

SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE



**PRINCE
OF PEACE**
Called to Connect



Self-Control

October 14 & 15, 2023

Esther – trapped in disorienting, deep uncertainty about a future for her and for her people – lives the spiritual fruit of self-control that prepares her for the right moment, the exact right time to speak. The spiritual fruit of self-control creates a brand-new future. Living the Spirit Life of self-control gives us the focus, the preparation, to be ready for generosity.

SCRIPTURE TEXT: ESTHER 7:3

Read the scripture text together as a group.

BACKGROUND INFO

Self-control is evident throughout the story of Esther. Esther was a Jew who grew up in exile in Persia and, through a crazy series of events, becomes the Queen. As Queen, she finds herself in a position to save her people from a plot by a key advisor to the King to kill all the Jews in Persia. Esther, almost intuitively, lives into Spirit Life and decides to exercise self-control. She prepares to tell the king what is going on by building trust through relationship. Exactly at the right moment, Esther reveals the truth to the King and asks for his help. The King hears her, believes her, and responds, saving the Jewish community.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What is your gut reaction when you hear the phrase “self-control”? Why do you think you have that reaction? On a scale of 1-10, how effectively/consistently do you exercise self-control? Share a quick story about a time you either “nailed it” or “crashed and burned” in a situation that required self-control.
- On a scale of 1-10, how excited do you get about financial stewardship? (Be honest.) What past experiences have influenced your score? What cause(s) are you passionate about supporting? Why? What “excuses” do you use when you don’t want to financially support something? What are the “real reasons” behind not wanting to support those things?
- Besides Esther, what other Biblical stories/characters model self-control? Share about somebody in your own life who has modeled self-control for you. How has their self-control been a gift to you or others?
- When you think about Prince of Peace and its mission to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ to the world, what do you see as our challenges? What do you see as our opportunities? What would you like to hear more about? How is God calling you to respond?

CHALLENGE: Over these next several weeks, reflect on your own journey of self-control, not as a command but as a gift, so you too can live Spirit Life like Esther and find that focus, that preparation to be ready for generosity in response to this year’s stewardship appeal.