to destruction. In Proverbs 16:5, it says, "Everyone proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD; though they join forces, none will go unpunished." If pride makes us feel good, that's because we have let Satan grab a foothold and have welcomed him in. But in the end, God will punish those who are proud. We must watch out for pride!

3. We must not have hatred in our hearts.

Another horrible thing pride does to us is that it creates hatred in our hearts. Haman's pride made him hate the Jews so much that he wanted all of them killed. It wasn't that the Jews did anything wrong; the problem stemmed from the pride in Haman's heart. In other words, pride can make us dislike others, but they do not deserve our hatred because the problem lies within us. Let me share another example with you to illustrate this.

Michael has been struggling in his English writing class for a long time. However, he practiced writing very hard prior to his most recent exam and his grade finally went from a C to an A! Michael's English teacher was very proud of him and announced this great news to Michael's class to encourage others who are struggling with certain subjects. Michael's friends were all very happy for Michael and congratulated him right away. Others who had the same struggle as Michael felt very inspired. However, there was one person in class who was not happy after hearing the news. Jason was very angry; for the longest time, he took pride in being the best student in the class. Instead of praising him for once again getting an A on his exam, everyone went to congratulate Michael. Before, the teacher would always ask Jason to share what he wrote on his exam to the rest of the class, and everyone would applaud him. Jason loves that and was eagerly expecting the same attention this time. Not only did he feel anger towards Michael, he also began to dislike Michael for threatening him to lose everyone's attention.

The next day, Jason went to school and started spreading a wrong message to his friends. He said, "Michael cheated on the exam. I saw him sneak into the teacher's office the day before our exam, and he had a look at the exam topic. He must have known the topic way ahead of us and had a lot more time to prepare for the exam." Jason didn't want Michael to receive the praise that he was so used to receiving, so he made up this faulty message. Not only did he hate Michael, he also wanted others to dislike him. Very quickly, the news spread, not just to all of Michael's classmates but to the teacher, too. Jason was punished the very next day. The teacher knew that he was lying right away because she did not come up with the exam topic until that morning of their exam. Michael could not have seen the topic the day before. Moreover, there was a security

camera in the teacher's office. Michael never went into the teacher's office. The teacher said to Jason, "Michael didn't deserve what you did to him nor did he deserve your hatred. Imagine if you worked very hard and got a good grade in science, which is your weakest subject. You wouldn't want someone else to tell your friends that you cheated on the exam, would you? I know that you are a very honest person. You made this mistake because of pride. It makes you feel so good that you're afraid to lose it. But don't let it change the honest, loving, and kind person that is in you. Don't let pride make you angry and resentful." Jason understood what his teacher said. There was no reason for him to hate Michael. He admitted that he was punished for the right reason. That day, Jason apologized to Michael. Michael said to him, "You're still the best writer in our class!" Instead of accepting the praise, Jason humbled himself and answered, "Thank God. He gave me a useful skill!"

4. God blesses those who are humble.

Mordecai was a humble man. Even when he managed to save the king, he did not seek to be praised or to be given any reward. In the end, we see that God truly blessed Mordecai.

Boys and girls, we all know the importance of being humble. But what does it mean to be humble? What kind of behavior does a humble person show? [Let students answer.] For example, a humble will give praise to God when he does well on a test at school. He will not go around showing off to others about how smart he is. James 4:6 states, "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble." When we can truly humble ourselves, God will bless us just like He blessed Mordecai. While pride is the root of many sins, humility is what keeps us from sinning against God. Many good virtues in fact come along with humility, such as love, patience, and kindness. Let's read a scenario.

It was snowing very hard and the wind blew harshly. There was hardly anybody on the streets except a homeless man sitting next to the telephone booth. Vicki, in the car with her parents, passed by this homeless man, and she said to her parents, "Can we stop and give this homeless man some of our take-out? He seems very cold and hungry. I think some warm food will help him a lot." Her parents agreed, and Vicki handed the homeless man some food. The homeless man answered, "Thank you, little girl. God bless you!"

The next day, Vicki saw a picture of herself and this homeless man on the newspaper. Someone caught the scene, photographed it, and sent it to the newspaper publisher. The title was "Homeless Man Says, 'God sent an angel.'" Many people read the newspaper and marveled at how loving and kind this little girl was, including Vicki's teachers and classmates. Everyone was saying that God is so good for sending this little girl to the homeless man and that this little girl must be a very good Christian. Vicki, being the little girl in the news, never revealed herself. She was just so happy that everyone praised God after reading her story, and she didn't want take the glory. She knew that it was all part of God's plan for her to meet this homeless man and that the glory should belong to God alone. Vicki's parents, the only people who knew who this little girl was, later bought Vicki a gift to encourage her to continue practicing humbleness before the Lord.

Students, clearly pride and humility are opposites. Do you want to be like Haman or Mordecai? Let's make a decision right now! [Have your students go to the left side of the classroom if they want to be like Haman, and to the right side if they want to be like Mordecai.] Thank God! We have a very humble E1 class!

HOMWORK ANSWER KEY

1. He told Queen Esther to warn the king.
2. Haman was prime minister to King Xerxes.
3. He wanted people to bow down to him.
4. Mordecai kept God's commandment to only worship Him alone.
5. Proud, hateful, wicked
6. The hatred in his heart was great, and he thought that it would make it easier to cover up his true motive.
7. Answers may vary.
8. He put the royal robe on Mordecai and had Haman lead Mordecai in a parade through the streets while Mordecai rode on the king's horse.
9. Answers may vary.

ACTIVITIES

1

Mordecai Is Honored

Look at the picture of Haman leading Mordecai through the streets on the king's horse. This was King Xerxes' way of honoring Mordecai for saving his life. Look carefully at the picture. Can you find the king himself, the king's ring, a scepter, and a goblet hidden in the picture? Color them in.



2**Mordecai and Haman Puppet Role-play**

Objective: To get students to make their own puppets for the play.

Materials

- Empty toilet paper rolls
- Scissors
- Construction paper
- Glue
- Markers

Instructions

1. Using the materials listed, make puppets for the following characters:

- Mordecai
- Haman
- King Xerxes
- Two guards that conspired against the king
- Queen Esther

2. When all the students have finished making their puppets, ask them to retell the story of Haman and Mordecai in a puppet role-play.

E1 Year 2 Book 3 Lesson 6—Mordecai and Haman

Homework Assignment

Name: _____ Parent signature: _____ Date: _____

Bible Truth: God blesses those who are humble.

Lesson Objectives: 1. To be humble children of God.
 2. To have love, instead of hatred, in our hearts.

Bible Reading: Please put a check mark in the space when you complete the reading each day.

Prayer: Please put a check mark in the space provided on the days you prayed to God.

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Bible Reading							
Prayer							

Memory Verse

Please write down this week's memory verse.

(1 Peter 5:5b)

What I Learned from the Bible This Week

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Homework Assignment

Understanding What You Have Learned

Short Answer

1. What did Mordecai do after hearing the plot against the king?

2. Who was Haman?

3. What did Haman want people to do when he walked past them?

4. Why didn't Mordecai bow down to Haman?

5. List out some of Haman's weaknesses.

6. Haman only hated Mordecai. Why did he eventually want to kill all the Jews in the land?

7. Do you think it was a coincidence that the king read the palace's history books just before Haman wanted to hang Mordecai?

8. How did the king reward Mordecai?

9. What happens when we are obedient to God?

Life Application

10. Have you ever disliked someone? Does the mention of that person's name make you angry? God tells us that this is the wrong attitude to have. As children of God, we need to learn to be humble, and we must not dislike other people. If we dislike someone or have hatred in our hearts, what can we do to change ourselves for the better? Write your ideas down on another sheet of paper.