



A Note to Leaders:

Small groups across all three campuses utilize our weekly discussion guides, making it impossible to create a guide that perfectly fits every group. With that in mind, we aim to write with a broad spectrum of people in mind, so feel free to make the appropriate adjustments to these questions to fit your specific group dynamic better.

We make it our aim to ask questions that are both open-ended and closed-ended. Open-ended questions typically lead to a better discussion, but closed-ended questions allow everyone in the group to participate, even if their answer to a question is “yes, no, or I haven’t ever thought about it.” Remember, not everyone feels comfortable thinking on their feet, and we want everyone to feel at home in our groups.

Make it a priority to hear from everyone in your group every week. This engagement can be one-on-one before or after the group meeting or active participation in the group discussion.

We're grateful for your leadership and willingness to serve on the Small Group Dream Team at Cross Church.

Today, we conclude our series, "Life on Purpose." So far, we've considered how the people in our lives mold us and how our different experiences shape us for the future. Thankfully, God promises to use everything we've gone through for His good purposes, just as we've seen in the life of Esther. Today, we will discuss how we're "Made for More" as we look at the life of Haman.

SCRIPTURE: Esther 5:9-14, Esther 7:1-7

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Looking back at your sermon notes, what encouraged or challenged you the most?
2. Today we see Haman suddenly move from joy to rage. He's overjoyed by the honor the king and queen show him, but Mordecai's behavior suddenly turns Haman's joy into anger. When will you most likely go from joy to rage as quickly as Haman?



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This ice-breaker question could include topics like being cut off in traffic, challenging moments as a parent, conflict in the workplace, etc.

3. Haman thought a lot of himself. First, we see him boast about his successes, and second, we see him driven into an over-the-top rage when Mordecai refuses to give him the honor he feels he deserves.

In his book, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*, Paul David Tripp writes, "My self-perception is as accurate as a carnival mirror." In these questions below, we aim to discover that our self-perception is almost always flawed (one way or another), and we don't typically respond well when people or situations conflict with how we see ourselves.

- a. Where in your life are you most tempted to be convinced of your own significance?
- b. Where in your life are you most tempted to feel you deserve recognition?
- c. How do you typically respond when you think you're not getting the "more" you deserve?
- d. How can we keep from thinking too highly of ourselves?

We would do well to keep these words from Peter in mind, "Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you." (1 Peter 5:6-7).

One way we can help keep ourselves out of trouble is found in Proverbs 27:6, "Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses." Haman is surrounded by people who only affirm his thinking – none of his confidants step forward to help him see things correctly. In Esther 5:14, we read, "Then his wife Zeresh and all his friends said to him, 'Let a gallows fifty cubits high be made, and in the morning tell the king to have Mordecai hanged upon it. Then go joyfully with the king to the feast.' This idea pleased Haman, and he had the gallows made."

4. Haman becomes so consumed with his plans for vengeance that he has no time to think about anything else, namely how his plans could backfire.

In these questions below, we aim to consider how easily our hearts can become hyper-focused on our agenda – especially when our stubborn ego or bruised pride slips into the driver's seat of our lives. Haman is so driven by vengeance against Mordecai and the Jews that he has tunnel vision.

- a. How do we see Proverbs 14:12 and Proverbs 16:18 play out in Haman's life?
- b. Describe a time when you were so focused on what you wanted that you paid little attention to whether God wanted it. Was there collateral damage?
- c. How can we keep from being so focused on our agenda that we miss God's?

Proverbs 14:12, "There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death."

Proverbs 16:18, "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall."

5. The world tempts us to think we're "Made for More" – more notoriety, honor, authority, etc. Contrary to this worldview, how have we seen Mordecai and Esther leverage their lives for "more" than themselves? How can we follow in their footsteps and avoid the mistakes made by Haman?

The World's Definition of "More"

- Recognition - It's easy to hear the phrase "You're made for more" and think it's all about you. Every one of us faces the temptation to make life all about us. Pride easily slips into our hearts and whispers that we deserve more recognition, influence, etc. The world will undoubtedly lead us toward these kinds of thoughts.

God's Definition of "More"

- People - It's not about individual recognition or individual position, but it's about other people. Esther's life highlights this vital truth: Be willing to sacrifice your life for others (not just in death, but in everyday living). Her life led to the saving of many people. Is your life about other people? To live a life of purpose, to live a life "made for more," your life must be focused on others.
- God's Kingdom - Though absent in name, we have seen that God is not absent from this story or the life of Esther. She was God's instrument, used for furthering His kingdom and protecting His people. You'll never live a life on purpose or live a life made for more if it's not focused on God's kingdom. Will you sell out for that kind of more? Will you sell out to expand the kingdom of God?