

## Facilitator

1. Open with Prayer
2. Welcome any newcomers
3. Read Esther 3 and 1 Samuel 15 and give a five-minute review of the sermon using Peppy's sermon notes.

Facilitator: Please don't feel you have to cover every question. Try to keep your discussion to an hour and a half at the most.

### **CONNECT Group study questions, Esther 3 and 1 Samuel 15 September 28, 2014**

#### **Title: What Goes Around Comes Around**

When my children were young, sibling spats were peppered with cries of "No fair!" As they grew older, some of their concern shifted to what's fair for others. We all have a sense of what's fair, even if we don't always do what's fair. I think it comes from a desire for symmetry, a kind of satisfaction derived from seeing events come full circle, reaping what's sown, getting your due whether it's good or bad. Some call it karma. Recently at a Chick fil A restaurant, a customer handed the cashier 10 \$100 bills to pick up the tab for the other customers in line. The restaurant gave him his 8-chicken nugget meal with a Dr. Pepper and served 88 customers before the \$1,000 ran out. Don't you think those customers have a sense of obligation to do something for someone else? You bet they do.

As creatures in our Creator's image, we don't have to look far in Scripture to see the same kind of symmetry in God's love, justice, mercy and grace. Our studies in Esther 3 and 1 Samuel 15 reveal God's love for His people, His just response to evil and disobedience, and His provision of grace and forgiveness for those who turn to Him in repentance.

**Question:** When asked, "How are you?" Radio personality Dave Ramsey usually says, "Better than I deserve." Let's brainstorm: In what ways have you been dealt better than you deserve?

**Question:** Verse 1 introduces the villain of the story—Haman, the son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, recently promoted to authority over all the princes. Who does the verse say promoted Haman? Read Psalm 75:6-7, and who you suppose actually manipulated Haman's promotion?

**Question:** Shifting to 1 Samuel 15, Peppy makes the connection between Agag, king of the Amalekites, and Haman, son of an Agagite. What was Saul's disobedience? What were the consequences of Saul's disobedience—to Saul? To the Jewish people of Esther's day? To Jewish people today?

**Question:** Is there a spirit of Amalek in the world today? If so, how does it express itself in world affairs, especially toward those of Judeo-Christian faiths?

**Question:** In Exodus 17:14, the Lord promises to Moses, "I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven." Has He fulfilled that promise yet? **Facilitator:** There is no race or nation today known to be descended from Amalek, so in that sense, the answer is yes. But Peppy reminds us that the Old Testament story of Amalek is a picture of our old fleshly nature that attacks us at our weakest point. In that sense, Amalek lives on in each of us.

**Question:** In Exodus 17:16, the Lord swears to wage war against Amalek from generation to generation. And in Deuteronomy 25:17-19, He promises His people rest from their enemies and again reminds them to not forget to blot out the memory of Amalek when they take possession of their inheritance. Read Romans 8:12-17 and 1 John 1:9. What is our inheritance? **Facilitator:** Our salvation (Romans 8:17). **Question:** How do we take possession?

**Facilitator:** By putting to death the deeds of the body—the flesh (Romans 8:13 and 1John 1:9).

**Question:** How and when do we find rest from our enemies—our old nature and deeds of the flesh?

**Facilitator:** Suggest personal study in confession and repentance.