



A Study of the Book of Daniel

**“As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom:
and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams”**

Daniel 1:17

Based on the Life Guide Bible study guide by Douglas Connelly

WHAT YOU WILL FIND IN THIS STUDY GUIDE

This study guide reviews the 12 chapters of the book of Daniel, highlighting the strength and integrity of Daniel and his friends as they faced the difficult challenge of remaining faithful to God in the midst of an idolatrous nation.

I Background Info on the Book of Daniel

II Our Challenge Today

III Suggested Tips To Get The Most Out of This Study

IV Weekly Discussion Material For April and May

Week 1 (April 7): Have You Got What it Takes (Daniel Ch. 1)

This lesson will address what it takes to follow God

Week 2 (April 14): A Disturbing Dream (Daniel Ch. 2)

This lesson will examine how God used Daniel to interpret the king's dream and what that meant for Daniel, his friends, and the king

Week 3 (April 21): Bow Or Burn (Daniel Ch. 3)

This lesson will show how Daniel's friends chose to remain faithful and refused to bow down to a golden idol

Week 4 (April 28): Our God Reigns! (Daniel Ch. 4)

This lesson will demonstrate God's sovereignty and King Nebuchadnezzar's downfall due to pride

Week 5 (May 5): The Handwriting on the Wall (Daniel Ch. 5)

This lesson demonstrates what happens when King Belshazzar chose to ignore the past

Week 6 (May 12): On the Menu At the Lions' Club (Daniel Ch. 6)

This lesson shows how God rewards obedience

Week 7 (May 19): A Prophetic Panorama (Daniel Ch. 7)

This lesson reveals Daniel's dream and vision about the future kingdoms of the world

DANIEL: SPIRITUAL LIVING IN A SECULAR WORLD

BACKGROUND INFO

On The Book Of Daniel

Jensen's Survey of the Old Testament; by Irving L. Jensen
The Outlined Bible; by Robert Lee, (1982)
Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary on the Whole Bible

SCRIPTURE: "As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams." Daniel 1:17

The book of Daniel is an autobiography; written around 536 B.C., depicting the accounts of the struggles of Daniel and his friends and their faithfulness to God while living in a foreign land. It is the last of the five major prophetic books of the Old Testament; **the only Old Testament book classified as an apocalyptic book.**

Daniel, whose name means "**God is my judge**", was taken from his native land Jerusalem as a young boy along with his friends Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to live in exile in Babylon. While living in captivity in Babylon, Daniel and his friends were selected by King Nebuchadnezzar to be trained for his service and eventually held high offices in the kingdom. Daniel, a prophet descended from the royal family of David, was favored by God and honored of men.

The book of Daniel has two main divisions: the first division highlights historic events regarding Daniel and his friends. The second division highlights prophetic accounts of Daniel's visions and interpretation of dreams; detailing numerous accounts regarding the four great empires of the world and future prophecies regarding the Messiah. It gives descriptive accounts of the destinies of Gentile nations under the sovereign hand of God.

Key points of the book of Daniel include God's protection of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego after being thrown into a fiery furnace for their refusal to bow down to a golden image of the king; God's protection of Daniel after being thrown into a lions' den following a deceitful plot which revealed that Daniel chose to worship the God of his ancestors rather than the god of a heathen nation; and Daniel interpreting "the handwriting on the wall", which predicted King Belshazzar's downfall because of the king's refusal to acknowledge God's sovereignty. The final six chapters of the book of Daniel contain Daniel's prophetic visions of the end times.

The message of Daniel points out how the Lord's obedient servants are blessed with worldly success; how they are trusted with secrets; how they have the comfort of the Lord's presence in times of suffering and trials; and it gives warning against pride and refusal to honor God. The chief message of the book of Daniel is the proclamation of the universal sovereignty of God.

Daniel offers encouragement and hope to God's faithful followers and serves as a reminder that God takes care of those who dare to stand for Him.

OUR CHALLENGE TODAY

Today, many Christians struggle with some of the same things as Daniel and his friends; honoring God's word and remaining faithful to God while surrounded by a heathen society. Just as with Daniel and his friends, temptations exist all around to distract Christians from their main purpose.

We sometimes choose to follow the one who speaks the loudest, has the most appeal, or promises us the most. Idols come in all shapes, forms, and fashions (self, family, acquaintances, job, entertainment, possessions, celebrities, etc.). **An idol is an image or representation of a god used as an object of worship. Anything that we put before God can become an idol (false god).**

Though having and enjoying these things is not wrong because it is God who allows us and enables us to obtain wealth in the first place. However, when we place them before our worship to God or God's commands to us, we make them our idols. God commands that we are to *"have no other gods before me"* (Exodus 20:3). Meaning, we are not to worship or hold anything or anyone in high regard above the maker and creator of this universe. All that we possess and all that we are is for God's glory.

We may not all face life or death situations because of our faith today, but living spiritually in a world consumed with idol gods of popularity, power, comfort, quick fixes, instant gratification, and pleasures beyond measure may seem to be a daunting task. Even today, just as Daniel and his friends realized, resisting the urges and temptations offer a greater reward than momentary pleasures.

As we will see with Daniel and his friends, following God's Will is not something to be taken lightly. It may sometimes prove to be anything but comfortable, convenient, popular, or easy. While it may seem easy in the moment to give in to peer pressure, the consequences and repercussions of disobeying God's commands carries a price far heavier than anything we would ever encounter in our physical bodies; to include possible separation from God and eternal damnation. *"For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"* (Matthew 16:26).

God does not always speak to us with a loud roar. Sometimes God speaks in a still, small voice, touching our hearts, our minds, and our spirits as we come into agreement with His word and plan for us. Hearing from God requires that we spend time alone with Him, tuning out the distractions and pressures of everyday life. Hearing from God means studying and remembering God's word over what the world promises.

It is not enough just to hear God's word, though, we must be doers of God's word in order to truly please God. This cannot be accomplished on our own, but only like Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, when we submit our will to the Will of God, are we able to remain faithful to God.

Though God does not promise that our lives will be free from heartache or pain; He does promise to walk with us every step of the way, to go through the fire with us, and to carry us when we become weak. When we honor God, He, in return, lifts us up.

God continues to warn people today about the consequences of disobeying Him. God is gracious and merciful to give us time to change (turn from our sin) and follow Him. However, God's grace and mercy will not last forever. Like King Nebuchadnezzar and others, if man continues to ignore God's warnings, man will pay the ultimate price of living in eternity separated from God.

God never changes; He is the same God yesterday, today, and forever. If He walked with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego through the fire, and if He protected Daniel in the lions' den, He can surely help us and keep us if we stand strong against adversities today.

GETTING THE MOST OUT OF THIS STUDY

Studying requires more than just reading. It requires spending time meditating on and examining what has been read against what we currently know or believe. For Christians, studying requires another, more crucial aspect in the process. It requires that we examine what we have read against what we currently know or believe compared to the Word of God. Without that last (and most crucial) stage of the process we would be lost in our own understanding (or misunderstanding).

In order to gain the most from this study, participants are encouraged to follow these suggested steps:

- *Read through study materials prior to each lesson**
- *Read scripture passages (use bible translation that helps you understand)**
- *Pray; ask God to reveal to you areas that need to be developed or strengthened in your life**
- *Meditate; take time to listen to the Holy Spirit's response to your prayer**
- *Write down what God has given you; answer the questions in the study guide**
- *Allow the Holy Spirit to begin changing those areas in your life that do not reflect God's plan for your life**
- *Share in the discussion as the Spirit leads you; sharing your experiences could help bring clarity someone else who may be experiencing a similar situation**

MID-WEEK BIBLE STUDY
DANIEL: SPIRITUAL LIVING IN A SECULAR WORLD

“And in all matters of wisdom and understanding, that the king enquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm.” Daniel 1:20

WEEK I
HAVE YOU GOT WHAT IT TAKES (Ch. 1)

KEY SCRIPTURE

Daniel 1:20

LEARNING GOALS

***Understand what it takes to be chosen by God**

***To show that what God places in us
is far better than anything we can gain on our own**

*** To challenge believers to take a stand
for biblical truth and personal conviction**

***To show that we do not have to compromise our beliefs to get ahead**

MID-WEEK BIBLE STUDY

DANIEL: SPIRITUAL LIVING IN A SECULAR WORLD

“And in all matters of wisdom and understanding, that the king enquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm.” **Daniel 1:20**

HAVE YOU GOT WHAT IT TAKES (Ch. 1)

Daniel, along with several other young men, was torn from his home and family when he was a young boy. All of them were chosen by the king and placed in a training course to prepare them for service to the king.

(1) What was the most difficult part of the process you had to face when transitioning into adulthood? What new adjustments did you have to make?

(2) What specific tactics were used to give Daniel and his friends a new Babylonian orientation?

- they were placed with the king’s children
- they were taught the language of the Chaldeans
- they were given certain food to eat to strengthen them

(3) How do these tactics parallel the pressures Christians face today in a secular society?

Christians today are faced with being the best or having the best of everything. Sometimes it is at the expense of denying God or putting those things before God.

(4) Why were the food regulations of the Old Testament law so important to Daniel (v. 8-10)? Do you think Daniel was making a big issue out of a minor problem?

Only certain food was approved by God to be eaten. Daniel did not want to dishonor God by eaten forbidden food.

(5) How can Christians today determine which activities we will engage in and which we won’t?

It is always important to examine what we do with how it lines up with God’s word. We should pray to God for direction if we are uncertain. If we still do not have clarity about what we are trying to decide to do or not do, it is probably best that we do not do it.

(6) What steps did Daniel take to provide a creative alternative to the king’s plan (v. 11-14)?

Daniel asked that he and his friends be given ten days to eat what God approved to see if it was enough to sustain them.

(7) What can you learn from Daniel’s attitude and actions about how to respond when your biblical values are challenged?

Daniel remained calm, he remembered what he had been taught from God’s word, and he honored God above man’s laws.

(8) What combination of factors produced the exceptional ability of Daniel and his friends (v. 17-20)?

- God gave them the skills and abilities above everyone else.
- They were taught and given the same favor as the King’s children.
- The king spent time with them and recognized their abilities

(9) What aspect of Daniel's character or conduct in this chapter impresses you the most? How can you cultivate that same quality in your own life?

Daniel continued to remain faithful to God despite of the pressure to conform to his surroundings. By praying to God and trusting in the Holy Spirit to give us strength, we can remain faithful just as Daniel did.

(10) What other people in the bible also demonstrate strength when pressured to take the easy way out?

- Joseph (Genesis 39-41)
 - David (I Samuel 17)
 - Esther (Esther 4)
 - Peter and John (Acts 4:13-31)
-

MID-WEEK BIBLE STUDY
DANIEL: SPIRITUAL LIVING IN A SECULAR WORLD

“But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days.”
Daniel 2:28a

WEEK II
A DISTURGING DREAM (Ch. 2)

KEY SCRIPTURE

Daniel 2:28a

LEARNING GOALS

To demonstrate God’s faithfulness to His people in a time of personal crisis

***To show that God speaks to those who are willing to listen**

*** To discuss ways in which God speaks to His people**

***To show that the truth can only be revealed
through spending time with God and yielding to Him**

MID-WEEK BIBLE STUDY

DANIEL: SPIRITUAL LIVING IN A SECULAR WORLD

“But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days.”

Daniel 2:28a

WEEK II

A DISTURGING DREAM (Ch. 2)

PART I (V. 1-30)

Scientists tell us that we dream every night. Most of the time our dreams make us feel good, but some dreams terrorize us. King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream that terrorized him. He sought astrologers and soothsayers to interpret to him the meaning of his dream.

- (1) Do you have a memorable or recurring dream that terrorized you or made you feel very good?
- (2) What is your impression of Nebuchadnezzar as you look through the passage again? (what kind of man was he?)
- (3) Why do you think Nebuchadnezzar demanded to know the content of his dream from wise men as well as the dream’s interpretation (v. 1-13)?
 - Nebuchadnezzar was deeply disturbed by his dream. He wanted to make sure that those interpreting the dream really knew the dream and what it meant.
- (4) Imagine yourself in Daniel’s situation. How would you and your closest friends respond, knowing that you faced certain death if you couldn’t interpret a dream you knew nothing about?
 - It would be terrifying and intimidating to know that my fate lie in my ability to interpret a dream
- (5) From Daniel’s example what can we learn about how we should react to a personal crisis (v. 14-18)?
 - Daniel did not respond hastily.
 - He requested time to respond to the king.
 - He consulted with people he trusted
 - He prayed to God for understanding
- (6) Compare how you normally respond when God answers your prayers with how Daniel responded in verses 19-23.
 - Daniel was quick to give God praise for answering his prayers. I am not always as quick to give God praise for answering my prayers; that is something I need to work on
- (7) What aspects of God’s character are emphasized in verses 20-23?
 - wisdom & might
 - God is in control of everything and everyone
 - God knows and reveals secrets
 - God is faithful to answer our prayers
- (8) How will knowledge of God’s wisdom authority and power change how you view your next crisis?
 - I will try to be more mindful of the fact that God is in control of all things and that He is always working on my behalf even when I may not see it. I need to trust God more.

(9) What did Daniel want King Nebuchadnezzar to know about the true God (v. 27-30)?

Daniel wanted King Nebuchadnezzar to know that God is the one who revealed the king's dream to him. God is in heaven, He knows our future.

(10) Three aspects of Daniels' spiritual maturity stand out in this chapter: his wisdom in response to a crisis, his prayer in response to a problem, and his praise in response to God's work in his life. Which of those marks of maturity is most well-developed in your life? Which one of them is weakest?

(11) Based on Daniel's example, what specific steps will you take to strengthen your weak area(s)?

PART II (V. 31-49)

Every year tabloid headlines in the grocery store checkout lines shout the same promises from the world's most notable psychics and fortunetellers. Daniel 2 is one of the most amazing predictive chapters in the Bible. It accurately described the future rise and fall of four great empires.

(12) From your study in Daniel so far, summarize the events that led to Daniel's appearance before King Nebuchadnezzar.

King Nebuchadnezzar was impressed with the knowledge Daniel and his friends possessed. He had faith that Daniel was able to interpret this dream.

(13) Nebuchadnezzar had demanded that any interpreter of his dream had to first tell him what happened

in the dream. What about Daniel's description of the dream (v. 31-35), would have caused Nebuchadnezzar to be troubled (2:1)?

(14) In the interpretation of the king's dream, why do you think God referred to Nebuchadnezzar as the head of gold (v. 36-38)?

God had allowed King Nebuchadnezzar to become powerful and wealthy; he was over all the kingdoms

(15) While Daniel does not identify the future kingdoms, we know them as the Medo-Persian (silver), the Greek (bronze), and the Roman (iron) empires. What does v. 36-43 tell you about the nature, organization, and strength of these kingdoms?

They were inferior to king Nebuchadnezzar. They were partly strong and partly broken.

(16) What can you conclude about the kingdoms represented by the mixture of clay (ceramic) and iron (v. 41-43)?

The kingdoms were divided.

(17) How would you describe the kingdom of God based on v. 44-45?

God's kingdom is superior to any other kingdom. It will never be destroyed. God's kingdom will destroy and consume all other kingdoms and will stand forever.

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

The king was amazed at Daniel's interpretation of his dream. He realized that Daniel's God was above all other gods and that He was a revealer of secrets. The king worshipped Daniel.

(19) What does this chapter teach you about God's activity in the unfolding of human history?

God knows everything, what was, what is, and what is to take place. God is in control of all things.

(20) How does the portrait of God in this chapter encourage you to trust Him with you life and circumstances?

This chapter shows that God already knows what lies ahead for me. When I trust God I don't have to be afraid of what I don't know.

(21) Does God still speak to us in dreams? What authority can we use to determine if a dream is genuinely from God?

MID-WEEK BIBLE STUDY
DANIEL: SPIRITUAL LIVING IN A SECULAR WORLD

“but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?” Daniel 3:15b

WEEK III
BOW OR BURN! (Ch. 3)

KEY SCRIPTURE

Daniel 3:15b

LEARNING GOALS

- *Understand the risks and rewards of obedience to God and His Word**
 - *To show that God is always with us no matter what we are facing**
 - * To demonstrate how to stand against pressure to conform to the world**
 - *To show the end results of jealousy and envy**
-

MID-WEEK BIBLE STUDY

DANIEL: SPIRITUAL LIVING IN A SECULAR WORLD

“but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?” Daniel 3:15b

WEEK III

BOW OR BURN! (Ch. 3)

Most Christians today have never had to face life or death situations because of their faith. The story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego gives a first-hand account of God’s people having to face a big decision to live for God or to bow down to the pressures of society.

- (1) In what circumstances have you been pressured to compromise what is right?**
- (2) Think of someone who is a model to you of courageous commitment to Christ. How can you learn more from that person about remaining faithful in your allegiance to Christ?**
- (3) What do you think prompted Nebuchadnezzar to build this image?**

King Nebuchadnezzar had become so powerful. He allowed that power to consume him. He forgot that it was the God of Daniel who enabled him to obtain his power.
- (4) What motivated the astrologers to report the disobedience of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (v. 8-12)?**

The astrologers were jealous of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego
- (5) What temptations did Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego face when they were brought before the king (v. 13-15)?**

They were faced with a decision of whether or not to bow down to the image of the king like everyone else or to be cast into the fiery furnace.
- (6) What were these men certain of in the response to Nebuchadnezzar’s challenge, and what were the uncertain of (v. 16-18)?**

They were certain that God “was” able to deliver them out of the furnace. They were not certain “if” God would deliver them.
- (7) How will their example encourage you if you are faced with the possibility of losing your job or being rejected by friends because of your refusal to compromise God’s Word?**
- (8) Some Christians claim that pain or sickness or difficulty are always the result of sin or lack of faith. How would you respond to that claim in light of verses 16-18?**

Sometimes we face trials because we have been faithful to God. Sometimes Satan tests our faith in God or tries to stop our work for God. We cannot judge why people are going through what they are going through

(9) What specific actions did God take to assure the three men and to demonstrate his power to Nebuchadnezzar (v. 24-30)?

God loosed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego so they could walk around in the fire. He kept them from being burned, and he was present in the fire with them.

(10) As you look back over the chapter, what lessons about the risks and rewards of obedience to God are most significant to you?

God is supreme. Being obedient to Him has greater, lasting reward than any risk of disobedience.

(11) What commitments can you make to the Lord today that will prepare you to face the pressures of the secular culture around you?

MID-WEEK BIBLE STUDY
DANIEL: SPIRITUAL LIVING IN A SECULAR WORLD

“Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.”
Daniel 4:37

WEEK IV
OUR GOD REIGNS! (Ch. 4)

KEY SCRIPTURE

Daniel 4:37

LEARNING GOALS

- *To show that God is in control and that He humbles those who are proud**
 - *To demonstrate God’s forgiveness when we repent of our sins**
 - * To demonstrate God’s patience in warning us and allowing us time to change our sinful ways**
 - *To show what happens when we allow pride to rule us**
-

MID-WEEK BIBLE STUDY

DANIEL: SPIRITUAL LIVING IN A SECULAR WORLD

“Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.”
Daniel 4:37

WEEK IV

OUR GOD REIGNS! (Ch. 4)

King Nebuchadnezzar wrote a letter describing how he was humbled by God because of his pride, then restored back to power.

- (1) **Think about your most humbling experience. What positive change came from that ordeal?**
- (2) **How does Nebuchadnezzar’s proclamation in 4:1-3 differ from what he said about God in 3:28-29 (after the fiery furnace)?**
Nebuchadnezzar spoke of God as their God before. Now Nebuchadnezzar acknowledges the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego as the high God.
- (3) **As you read Nebuchadnezzar’s description of the dream (v. 9-18), what aspects of it might have caused the king to be “terrified” (v. 5)?**
 - The tree was flourishing, then it was chopped down
 - An angel from heaven commanded that the tree be chopped down & the branches cut off and the fruit Scattered
- (4) **If verse 17 is applicable today, must we conclude that Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin, and other evil rulers came to power by God’s decree?**
Not necessarily, although God may allow evil to exist, He does not decree it. God has allowed Satan rulership over this world for a time until He returns to reclaim power.
- (5) **How does your response relate to (or challenge) your perception of who God is and how He acts?**
God is supreme, He is in control of everything; He has a plan and He allows things to happen in accordance with His plan. In time, God’s plan will be revealed to all of us.
- (6) **If Nebuchadnezzar had repented of his sins as Daniel advised, do you think God would have withheld his judgement, or was his decision irrevocable at this point (v. 24-27)? Explain.**
I believe God would have withheld his judgement if Nebuchadnezzar had repented of his sins. When we repent, God is gracious and merciful to forgive us
- (7) **Why did God wait a full year between the announcement of judgement and its actual fulfillment (v. 29)?**
God does not desire anyone to perish. God gave King Nebuchadnezzar plenty of time to think about what had been revealed to him and to change his behavior.
- (8) **What specific steps did God take to humble Nebuchadnezzar (v. 31-33)?**
 - God took away the kingdom
 - God caused him to live like a wild animal

- (9) Sometimes we gain fresh insight into God’s character as we wrestle with the truth. What’s the hardest thing about this chapter for you to accept? What does that hard lesson teach you about how God works in our lives to bring us to spiritual maturity and Christlikeness?**
- (10) Is there a “stump” in your life-the remainder of a “tree” of your own efforts that was cut down (or needs to be cut down)? What is God trying to teach you through that painful experience? Did you learn the lesson or are you still resisting God?**
-

MID-WEEK BIBLE STUDY
DANIEL: SPIRITUAL LIVING IN A SECULAR WORLD

“In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaister of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote.” Daniel 5:5

WEEK V
THE HANDWRITING ON THE WALL (Ch. 5)

KEY SCRIPTURE

Daniel 5:5

LEARNING GOALS

- *To explore the role a committed Christian plays in influencing a decaying society**
 - *To show what happens when we choose to ignore the past and refuse to heed God's warning**
 - * To demonstrate God's swiftness in bringing judgement against those who choose to dishonor Him**
 - *To show how God raises us up in His time and for His purpose**
-

MID-WEEK BIBLE STUDY

DANIEL: SPIRITUAL LIVING IN A SECULAR WORLD

“In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaister of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote.” Daniel 5:5

WEEK V

THE HANDWRITING ON THE WALL (Ch. 5)

Most often God finds one person who is totally committed to him, and then God works powerfully through that person to accomplish what he desires. Daniel has grown old and has been pushed aside. When the king finds himself in trouble he calls for the one person in the kingdom who is able to help him. Never underestimate the influence of one godly life. Daniel 5 shows us how to stand for God over the long haul.

(1) What one person has had the most influence on you? Has that influence been positive or negative?

(2) How do you want to be remembered by the people who are closest to you?

(3) What are you doing each day to cultivate the influence you want to leave behind?

(4) What do you think motivated Belshazzar to have this feast?

Belshazzar became arrogant in his ability to gain all that he had. He forgot that all of his power and wealth was a result of God's blessings. Belshazzar held the celebration to boast about what "he" had accomplished.

(5) How would you have reacted if you had been at the banquet and saw a hand appear and write on the wall (v. 5)?

(6) Three times Daniel recorded the failure of the "wise men" of Babylon to interpret the message of God. What point is Daniel trying to make?

Daniel points out that interpretation can only be given by God. It does not matter how smart or knowledgeable a person claims to be, if they are not connected to God spiritually, they will not understand what God is trying to reveal.

(7) What insights into the nature of Belshazzar's sins can you find in verse 18-23?

Belshazzar was stubborn and arrogant like king Nebuchadnezzar. He was aware of his father's experience when he was king. He knew that his father's rulership was taken from him because he failed to acknowledge God as sovereign, yet he refused to humble himself.

(8) When are you tempted toward similar sins?

When we begin to think that what we have or accomplished is because of our own doing apart from God and we fail to acknowledge God, then we can be tempted to boast on ourselves and try to take credit for everything like Belshazzar did.

(9) How can Daniel's words to Belshazzar help us become more humble and thankful to God (v. 18-24)?

It should remind us that even when we feel like we have it all going on, if we fail to acknowledge God

as the source of our blessings, we can and will lose everything in the end.

(10) Why do you think Daniel emphasizes that “that very night” the city of Babylon fell and Belshazzar was killed (v. 30)?

Sometimes God will allow people time to change, but God’s wrath may also be sudden; there will not be any time to try to hide or call on anyone to “fix things”. God has already warned us in His word what happens to those who sin; God does not lie.

(11) How does this chapter demonstrate that seventy years of life under Babylon’s influence had not broken down Daniel’s convictions?

The Queen recognized that Daniel was the same person whom King Nebuchadnezzar had called upon. His spirit and wisdom were still beyond anyone else’s in the kingdom. When Daniel was offered the scarlet clothes and gold chain he refused them, but Daniel was still willing to reveal God’s message to the king.

(12) What can we learn from Daniel’s example that will help us resist pressures to compromise our convictions?

- be patient and wait on God
- trust that God will provide us with what we need
- everything that shines and “looks good” is not “good for us”
- God’s message must always and will always be revealed
- God is always in control (even when things don’t appear that way)

(13) Do you know of anyone today who has mocked God by their words or actions? Does God seem slow to judge their mockery? How can you explain God’s “slowness”?

People may gain wealth or power by means other than through God’s blessings. They may appear to “have it all” right now, but in the end they will lose it. God is the one who blesses and enables His people to gain wealth. Anything gained any way other than through God will not last.

It is important for believers not to focus on what others have because they may have gained it through disobedience to God and compromising their faith and will one day have to answer for that.

MID-WEEK BIBLE STUDY
DANIEL: SPIRITUAL LIVING IN A SECULAR WORLD

“My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me;”
Daniel 6:22a

WEEK VI
ON THE MENU AT THE LIONS' CLUB (Ch. 6)

KEY SCRIPTURE

Daniel 6:22a

LEARNING GOALS

- *To encourage Christians to persevere in their commitments to the Lord in spite of opposition and oppression**
 - *To show the importance of being obedient to God**
 - * To show how God honors our obedience to Him**
 - *To demonstrate what happens to those who try to set traps for God's people**
-

MID-WEEK BIBLE STUDY

DANIEL: SPIRITUAL LIVING IN A SECULAR WORLD

“My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me;”
Daniel 6:22a

WEEK VI

ON THE MENU AT THE LIONS' CLUB (Ch. 6)

Your first day on the job you meet the enemy and don't even know it. Daniel was not thrown into the lions' den for being bad, but for being godly. We expect to be punished when we do wrong, and when we do right we expect to be rewarded. Sometimes those who do wrong are rewarded and those who do right are persecuted.

- (1) Was there a time when you were betrayed or accused unjustly of doing wrong? What do you think motivated the person who attacked you?
- (2) List three or four words that describe each of the main characters in this account. How would you describe them to your best friend?
 - Daniel
 - King Darius
 - Other Governors and Princes
- (3) What can we conclude about Daniel's character from the results of this special investigation by his enemies (v. 4-5)?
 - Daniel was an honest, upright man who lived a life of integrity; they could not find any fault in him
 - Daniel was faithful and obedient to God; he refused to worship pagan gods
 - Daniel was consistent; he prayed at the same time each day
- (4) If you were being watched as Daniel was, what changes (if any) would you want to make in your present lifestyle?

A believer's life should be a reflection of God and a witness to others. It is important to consider our thoughts and plans according to God's Word, Will and Way. Although believers are not perfect, when we submit ourselves to the Holy Spirit we can live according to God's plan for our lives.
- (5) King Darius willingly signed the document prohibiting prayer (v. 6-9). How does this action resemble the sins of his predecessors?

King Darius allowed himself to be swayed by the pressures of his surroundings. King Darius was tricked because of his desire to be worshipped above all others. Although King Darius liked Daniel, he did not consider how this decree would affect Daniel's worship to his God.
- (6) Daniel had three choices in response to the king's decree: (1) stop praying for thirty days, (2) pray secretly or (3) pray as usual. Explain the consequences of each and why you think Daniel made the choice he did. Which choice would you have made?
 - (1) to stop praying (even for thirty days) would mean Daniel would not be spiritually connected to God and he would be obeying a false god.
 - (2) to pray secretly meant that Daniel would be changing his habits because of fear of being found out

Daniel remained faithful to God and trusted that God was able to deliver him from whatever punishment he might receive from the king. Daniel's obedience to God was more important to him than being faithful to the king.

I would hope that I remained faithful just as Daniel did and I would trust that God is able to keep me no matter what the outcome.

(7) How does verses 14-20 underscore the impact Daniel's life had on the king?

- King Darius had grown fond of Daniel
- King Darius trusted Daniel to be a man of integrity
- Even though he did not worship Daniel's God King Darius had some faith that He would deliver Daniel
- King Darius' faith was strengthened as a result of witnessing what Daniel's God could do.

(8) In what ways would the miracle Darius witnessed have reinforced Daniel's personal example (v. 21-24)?

- it showed that Daniel was a man of faith
- it showed that Daniel was willing to remain faithful to his God even to death
- it showed that Daniel served a powerful God who was able to control the lions
- it showed that Daniel's God protected him as a result of his faith and obedience
- it showed that Daniel gave God the glory for protecting him in the lions' den

(9) What specific aspects of God's character can you discover in Darius' decree praising the "God of Daniel" (v. 25-27)?

- He is the living God
- He is steadfast
- He is forever
- No-one is more powerful
- His kingdom cannot be destroyed
- He delivers and rescues
- He works miracles in heaven and on earth

(10) How has Daniel encouraged you to be a more Christlike example to those around you?

- Daniel has encouraged me to remain faithful to God (even in the face of fear)
- it has also encouraged me to be patient and to wait on God

God already knows the outcome. God's wrath is to be feared above anything man can do

(11) What can you learn from Daniel's experience that will help you trust God even in the face of the threat of punishment for your obedience to God?

God is able to do the impossible and God rewards faithfulness.

(12) Reflect on what it took for Daniel to live such a consistent life of obedience to God for more than seventy years in the corrupt society of Babylon.

DANIEL: SPIRITUAL LIVING IN A SECULAR WORLD

“In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon Daniel had a dream and visions of his head upon his bed: then he wrote the dream, and told the sum of the matters.”

Daniel 7:1

WEEK VII A PROPHETIC PANORAMA (Ch. 7)

KEY SCRIPTURE

Daniel 7:1

LEARNING GOALS

***To instill confidence in God’s plan for history
and in His power to do what He promises**

***To show how God reveals Himself to us**

*** To show that we don’t have to be afraid of the future when we trust God**

***To show that God’s kingdom will prevail over all other worldly kingdoms**

MID-WEEK BIBLE STUDY

DANIEL: SPIRITUAL LIVING IN A SECULAR WORLD

“In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon Daniel had a dream and visions of his head upon his bed: then he wrote the dream, and told the sum of the matters.”
Daniel 7:1

WEEK VII

A PROPHETIC PANORAMA (Ch. 7)

Christians who know God’s Word, however, realize that history has a plan. God is not sitting in heaven hoping everything will work out. He has already told us how history will conclude because He has planned it all. God gave Daniel several visions of the future.

- (1) What are some ways that people think the world will come to an end?
- (2) If you had seen this vision with Daniel, what question would you have asked the one who interpreted the vision for Daniel?
- (3) The sea is used in many prophecies to represent the nations of the world. If that is the picture here, how would you explain verses 2-3?
All the nations from the North, South, East, and West came together
- (4) Daniel sees four beasts which, according to verse 17, represent the four kingdoms. The lionlike appearance of the first beast may represent that kingdoms’ strength and majesty. What characteristics of the second, third, and fourth kingdoms are suggested by verses 5-7?
 - the bear may represent fierceness and ferociousness
 - the leopard with wings may represent height and mobility
 -
- (5) What aspects of God’s nature and power are suggested by Daniel’s description of the Ancient of Days in verses 9-10?
 - throne and wheels were fiery (could mean strength and power)
 - garment was white (could mean purity)
 - white hair (could mean wisdom and longevity)
- (6) How can this vision of God give us hope and stability when the nations (or our lives) are in turmoil?
 - We can know that God is in control
 - God is more powerful than anything in our lives
 - God never changes; we can trust His promises
- (7) The final figure to appear in Daniel’s vision is “one like a son of man” (v. 13-14), an apparent description of Jesus. What effect does his coming have on the inhabitants and rulers of the world?
Jesus will have dominion over everyone and everything. He will destroy all other powers. His rulership will last forever.
- (8) After the four kingdoms rise, “the saints of the Most High will receive the kingdom” (v. 17-18). How is their conquest different from that of the four kingdoms?
The saints will possess the kingdom forever; they will not be overthrown.

(9) What can you conclude about the moral and spiritual character of the “other horn”?

The other horn has no moral or spiritual character; he will do whatever he can to take control. He is divided. He promised a lot of things. He will speak lies against God and try to wear down the saints. He will destroy anyone who tries to get in his way.

(10) Twice the heavenly interpreter says that the last king will be tried and condemned by God (v. 22, 26).

Why do you think God goes to the effort of setting up court to judge someone so blatantly sinful?

God has already told us that sin will be dealt with. He wants His people to know that His word is true.

No matter how long sin is allowed to exist, it will be destroyed along with all those who choose to sin.

(11) Daniel is told that the saints of the Most High will share in the kingdom with the “one who is like a son of man”. What do you find most appealing about Daniel’s description of God’s kingdom (v. 13, 14, 27) and why?

-the kingdom is everlasting

-greatness shall be given to the saints

-
