

THE STORY OF ESTHER

THE HIDDEN KING DELIVERS



Small Group Guide: Recognizing God's Activity

Based on Esther 6-8

Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

Begin by asking God to open hearts and minds to recognize His activity in your lives, both past and present.

Icebreaker (10 minutes)

Share a "coincidence" from your life that, looking back, you now recognize as God's hand at work.

Key Takeaways from the Sermon

1. God Moves Through Reversals

- Haman built gallows for Mordecai but was hanged on them himself
- Mordecai went from sackcloth and ashes to royal robes
- The Jews went from facing extermination to being empowered to defend themselves

2. There Are No Coincidences with God

- King Xerxes "couldn't sleep" → God wouldn't let him
- The eunuchs "happened" to read about Mordecai → Spirit-guided
- Haman arrived at the "right moment" → Divine timing

3. How to Recognize God's Activity

- Look for the "upside downs" in your life
 - Watch for death becoming life
 - Notice when closed doors lead to better open ones
 - See patterns that match biblical stories
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Discussion Questions

Understanding the Text (15 minutes)

1. What stood out to you most from the rapid reversals in Esther 6-8? Which character's experience resonated with you and why?
2. How did Haman's pride lead to his downfall? What does this teach us about humility before God?
3. Why is it significant that "many from the peoples of the country declared themselves Jews" (8:17)? What does this tell us about God's ultimate purpose?

Recognizing God's Activity (20 minutes)

4. Pastor Chad said, "If you want to understand the story, stand on your head and read the Bible upside down." What does this mean practically for how we view our circumstances?
5. The sermon identified several ways to recognize God's activity:
 - Sudden reversals
 - Life from death situations
 - Closed doors leading to open ones

Which of these have you experienced? Share your story.

6. Read Philippians 2:5-11. How does Jesus' humiliation and exaltation mirror what happened to Mordecai? How should this pattern shape our expectations?

Personal Application (20 minutes)

- 7. The "homework" was to look back on your life for reversals and upside-downs. Take a few minutes of silence for personal reflection, then share:**
 - **A time when something that seemed terrible turned out for good**
 - **A closed door that led to something better**
 - **A "death" situation where God brought life**
 - 8. Where in your life right now might God be working that you haven't recognized yet? Are you in a "Friday episode" waiting for resolution? How does this sermon encourage you?**
 - 9. How can we better train ourselves to see God's activity in real-time rather than only in hindsight?**
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Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge:

Choose ONE of the following to practice this week:

Option 1: Testimony Journal

- **Write down 2-3 "God reversals" from your past**
- **Note specific details about how things were turned upside down**
- **Prepare to share one with someone this week**

Option 2: Recognition Practice

- **Each day, look for one "upside down" moment (big or small)**
- **Ask: "Could this be God at work?"**
- **Share with the group next week what you noticed**

Option 3: Witness Opportunity

- **Identify someone who needs encouragement**
- **Share a specific story of how God reversed something in your life**
- **Connect it to God's character and faithfulness**

Biblical Patterns to Remember

When recognizing God's activity, look for these biblical patterns:

- ✓ **Humility before exaltation (Mordecai, Jesus)**
- ✓ **Closed doors leading to better paths (Paul in Acts 16)**
- ✓ **Life from death (Sarah's womb, Jesus' resurrection)**
- ✓ **Evil intended, God uses for good (Joseph, Esther)**
- ✓ **The last becoming first (Throughout Scripture)**

Memory Verse

Philippians 2:8-9

"And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name."

Closing Prayer (10 minutes)

Pray together:

- **Thank God for specific reversals group members shared**
- **Ask for eyes to see His activity in current circumstances**
- **Pray for boldness to share testimonies with others**
- **Request wisdom to recognize patterns of God's work**

Preparation for Next Week

- **Read Esther 9-10 (the conclusion)**
 - **Continue looking for "upside downs" in your life**
 - **Be ready to share what you discovered this week**
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Leader Tips

- **Create space for silence when asking people to reflect on their own stories**
- **Validate both big and small examples of God's reversals**
- **If someone is in crisis, acknowledge that sometimes we can't see the reversal yet—that's okay**
- **Encourage specificity in sharing—details make testimonies powerful**
- **Don't rush—these conversations about recognizing God are worth extended time**