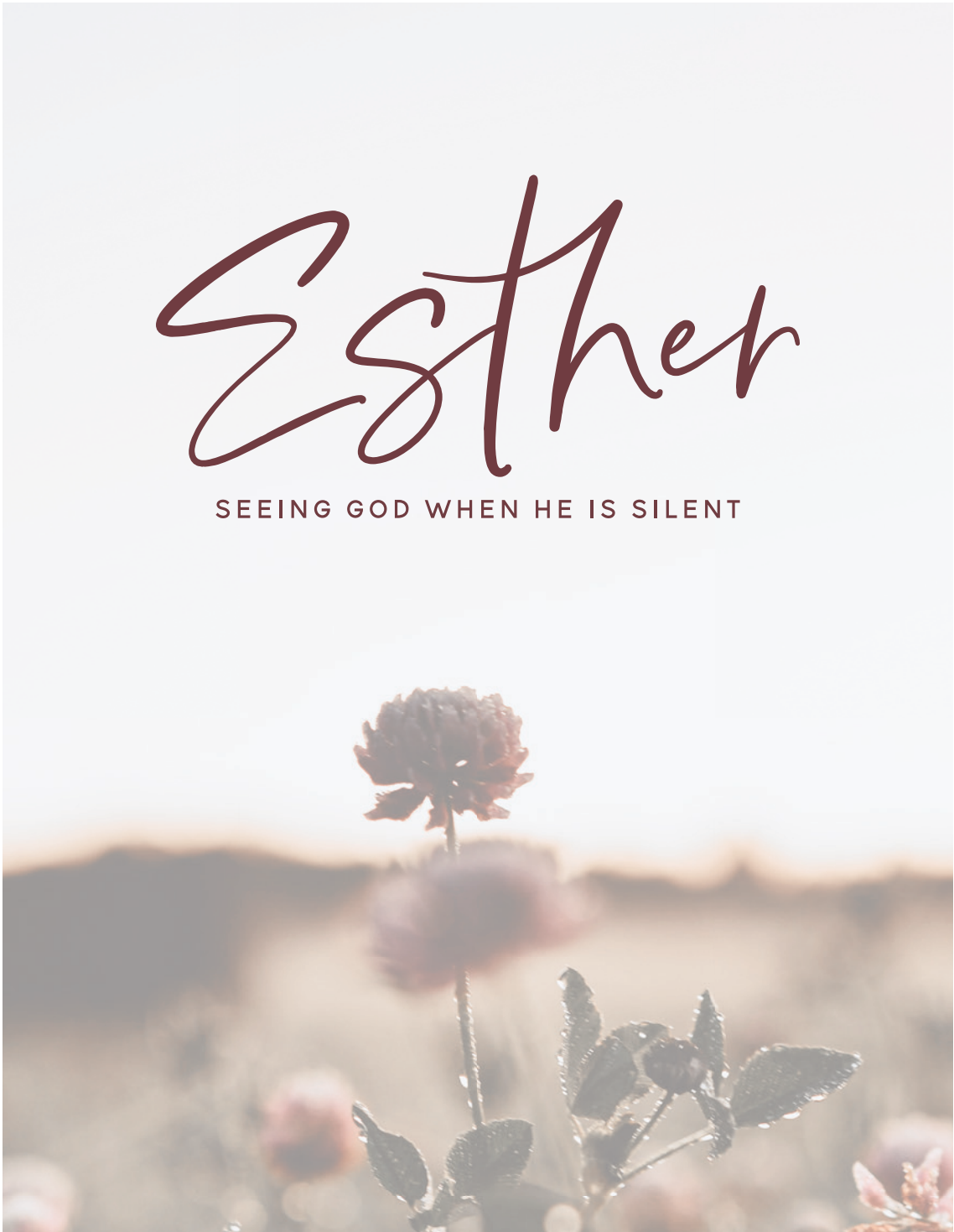


# Esther

SEEING GOD WHEN HE IS SILENT



VIDEO + GROUP LEADER GUIDE

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## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide is meant to give you helpful suggestions, practical tips, and a step-by-step checklist to assist you in leading a small group through *Esther: Seeing God When He Is Silent*. There are several sections, and each is detailed below along with its intended purpose. You may choose to use all or only a small portion of this guide—it is completely up to you!

### THE HEART OF SMALL GROUP BIBLE STUDY

This section details the mission and heart of discipleship. Discipling people is much more than simply meeting up on occasion to complete a study. It is about fulfilling the commission Jesus gave us to make disciples by using the instructions given by God in His Word. While this can seem like a daunting task, we have not been left alone in this work. Jesus has given us His Spirit, and we have the Word of God to lead and guide us.

### THE PRACTICE OF SMALL GROUP BIBLE STUDY

Once we understand the heart of small group Bible study, we must consider what it looks like to incorporate essential discipleship elements into leading a small group. This section will help you practically plan how you will lead your group.

### GROUP STUDY PLAN

This section provides a quick outline of the study, including what homework needs to be completed each week before the meeting, which video the group should watch during the meeting, and which discussion questions you will cover.

### START A SMALL GROUP CHECKLIST

Not sure where to start? This simple checklist will guide you step by step as you launch your small group.

### GROUP MEETING IDEAS

In this section, you will find ideas for how to put together a plan for your group meetings. Here, you will find suggested ways to include corporate prayer, Scripture study, and times of fellowship in addition to the group video and discussion.

### WEEKLY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

In this section, you will find the weekly discussion questions for each week of the study, plus an optional set of questions to be used in an introductory week. If you would like to share the weekly questions with group members, we have also included a separate PDF you can print out or share with them digitally.

### HOW TO HAVE MEANINGFUL GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Group discussion can be tricky. Here, you will find tried and true tips to help promote deep and meaningful conversations.

### FAQ

Here, you will find answers to some questions commonly asked by small group leaders.

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## THE HEART OF SMALL GROUP BIBLE STUDY

Why have you chosen to lead a small group Bible study? Perhaps you are hoping to form a community that will support one another through the highs and lows of everyday life. Maybe you are hoping to be an encouragement to others as they grow in their faith. Or maybe it just sounds like a lot of fun!

All of these are great reasons to start a Bible study group. Scripture certainly instructs believers to carry one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2), encourage spiritual growth in those around us (Ephesians 4:16), and enjoy the company of other believers (Acts 2:46). But ultimately, all of those things are small parts of a greater commission.

In Matthew 28:19–20, Jesus gave His disciples and all believers the Great Commission. We are to go and make disciples, teaching them to obey everything Jesus has commanded. Small group Bible study will be the most fruitful and purposeful when making disciples is the ultimate goal and underlying purpose for gathering together.

Matthew 28:19–20 also says disciples should be baptized. Historically, baptism is a sacrament that is administered by the local church.

Those who desire to be baptized should be baptized in view of their community of believers. Additionally, the ideal setting for making disciples is within the context of a local church. This does not mean that you should not gather with a group of friends, neighbors, or coworkers to study the Bible. However, it does mean that small group Bible study alone will not provide what a believer needs apart from the spiritual shepherding and leadership available in a local church.

So, what does all of this mean for you as a small group Bible study leader? It means you should be careful to plan your group meetings so that each and every part of your meetings is intentionally making disciples. All too often, we believe that if we just get people who are young in their faith together in a room, they will become disciples who mature in their faith. But this is not usually the case. Being a disciple is a choice, and making disciples takes care, dedication, and preparation. You will find many helpful tips for creating an environment that encourages spiritual growth in the next two sections: “The Practice of Small Group Bible Study” and “Group Meeting Ideas.”