

## Session 1 Leader Guide

Cozy in the Culture - ESTHER 1:1-2:18

### READ

Ask one person to read the following passage, and then discuss the questions that follow.

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is - his good, pleasing and perfect will (Romans 12:2).

What does it mean to conform to the pattern of this world?

How does conforming to the pattern of this world prevent us from knowing God's will?

### WATCH

Play the video segment for session one (see the streaming video access provided on the inside front cover of this study guide). As you watch, use the following outline to record any thoughts, questions, or points that stand out to you.

God has given us a role to play in the grand drama we call life. There will be times when he will call us to step onto the stage to perform the part that he has designed for us.

Mordecai and Esther were members of the Jewish race-the exiled descendants of the people of Israel. There are many words we could use to describe the Israelites, but above all they were to be holy. Biblically, this meant they were to be set apart.

Mordecai was three generations removed from the first Jerusalem exiles. He had begun to assimilate to the Persian culture and blend in rather than stand out. He had gone clandestine with his convictions and deferred his theology to the bureaucracy.

# Journey CHURCH

Pastor James Greer

[James@jcpineville.com](mailto:James@jcpineville.com)

[www.jcpineville.com](http://www.jcpineville.com)



The compulsion to compromise affects us all. Everything around us says "conform." Our society permits all beliefs except an exclusive belief. It says it's okay to do whatever you want as long as you accept what everyone else does.

To believe in Jesus as the only redeemer is to incur the disdain of Persia. This is why we must remember our true identity. Our eternal citizenship is not the one printed on our passport. We are subjects of a different King.

We have the same mandate as the Israelites-to be caretakers of God's promise. The message of Jesus has been entrusted to us, and we have the hope the world needs.

## **DISCUSS**

Take a few minutes with your group members to discuss what you just watched and explore these concepts in Scripture.

1. How would you describe Xerxes based on what you have heard about him so far?
2. How would you summarize the events that led to Esther?
3. Read Leviticus 19:2 and Deuteronomy 18:9. What does holiness mean in these contexts? What was God calling his people to represent in the world?
4. Review Esther 2:5-11. What clues are we given in this passage that reveal both Mordecai and Esther were con-forming to the Persian culture?
5. Think about a time you were tempted to assimilate to fit in with the culture. Share that experience. How did it affect you? How did it affect your faith?
6. As Christ followers, we are all called to be holy, or set apart, for God. What does holiness look like as a fol-lower of Jesus?

# Journey CHURCH

*Pastor James Greer*

[James@jcpineville.com](mailto:James@jcpineville.com)

[www.jcpineville.com](http://www.jcpineville.com)



## **RESPOND**

Use the space below to describe someone whose life indicates he or she is working toward holiness. How do you know this about that person? What do you admire about him or her?

## **PRAY**

Close your time in prayer. Ask God to help you see any ways that you might be conforming to the culture around you, and ask him to empower you to start taking bold risks for him. Write down any prayer requests the group has, and pray for those needs during the coming week.