

DANIEL

DETERMINING TO GO GOD'S WAY – SPIRITUAL LIVING IN A SECULAR WORLD

Session 2 – Chapter 2

Where do you run?

7. Describe the king's response to Daniel's interpretation of his dream (vv. 46-49)

8. Five aspects of Daniel's spiritual maturity stand out in this chapter: *his wisdom* in response to a crisis, *his prayer* in response to a problem, *his praise* in response to God's work in his life, *his humility* in the works of God carried out, and *his compassion and concern* for others (others-centered). Which of those marks of maturity is most well-developed in your life? Can you give an example?
 - a. Which of them is weakest in your life? How can you strengthen in this area?

REFLECTION – GOING FORWARD

- Think of **ONE or TWO** things that you have learned that you'd like to work on in the coming week.
 - *You can list these things on page one of your study binder titled Going Forward.*
 - Remember that this is all about QUALITY, not QUANTITY. It's better to work on one specific area of life and do it well than to work on many and do poorly (or to be so overwhelmed that you simply don't try).**
- Consider the things in your life today that require a great deal of trust – anything from a relationship challenge to an uncertain job situation. What are you doing today to seek God's wisdom for these situations? Spend time studying Daniel's story and looking for clues about how he sought God's guidance to deal with the king's request. Then apply the same sort of wisdom to your own story.
 - *You can list these things on page two of your study binder titled Application under Session Two.*
- Invite God to work on your mind and heart in those areas you've previously noted. Be honest about your desires and fears, consider writing them down.

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IN TIMES OF CRISIS – GROUP DISCUSSION

Look for ways to put into practice the things you wrote down on page 1. Talk with other group members about your ideas and commit to being accountable to one another.

During the coming week, ask the Holy Spirit to continue to reveal truth to you from what you've read and studied.

My notes:

- Which direction do we look in times of crises? Where are our eyes fixed in the “good times”? It consistently seems to be the struggle to look up both in the “good times” and “bad times”.
- In the times of crisis we are inclined to try and figure it all out on our own, then reach out to others for input, and then when the sleepless nights commence and the sweat starts to pour we buckle our knees in prayer.
- I don't speak from experience of course. ☺
- And in the good times...well...our eyes are fixed on ourselves, our accomplishments, and our condition.
- But how often do they gaze upward toward our Father who provides for us?
- Ps 121 says, “He will not allow your foot to slip; He who loves you will not sleep”***
- I have been on this side of my prayer and praise many times but have also felt the relief and peace of prayer and praise properly exercised.
- Example, burglary story:
 - Yuriyanna and I, 5 days before we were to be married.
 - I came home from work, streamlined to my office, business call.
 - Glass all over floor, Yuriyanna why didn't you call me instead of breaking a window to get in?
 - Then it hit me, I turned to see the rest of my office and it was destroyed. We had been burglarized.
 - Missing items, trace steps back to bedroom and safe.
 - I called the cops, landlord, and wife, the latter two who were distraught by the news.
 - My wife got home first, encouraged by her father in the midst of chaos and tears we prayed,
 - Thanked him for our safety, thanked Him we weren't home, we prayed for the criminal and his life.
 - Following; our landlord showed up with his wife and daughter to console Yuriyanna
 - My landlord got right to work putting up a new door, and started the process of installing an alarm, none of which were requested.
 - Once the police finally showed up it was evident they could really do nothing about it. So I showed them the damage and it occurred to me in that moment...
 - OUR MONEY FOR THE WEDDING, OUR WEDDING RINGS!!!!

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- The night before I had done a final count of the cash and stuck it back in a money bag.
- I kept it behind picture frame on my desk, describe frame, location, and how it was hid.
- That night something told me to put it upright.
- They didn't see the money or rings.
- Later, as time went by...
 - We had learned and met a man that was living in a shed behind a vacant house 2 doors down, street was vacant, economy crash
 - Bad vibe doesn't begin to describe it.
 - However, at the conviction of the Holy Spirit I went back outside and prayed for him.
 - Need A/C, window shaker, and a few other items I gave them to him. Surprised look as I gave him, things he named which were in my house. Hmmmm
 - I picked him up for a few rides when I'd see him walking and gave him a Bible.
 - I ran his record, multiple breaking and entering's, GTA's, and a rap sheet that hit the ground.
 - In fact, my buddy on OPD said keep my family as far away as possible.
 - A few months later, another break in, thwarted by my pig.
 - We moved.
- Another story, same but different.
 - Cleaning company story.
 - Kept faith as we waited.
 - Prayed and Praised.
 - It's His Company, He gave it to me.
 - I am humbled by it daily.
- These stories are not an attempt to make myself seem holy and righteous, or to brag, because I still need to work at looking upward.
- When I do, I am at peace, relief, and with strengthened faith. As an old saying says, "Let Go, Let God."

As we look at Daniel's responses and actions in this chapter we see the image of a wise and spiritually mature young man, looking upward for the Truth as the world looks around. He ran to the Lord in prayer and in praise and exercised unwavering faith. He ran to Godly friends and when all was said and done and the crises had been averted he remained humble and others centered.

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While we may not be asked to interpret a dream anytime soon for our lives sake, we as Christians today face the “problem of pressure” daily and whether our faith holds or folds is a matter of where we look for the answers, where we have put our faith.

So as we look at...

Prayer:

- Appeals to Arioch and the King in extreme faith with cautiousness and good judgment (vv. 14-16)
- Daniel, though lumped in with the other wise men, doesn't refer to Babylonian techniques, he doesn't refer to the training of magi, mediums, sorcerers, or the Chaldean's.
- What does he do? He prays. The same resource available to all of us (vv. 17)
 - Daniel doesn't buckle in the midst of the crisis. He had no assurance that God would reveal the dream to Him just faith that God answers earnest prayer and the Babylonian techniques were empty.
 - He asks for time, because it takes time to listen to the Lord and wait upon Him.
 - He doesn't pray alone but seeks his closest companions; hearts knit together.
 - *Daniel had an unwavering faith, no matter the outcome he was running to the Lord.*
 - ✓ DANIEL TRUSTED THE SOVEREIGN GOD EVEN WHEN HE COULD SEE WHAT THE OUTCOME WOULD BE, IN AN OUT-OF-CONTROL WORLD THAT SAME GOD IS THE ONE SECURE ANCHOR WE HAVE.
 - ✓ JUST BECAUSE SOMEONE IS EDUCATED IN THE THINGS OF THIS WORLD DOESN'T MEAN THAT THEY ARE SUPERIOR TO OUR SOLID ANCHOR. DANIEL WAS EDUCATED IN ALL THINGS BABYLONIAN BUT NEVER RELIED ON THAT EDUCATION. SECULAR OR CHRISTIAN SCHOOL WE STILL HAVE TO CHOOSE GOD.
 - ✓ LET'S COMMIT TO RELYING ON GOD EVEN WHEN WE CAN'T SEE THE OUTCOME. LET'S NOT TURN TO THE EMPTY GUIDANCE OF THE WORLD WHEN FACED WITH A CRISIS.

Praise:

- When God had answered their prayers and revealed the king's dream, Daniel praised Him!
- Daniel blesses and thanks Him.
- 2:27 Nebuchadnezzar gets close, but mismanages the placement of praise.
 - I'm sure there was an extreme excitement following the vision, but Daniel knew who he should share that excitement with.
 - He could have ran directly into the King's court delivering the revelation of the Lord, but he didn't. Daniel had time, he spent it with his Father.
 - ***(Q3a) How easy is it for you to praise God when things turn out right? How easy is it for you to praise God when the outcome is uncertain or not what you expected?***
 - ✓ WHEN THE LORD ANSWERS OUR PRAYERS, GIVES US PEACE AND COMFORT, DO WE SPEND TIME WITH HIM THANKING HIM, BLESSING HIM, AND PRAISING HIM OR RUNNING RIGHT OUT OF THE SITUATION?

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- ✓ WHEN A PERSON HELPS YOU OUT OF A TOUGH SITUATION, DO YOU TAKE THE MONEY AND RUN OR DO YOU SPEND A MOMENT THANKING THEM, SHOWING EARNEST EMOTION?

Presence of God; Humble:

- Daniel doesn't make a request to not be counted among the wise men, even though Daniel and his friends were found to be 10 times better than all the others (1:20, 2:13)
 - Daniel could have said, "wait a minute, pump the brakes, you seek to kill us yet the king sees us as 10x better." God gave Daniel knowledge and skill in all literature and wisdom; and understanding in all visions and dreams.
 - This would also have been an appeal but would have shifted the glory to him and not God. Would Daniel still have been answered?
- As we discussed previously Daniel doesn't run right into the king's courts with the revelation, he stays in the presence of his Father.
 - Daniel spent time giving praise to the one true source of wisdom.
 - He didn't run out to heap the credit on himself or the rewards and riches that had been promised.
 - He gave God the credit privately.
- Daniel's humility doesn't go away in the presence of the King.
 - 2:28 Daniel gives glory to God, he gives God the credit publicly. He doesn't take the credit but remains humble. The Lord saved him and his friends.
 - In fact this humility is proven in the placement of the king's praise to Daniel (vv.48)
 - ✓ THE PEOPLE GOD USES ALL HAVE HUMILITY. ARE WE HUMBLE SO THAT GOD CAN USE US AS HE PLEASES?
 - ✓ WE SHOULD NOT BE IMPRESSED AND OVERCOME BY OUR OWN GIFTS, INSIGHTS, AND INTELLIGENCE; BUT IN AWE OF THE ONE TRUE SOURCE OF WISDOM, CAPTURED BY THE GREATNESS OF GOD.

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People; Others-centered:

- Daniel knew the value of a few faithful and like-spirited friends.
 - He seeks them out in prayer
- Daniel doesn't leave his friends behind, he ensures them a promotion also (vv. 49)
 - Not only does Daniel not take the credit or glory, he doesn't stop at his promotion and his friends ensured safety, he secures them a place in the empire, keeping them close.
- Daniel doesn't seek just their safety, he brings safety to those unbelieving wise men (vv.24)
 - How easy it would have been for Daniel to use their favor as an advantage and do away with the "wise men" of Babylon? What a testimony! Jesus saves unbelievers!
 - ***(5) In regards to Daniel's compassion to the "wise men", what does this tell you about how you ought to respond to nonbelievers whose actions might cause you harm or philosophies are completely backwards to ours?***
 - ✓ JUST LIKE HUMILITY, BEING OTHERS-CENTERED IS AN ATTRIBUTE OF A BELIEVER. WHEN WE ARE OTHERS-CENTERED WE ARE TRULY REFLECTING THE IMAGE OF JESUS BACK TO THE WORLD.
 - ✓ THIS DOESN'T STOP WITH OTHERS DEFINED AS OTHER BELIEVERS, BUT THOSE THAT HAVE NOT COME TO KNOW THE LORD IN THEIR LIFE, THE OTHER SIDE.

FOUR POINTS:

- PRAY – 1 THESS 5:16-18, 1 CHRON 16:11, JAS 5:13
- PRAISE – HEB 13:15, DAN 2:23, PS 138:1
- PEOPLE – EPH 4:32, PHI 2:4
- PRESENCE OF GOD; HUMBLE – PRO 11:2, JAS 4:10
 - ***(8) In light of Daniel's wisdom in response to a crisis, his prayer in response to a problem, his praise in response to God's work, his humility in the works of God, and his concern for others. Which of those is most developed in your life? Which is weakest***

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GROUP DISCUSSION

Reflect, write, and answer as you feel comfortable

1. What kinds of magic, myths, and mysticism compete with God's Word now, as the magicians competed with Daniel in King Nebuchadnezzar's court?
2. When Daniel returned to his friends, he asked them to plead for God's mercy and wisdom relating to the dream. What does this tell you about the way Daniel approached challenges?
3. Prayer sustained Daniel and his friends while they were exiled in Babylon. In what ways has prayer sustained you when you were in a difficult time?
4. What keeps us at times from remembering to praise God for answers to prayers, as Daniel did?
5. Following Daniel's example in this chapter, how can we remain humble when God uses us to do good things?