

### Questions for Cubs

**NOTE TO PARENTS/TEACHERS:**

The goal of this questions-and-answers section is to initiate interaction between you and your kids. Please do not just read the questions and answers to your kids. These answers are given for you at an adult level to think about and to process. Once that is accomplished, you can then translate them into appropriate answers for your kids.

**Lesson**

God Causes All Things to Work together for the Good of His People

**Key Verse**

And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. (Romans 8:28)

**Ear Check (Story Comprehension)**

- Q: Why was Queen Vashti sent away?  
A: *She refused to parade herself before the king and his council.*
- Q: What were Mordecai and his guests celebrating?  
A: *Esther's birthday*
- Q: What did Mordecai announce at the party?  
A: *Moshe and Esther's engagement*
- Q: Why were the king's soldiers gathering the women together?  
A: *To force them to compete to be the next queen*
- Q: What is the name of the woman who Esther says is "wretched"?  
A: *Mahnoosh*

**Heart Check (Spiritual Application)**

Q: Do bad things happen to those who are deeply committed and obedient to God?

A: Yes, they do. It happened to Esther. She was taken from her home—never to return. She was forced to compete to become the queen of a pagan king, which was an unthinkable situation for her because of her faith.

When tragedy strikes one of perhaps several things may be going on. It could be as it was for Esther, what seemed an evil circumstance was really part of God's plan and it will be used for good. Or our suffering could be due to our sins or the sins of others around us. A deep mystery surrounds every tragedy. We may not know the reasons behind our sorrow until we see Christ face-to-face in heaven. However, as children of God, we can trust in His

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character. God is not flippant or indifferent toward our suffering. He is not spiteful or amused with our suffering. He is our loving, caring Father. He is able to use every situation—good and bad—for our ultimate good. Whenever we face suffering that we cannot understand, we need to throw ourselves into the arms of Christ instead of running from Him in anger (Romans 5:3–5; 8:35–39). He loves us dearly, and we can trust Him implicitly.

#### **“I” Check (*Personal Application*)**

1. Ardia looked up to Esther because of her beauty. Who do you look up to? Why do you admire him or her?
2. Ardia prayed and asked God to take away her freckles, turn her hair red, and make her fifteen years old. Why do you think God chose not to answer her prayer?
3. Put yourself in Esther’s shoes. How would you feel if you were taken from your family and friends and forced to live somewhere else? Would you pray? What would you pray for?
4. Read Romans 8:28. What does this mean in your own words? Does this verse promise that bad things won’t happen? Why not? Can you remember a bad situation that God used for good in your life?
5. Esther cried out to God in despair because she couldn’t imagine that He would allow such a devastating tragedy to happen to her. Do you think God had really left Esther? Why or why not?

### **Director's Notes**

While we were recording the very first *Paws & Tales* episode, which was years before we recorded Esther, I was planning on doing the biblical story of Esther. It has all of the elements of a classic drama including treachery, a loathsome villain, a pure and valiant hero, and, of course, a brave and beautiful heroine. In this “part one,” I really wanted to communicate that Esther was *not* a competitive girl who was hoping to win a royal beauty contest. She was a very young girl who was taken from her home and tossed into an unfamiliar world. The difficulty of her circumstances is often overlooked, but it is hugely significant. The way we respond to the trials and tragedies of life are far more telling of our character than anything else. Esther’s character is revealed in the hardships she endured.

Our response to trials also indicates how well we understand God’s character. If our view of God tells us that His only job is to do good things for us, then we will be utterly unhinged when disaster strikes. We will believe He did not live up to His part of the bargain, and we will be angry and confused. A poor understanding of who God is and what His priorities are causes needless pain and suffering. God’s first priority is not our comfort—it’s our character.

It is safe to say that tragedy will occur in your life, if it has not come to you already. When it comes, remember that God is interested in helping us to become more like Christ. He promises to “cause all things to work together for good to those who love God” (Romans 8:28)—NOT to “cause only good things to happen.” By my saying this, you may think that God is uncaring or mean-spirited. Nothing could be further from the truth. Becoming more like Christ is not just better than comfort; comfort and Christlikeness are entirely different things. Christlikeness means that we will come closer to the way we were created to be—intimate with God, secure in who we are as His children, confident enough to weather the storms of life, and selfless enough to work for the good of others.

It is important to note that the very pursuit of Christlikeness requires that we accept and endure some discomfort; it is a necessary part of God’s curriculum. Remember that comfort is merely a bit of physical pleasure. Comfort is not evil or wrong; it is simply neither the chief goal nor the promised result of a life dedicated to Christ.

I do not believe that Esther was called by God “to save her people.” God called her to trust Him and then to obey Him under harsh conditions, even while she was living as a part of the harem of a pagan king. Esther didn’t know why any of this was happening, but in the end her obedience to God saved her people. We never know exactly what God has in mind for us while we are on our journey. We do know that He is worthy of our trust. If we obey Him, He will “cause all things to work together for good.”

Most of us are in “part one” of our own story. We may be confused, we may even be angry that things have not worked out as we planned, and we cannot see how our story will have a happy or important ending. God is the author of happy and important endings. His perfect plan will be accomplished. Most of the Christian walk does not involve doing the great or important things; it is being obedient to God and doing the next thing in front of you. Follow Esther’s example—trust that God knows what He is doing, obey Him always, and be ready for the mighty things He will do in your life and in the lives of those around you.



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