



## Scripture



# Daniel 6:6-10, 16-23,25-27

## Unit .16

## Session .03

# God's Protection Sustains His People

**6** So the administrators and satraps went together to the king and said to him, “May King Darius live forever. **7** All the administrators of the kingdom, the prefects, satraps, advisers, and governors have agreed that the king should establish an ordinance and enforce an edict that for thirty days, anyone who petitions any god or man except you, the king, will be thrown into the lions’ den. **8** Therefore, Your Majesty, establish the edict and sign the document so that, as a law of the Medes and Persians, it is irrevocable and cannot be changed.” **9** So King Darius signed the written edict. **10** When Daniel learned that the document had been signed, he went into his house. The windows in its upstairs room opened toward Jerusalem, and three times a day he got down on his knees, prayed, and gave thanks to his God, just as he had done before. . . . **16** So the king gave the order, and they brought Daniel and threw him into the lions’ den. The king said to Daniel, “May your God, whom you continually serve, rescue you!” **17** A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den. The king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the signet rings of his nobles, so that nothing in regard to Daniel could be changed. **18** Then the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting. No diversions were brought to him, and

he could not sleep. **19** At the first light of dawn the king got up and hurried to the lions’ den. **20** When he reached the den, he cried out in anguish to Daniel. “Daniel, servant of the living God,” the king said, “has your God, whom you continually serve, been able to rescue you from the lions?” **21** Then Daniel spoke with the king: “May the king live forever. **22** My God sent his angel and shut the lions’ mouths; and they haven’t harmed me, for I was found innocent before him. And also before you, Your Majesty, I have not done harm.” **23** The king was overjoyed and gave orders to take Daniel out of the den. When Daniel was brought up from the den, he was found to be unharmed, for he trusted in his God. . . . **25** Then King Darius wrote to those of every people, nation, and language who live on the whole earth: “May your prosperity abound. **26** I issue a decree that in all my royal dominion, people must tremble in fear before the God of Daniel: For he is the living God, and he endures forever; his kingdom will never be destroyed, and his dominion has no end. **27** He rescues and delivers; he performs signs and wonders in the heavens and on the earth, for he has rescued Daniel from the power of the lions.”

**What are some examples where Christians should clearly challenge the cultural status because of our higher commitment to Jesus?**

**What role do you think Daniel's consistent practice of prayer had in shaping the kind of man he was? How has your own personal prayer life given shape to the person you are today?**



## 99 Essential Doctrines

### Sin's Effects in the World

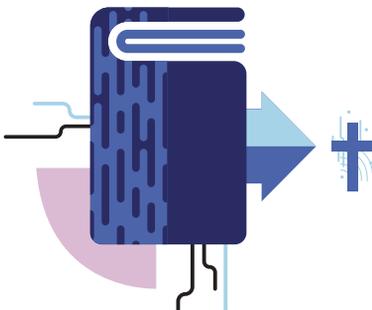
Sin does not only impact our relationship with God; it is also the root of our broken relationships with the people around us. Human sinfulness is the reason the creation groans in anticipation for redemption and deliverance from its bondage to evil powers (Rom. 8:20-22). Sin has infected and redirected the social structures of society, leading to injustice and oppression. The distorting effects of sin are visible all around us, but the good news of the gospel is that the battle against these powers will be won through the work of Christ.

## Main Point

God's kingdom advances through the faithfulness of His people.

When Daniel refused to obey the king's edict, what statement did it send to the rest of the world? What are some areas in our own culture in which we are called to obey God rather than men?

Have harsh circumstances ever caused you to doubt God's faithfulness in your life?



## Christ Connection

Daniel faithfully trusted and obeyed God even at risk of his life. God rescued Daniel from death and used him to advance His kingdom. Like Daniel, Jesus faithfully trusted and obeyed God, but unlike Daniel, Jesus was not spared from death. Jesus died and was resurrected to establish the kingdom of God.

**Make a list of the attributes given to God in Darius' song. How is God's ultimate mission of receiving glory and honor from people of all nations revealed in this song?**

## In Defense



“Critical scholars judge Darius the Mede (Dan. 5:31) to be literary fiction, pointing out that no such name has been discovered in ancient texts. They claim the Jewish author conflated details about Cyrus (559–530 BC) and Darius I (522–486 BC) into his imaginary monarch. Such arguments from silence are notoriously precarious. Skeptics once confidently declared Belshazzar to be a fictional character as well. Scholars who accept the historicity of Daniel’s account usually identify Darius the Mede as a governor of Babylon (Gubaru=Gobryas) or as Cyrus himself. Lesser rulers were often spoken of as kings in ancient times, and dual names for kings were common. Either explanation is historically feasible. Ancient records vary in the exact number of Persian satrapies. ‘Satrap’ means ‘protector of the kingdom’; Xenophon and other Greek historians applied the term to lower officials. Daniel apparently used it in similar fashion.”— Stephen R. Miller, “Daniel,” *The Apologetics Study Bible* (Nashville: B&H, 2007), 1280.



## Head

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**How does this account give you a different perspective on personal trials, allowing you to step back and see the bigger picture of God's work?**

**Share about a time when God used a difficult period in your own life to point others to Himself.**



## Heart

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**In what ways are you intentionally seeking to live a life faithfully devoted to God? What does such a life look like?**

**How can you better demonstrate this devotion in your own life?**



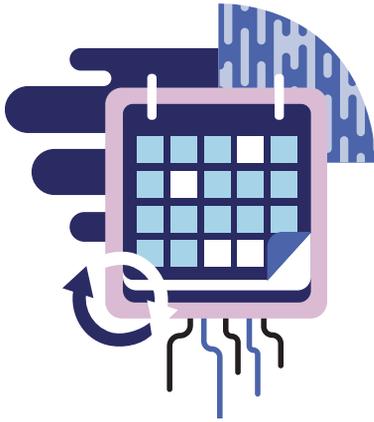
## Hands

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**What are some spiritual disciplines you have intentionally tried to hide from others out of fear of what they might think or say?**

**How does this account challenge you to be more faithful in these areas? How will you begin to demonstrate that faithfulness this week?**

# Daily Devotions



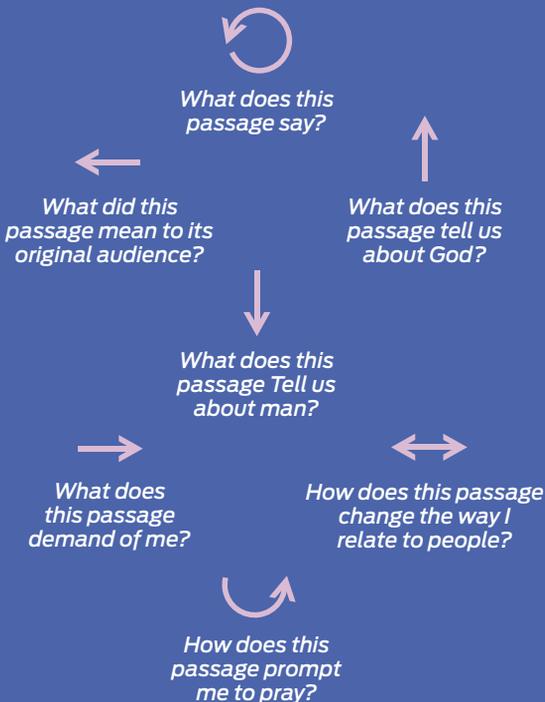
Day 1

## Daniel 6:1-5

Daniel's elevation during Israel's exile is inspiring. Under three unbelieving leaders, God's servant remained faithful and righteous, earning him the trust of all he served. Not everyone, however, celebrates when the people of God function as salt and light in the world. The resistance Daniel faced is not unlike the open hostility that living as a Christian in the twenty-first century invites. Though God will use us to be a blessing to many, some enemies will resent and lash out at genuine faith. The more God elevates us, the greater the resistance will likely be.

Responding correctly to attacks like these requires tremendous confidence in God's sovereignty over your life and an abiding contentment with His plans. The hatred of a few should not prevent us from blessing as many people as possible as we live by faith. Daniel's commitment was unshakable, much like the resolve of Jesus. We, too, must strive to live with complete integrity no matter the personal cost.

## The 7 Arrows of Bible Reading



**How has your service to the Lord been a blessing to others? How has it cost you?**

# Daniel 6:6-10

Faithfulness to God's Word is not only difficult in our modern era, but it also puts us in direct contradiction to the expectations and rules of our contemporary context, whether spoken or unspoken. Because the days of cultural religiosity are gone, the basic expressions of Christianity are becoming increasingly offensive. Daniel's example is a reminder that our obedience must not change even as the world around us does. With full knowledge of the potential cost, Daniel chose to live by a higher law. God calls us to do the same.

Doing so will require us to resist compromise. Often, keeping our faith quiet or hidden seems easier. While we should strive to be good citizens whose presence blesses society, we should be unashamed in our determination to please God more than those around us. Our enthusiasm to our true King ought to be a constant reminder that this world is not our final home.

**In what ways do you feel pressure to compromise your faith because of the standards in our world?**

# Daniel 6:11-24

The Lord always protects His people. Daniel's survival in the lion's den is a vivid example of the relentless care and security God offers to us. This does not mean, however, that our outcomes in adversity will always be as favorable as what we read here. Though we praise the Lord when He meets an earthly need or provides deliverance, our confidence in Him must rest beyond what we can see with our eyes. Because nothing can separate us from the love of God, we know our Savior's faithfulness is not based on circumstances (Rom. 8:31-39). We do not fear those who can kill our bodies because of our certainty that our heavenly Father protects our souls.

Trusting God may be a simple concept to grasp, but it is much more difficult to live. Knowing that our future is secure, however, helps us lift our gaze to eternity when the present is harsh and painful. Daniel was just as victorious before God saved him from the lions as he was afterward, and so can ours be.

**How do your circumstances today increase or diminish your confidence in God's protection over your life?**

# Daniel

## 6:25-28

The enduring impact of Daniel's faithfulness to the Lord is as inspiring to us as it is instructive. After watching his servant emerge from the lion's den unscathed, King Darius not only rejoiced but also worshiped Daniel's God. Consider, for a moment, how remarkable it is that two pagan rulers voiced the eternal glory and power of Yahweh because of the witness of one man. The consistency and perseverance of Daniel were powerful tools for advancing God's kingdom in a difficult place. His presence in Babylon was even instrumental in Israel's return to their homeland.

Today, our lives possess similar potential. Though our eternal impact is rarely the result of big accomplishments, the steady, constant witness of trusting God through all of life's hills and valleys has profound influence on those around us. Ultimately, only eternity will reveal the full ripple effect of our commitments to Christ.

**How do you want your life to make a difference for God's kingdom?**

# Acts

## 4:1-31

Boldly speaking the words of Christ and pointing others to Him can often be costly. Just as Daniel nearly died because of his faith, the early apostles faced threats and hardship because of their efforts to influence others. After Peter and John healed a lame man, religious leaders who could not deny the miracle attacked them anyway. These men are a reminder to us that just as prophets suffered persecution, circumstances will sometimes force us to choose between obedience or sinful compromise (Matt. 5:11-12).

Yet, we should not lose sight of the reality that the endurance of God's faithful servants often results in miraculous results. The early church continued to grow exponentially because of their witness. Likewise, our resolve to be salt and light no matter the personal cost will bear eternal fruit as well. Regardless of how well known you might be, your life can make a significant difference in God's kingdom. Insults and false accusations should never hinder our efforts to be Christ's witnesses (Acts 1:8).

**How are you intentionally bold for Christ? How has God used your efforts?**