

# HIDDEN GOD

A SERIES IN ESTHER

## SERMON TEXT DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

NORTHVIEW COMMUNITY CHURCH

May 17, 2020

### INFO AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **CG Leader Resources** || Find Zoom games, training podcasts, content from the training breakfasts, along with other announcements and information at [northview.org/community-group-resources](http://northview.org/community-group-resources)
- **Daily Devotions** for our Esther sermon series || Dive into the sermon text during the week to prepare your heart and mind for the weekend sermon at [northview.org/esther](http://northview.org/esther)
- **Northview Cares** || An initiative to get everyone involved! We want to offer assistance to those in our community who are seeking to get help or give help at [northview.org/northview-cares](http://northview.org/northview-cares)
- **Divorce Care, Griefshare, and Theology Classes** || Registration for the fall is now open || [northview.org/courses](http://northview.org/courses).
- **Northview's Premarriage Class** || Registration is open at [northview.org/pre-marriage](http://northview.org/pre-marriage)
- **Prayer at Northview** || Take a look at recommended books, videos, podcasts, and websites to help you enrich your prayer life at [northview.org/prayer](http://northview.org/prayer).

### KEEP MEETING TOGETHER - BUT ONLINE!

In the days ahead, we want to encourage you to 'not neglect meeting together' (Hebrews 10:25) even if we cannot physically gather. Our Community Department has shared some great resources which give instructions on how to connect people online. You can access this information at the link below:

#### **How to Host a Community Group Online**

It provides step-by-step directions for setting up groups via Google Hangouts and Facebook Messenger, as well as guidelines for Online Etiquette.

### PRAYER REQUESTS

- **Content:** Pray that we would understand God's providence in our lives. That as we see God silently at work in the story of Esther we would begin to see His work in our own circumstances.
- **Connect:** Pray for wisdom as we begin to see opportunity to connect more personally with those around us. Pray that God would continue to enable us to connect with one another safely.
- **Care:** Pray for our leaders! God has given them the responsibility to care for us in many ways. Let's pray for our government leaders as well as our leaders within the Church. Be sure to lift up your Community Group leaders and thank God for their faithfulness to Him.
- **Commission:** Pray for those many people across the globe, and even in our own communities, who have never heard the gospel of Christ. Pray that God would equip and empower His people everywhere to share the gospel with great joy.

# SERMON TEXT DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

## NORTHVIEW COMMUNITY CHURCH

You may need to pick and choose which questions will allow for the best discussion in your group, but it's important to work through questions from each section in order to have a firm grasp on the text at hand.

### OBSERVATION

*This section is aimed at helping people observe the details of the text: what is written, what words or ideas are repeated and emphasized, the text's structure and how this text fits into the wider context of the book.*

1. Read Esther 1:1-22.
2. Who was Xerxes (NIV) / Ahasuerus (ESV)?
3. Who does Xerxes throw a banquet for? What do we know about the banquet?
4. Why does Xerxes summon Vashti and how does she respond?
5. Why was Vashti's refusal a big deal?
6. a) How is Xerxes advised to deal with the situation?  
  
b) What outcome do they expect from the decree?

### INTERPRETATION

*This section is aimed at linking the current text to other texts or to the bigger biblical narrative.*

1. "Xerxes was high in spirits from wine," which leads to him summoning Vashti. This is a euphemism used in other passages often resulting in a bad outcome.  
a) Read 1 Samuel 25:36-49.  
What is the result of Nabal's high spirits?  
  
b) Read 2 Samuel 13:28-29.  
What is the result of Amnon's high spirit?

Notice the author of Esther doesn't make judgments about the king's drunkenness, but still seems to suggest that his drinking may have caused him to do something he would otherwise not have done: his judgment was impaired.

2. In Esther 1, we see the unfathomable wealth and pride of King Xerxes. How does Psalm 2 offer an insightful contrast to that of Xerxes?

### APPLICATION

*This section is aimed at helping people apply what we have read in the text to our lives. It is intended to foster more open-ended discussion as people connect the text to their everyday life, and reflect on how it changes the way they think and act.*

1. Xerxes has amassed great wealth and a beautiful wife which he desires to display pridefully, but none of it belongs to him apart from the grace of God.  
a) Why are we tempted to boast in ourselves and our things rather than in God?  
  
b) What do you tend to take pride in without reference to God?  
  
c) How can we begin to give God the recognition He deserves?
2. In Esther, God is never mentioned but He is providentially working behind the scenes. Xerxes' pride results in Vashti being banished, but this makes way for Esther to enter into the picture.  
a) Looking back, how have you seen God's providential hand at work?  
  
b) Does it bring you comfort knowing that God is at work behind the scenes? Why or why not?

Spend time praying for one another to recognize the grace and providence of God at work in our lives.