

**MESSAGE BIG IDEA**

Comfort can be very good, but comfort becomes a problem when it is seen not as a gift but as a destination. To live out our calling as “sent,” there are times when comfort has to go.

**SCRIPTURE**

Esther 4:1-17, Matthew 16:24

**ICEBREAKER**

What is your favorite comfort food?

**OPENING THOUGHT**

When you think of “comfort,” what comes to your mind? Do you picture a particular food that brings you back to sweet childhood memories? Or maybe comfort is a cozy sweatshirt that makes you feel warm and secure. Comfort may be something we seek out and something we may desire to experience. However, comfort should not be the end-all goal. Stepping outside our comfort zone may be exactly what we are called to do.

**BIBLE DISCUSSION**

1. Read Esther 4:1-17 together. Why do you think Esther first responded as she did to Mordecai?
2. Why do you think Esther changed her mind?
3. Read Matthew 16:24. What was Jesus suggesting the disciples do?
4. How would you put Matthew 16:24 into your own words?

**LIFE APPLICATION**

5. Imagine that you are Esther. How do you think you would have felt when receiving the message from Mordecai asking you to make a plea to the King?
6. Jesus says, deny yourself, pick up your cross, and follow me. This is outside of our comfort zone. What comfort zones would you be most uncomfortable about leaving?
7. In what ways can you practice Matthew 16:24?
8. What special talents or gifts do you possess that you think could help you to fulfill your calling?

**CHALLENGE**

Esther probably never imagined that she would be in a position to save so many lives and be the hero. Even she didn't realize her unique position. First, it had to be pointed out by Mordecai. Could there be areas in your life where you may be in a unique position to make a difference? This week look at your relationships, talents you may possess, positions you may hold, and places of influence you may have in a different light. Is there an area of comfort that you may need to shake things up to step into your calling? Next week, share with the group any examples you may have of times you were able to step out and make a difference.