



# STUDY GUIDE

2025

# *Esther*

FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS



WOMEN'S HOME & OVERSEAS COMMITTEE

UNITED FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND



The book of Esther is striking, most notably there is not a single mention of God. His name is never spoken, no prayers are recorded, no visions appear. And yet, the providence of God is deeply woven throughout the narrative—subtly but powerfully—moving in and through His people. At first glance, the story might seem like a fairy tale: a young woman who wins the king’s favour and saves her people. But at its heart, it is far deeper.

If we’re honest, we’ve all asked the question “Where are you, God?” Perhaps it’s while watching the news and seeing the pain and conflict in our world. Other times it hits closer to home, as we wrestle with our own circumstances or the suffering of those we love. Esther’s story doesn’t offer easy answers, but it points us to a deeper truth: even when God seems silent, He is not absent. The book invites us to reflect on where God might be moving in our own lives, asking us to trust in “the Lord of the ages”.

These study notes are designed for either personal reflection or group discussion.

As you open God’s Word, take time to ask Him to speak to you. May you be encouraged, challenged, and strengthened as you seek to love and serve Him in your daily life.

### ***Study One - Read Esther 1 and 2***

In these opening chapters in Esther, we see that God is at work through what appears to be random, uncomfortable, or seemingly insignificant details. Vashti’s refusal, Esther’s beauty, the king’s favour—all these moments are used by God to position Esther exactly where she needs to be, at exactly the right time.

**Have you ever faced a situation where standing up for what is right came with a personal cost?** What did it require of you? How did you respond, and what did you learn from the experience?

**Mordecai advises Esther to keep her Jewish identity a secret in Esther 2:10.** What does this teach us about discretion, wisdom, and knowing when to act in our faith?

**How might you be more intentional about using your influence for the good of others—especially those who are vulnerable, overlooked, or oppressed?** In what spheres of your life (work, church, school, community) do you have influence, and how can you steward it well?

**Pray:** Take a moment to pray, asking the Lord to open your eyes to His quiet work in your life and in the lives of those around you. Ask for courage to act justly, humility to lead well, and faith to trust in God's providence—even when He seems silent.

## *Study Two - Read Esther 3 and 4*

These chapters reveal a crisis that threatens the Jewish people. Haman's hatred for Mordecai leads to a decree of destruction—a situation that seems hopeless. Yet in this moment, Esther's courage becomes a turning point. Mordecai's words—"Who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?" (Esther 4:14)—challenge Esther to act. She could have remained silent in the safety of the palace, but instead, she chooses to step out in faith, risk her life, and trust God's unseen hand.

### **How do you see God's hand at work in the events of Esther 3–4?**

Consider the rise of Haman, Mordecai's boldness, and Esther's response. How might God be working even in situations that seem dark or hopeless?

### **Esther called for a three-day fast before approaching the king.**

What role do prayer and fasting play in your own life when you're facing difficult decisions or challenges? Have you seen God move in response to seasons of intentional prayer?

### **Have you ever looked back on a situation and realised that God placed you in a specific place or time for a greater purpose?**

What did you learn through that experience about God's timing, your calling, or His faithfulness?

**Pray:** Where might God be leading you into deeper trust today? Take time to pray, asking God for the courage to stand firm and the faith to follow Him into the unknown. "Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong."

— 1 Corinthians 16:13

## *Study Three - Read Esther 5 and 6*

In these chapters Esther bravely approaches King Xerxes, fully aware that doing so without an invitation could cost her life. Her actions mark a pivotal moment in the narrative—not just because of her boldness, but also because of her wisdom and patience. Rather than revealing her full plan immediately, Esther waits for the right moment, showing both courage and discernment and in a dramatic reversal, the king chooses to honour Mordecai—the very man Haman hoped to destroy.

### **Esther takes a huge risk in approaching the king uninvited.**

What does her boldness teach you about stepping out in faith when facing a difficult or dangerous task? What fears or obstacles might God be calling you to face with courage?

**The king's decision to honour Mordecai instead of Haman creates a dramatic turning point.** How does this highlight the biblical theme that God can bring about sudden and surprising reversals? Where in your own life have you seen God work in unexpected or surprising ways?

### **Esther waits patiently before revealing her request to the king.**

How do you recognise God's timing in your own life, especially when things feel uncertain, slow, or out of your control?

**Pray:** Take a few moments to consider what it means to wait on the Lord in your life. Ask the Lord to help you discern His timing and respond in obedience.

"Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him" - Psalm 37:7

## ***Study Four - Read Esther 7 and 8***

The tension reaches its peak in these chapters, as Esther reveals to King Xerxes that Haman is behind the plot to destroy her people. Haman's wicked plan is exposed, and Esther pleads for her life and the lives of the Jews. Justice is served, and the king reverses the decree, allowing the Jews to defend themselves—a powerful reminder of God's unseen hand at work even in the darkest moments.

**How do you see God's hand in the way justice unfolds in these chapters?** Is there an area of your life where you've experienced injustice or where you are waiting for vindication? How can you trust God to bring about justice in His time?

**Have you experienced a time when God turned a difficult situation around for good?** How did that impact your faith?

**The Jews responded with joy and celebration.** How do you respond when you experience God's deliverance or breakthrough in your own life?

**Pray:** Where do you see areas of injustice in your life or the world around you? Take time to bring these before the Lord and ask him to bring his deliverance to these situations.

## ***Study Five - Read Esther 9-10***

The book powerfully concludes with a decree that leads to the deliverance of the Jewish people. What seemed like certain destruction is turned into a great victory. God makes a way for his people, ultimately preserving His people and securing the lineage through which Jesus would one day come. Perhaps these chapters may encourage and invite us to trust in him, in both the joyous and difficult moments of life.

**What does Mordecai's story teach you about the value of integrity and long-term faithfulness?** Can you think of a time when either you or someone you know experienced God's favour after quietly doing what was right?

**How does Esther and Mordecai's story encourage you to think differently about your daily obedience to God?** Are there small or unseen acts of faithfulness in your life that could have a greater impact than you realise?

**Are there areas in your life where God is calling you to take a stand or make a bold decision for His purposes?** What steps can you take to obey, even when the outcome seems uncertain?

**Pray:** Take time to praise God for the ways in which you have seen him at work in your life, and bring to him those areas that you are longing for him to work in.