



## Unit .16

### Session .02

# God's Authority Sustains His People

## Scripture



## Daniel 4:29-37

**29** At the end of twelve months, as he was walking on the roof of the royal palace in Babylon, **30** the king exclaimed, “Is this not Babylon the Great that I have built to be a royal residence by my vast power and for my majestic glory?” **31** While the words were still in the king’s mouth, a voice came from heaven: “King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is declared that the kingdom has departed from you. **32** You will be driven away from people to live with the wild animals, and you will feed on grass like cattle for seven periods of time, until you acknowledge that the Most High is ruler over human kingdoms, and he gives them to anyone he wants.” **33** At that moment the message against Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled. He was driven away from people. He ate grass like cattle, and his body was drenched with dew from the sky, until his hair grew like eagles’ feathers and his nails like birds’ claws. **34** But at the end of those

days, I, Nebuchadnezzar, looked up to heaven, and my sanity returned to me. Then I praised the Most High and honored and glorified him who lives forever: For his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation. **35** All the inhabitants of the earth are counted as nothing, and he does what he wants with the army of heaven and the inhabitants of the earth. There is no one who can block his hand or say to him, “What have you done?” **36** At that time my sanity returned to me, and my majesty and splendor returned to me for the glory of my kingdom. My advisers and my nobles sought me out, I was reestablished over my kingdom, and even more greatness came to me. **37** Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, exalt, and glorify the King of the heavens, because all his works are true and his ways are just. He is able to humble those who walk in pride.

**When have past successes inflated your ego?**

**In what ways do you take the future for granted, as if it is yours to plan?**



## 99 Essential Doctrines

### God is Transcendent

God's transcendence refers to the fact that He is distinct from and independent of His created world. He is transcendent over us in regards to His greatness and power as well as His goodness and purity. The implication of this doctrine is that God is inherently superior to humanity; His thoughts and ways are higher than ours (Isa. 55:8-9). When God saves us, He restores us so we can fulfill our human purpose; this does not mean that we become God or that distinctions between God and humanity are obliterated. Understanding God's transcendence evokes awe and wonder at His goodness and power.

## Main Point

# God shows grace by humbling the proud.

How do you tend to respond to God's interruptions in your life?

anger

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annoyance

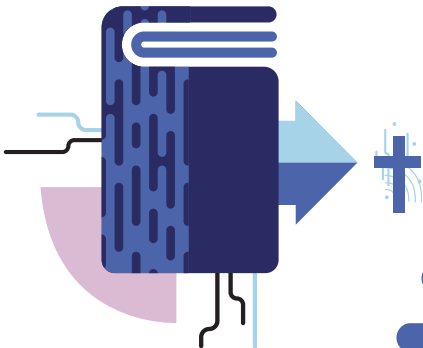
tolerance

humble receptivity

How does having humility before God help us to realize our place and purpose in life?

## Christ Connection

King Nebuchadnezzar boasted in the city he had built to bring glory to himself, but God humbled him so he could see the glory of the King of heaven. Jesus is the King of kings who humbled Himself by taking on the flesh and laying down His life to build a people of God for the Father's glory.



**How does the humility of Christ challenge our prideful hearts?**

## In Defense



“Nebuchadnezzar may have suffered from boanthropy, a rare mental illness in which people believe they are actually cattle. One modern case of boanthropy resulted in the patient growing long matted hair and thickened fingernails, much like Nebuchadnezzar, whose hair grew like eagles’ feathers and his nails like birds’ claws. Critics contend that secular history has no record of Nebuchadnezzar’s mental illness. However, it is questionable as to whether an ancient Near Eastern despot would mention his bout with insanity in official court records which were typically devoted to highlighting his accomplishments. Silence about an embarrassing episode is understandable. Moreover, the church historian Eusebius cited Abydenus, a third-century BC Greek historian who referred to a time when Nebuchadnezzar was ‘possessed by a god.’ Also, the third-century BC historian Berosus possibly referred to these events when he spoke of an illness that befell Nebuchadnezzar just before his death.” —Michael Rydelnik, “Daniel,” *CSB Study Bible* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2017), 1333.

# Our Mission



## Head

How does this account make us look to our own hearts for any signs of pride?

Why do you think God has designed the world in such a way that the humble will be exalted and the proud will be brought low?



## Heart

What are some behaviors and actions that point to a prideful heart? Do you see any of these in yourself?

What are some behaviors and actions that point to a humble heart? Do you see any of these in yourself?

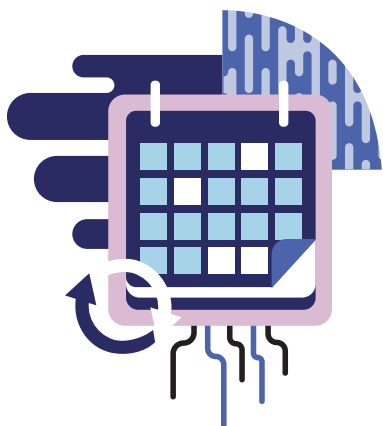


## Hands

How does Jesus' humility serve as a model for our own?

What are some ways we can imitate Jesus' example of humility in our own lives?

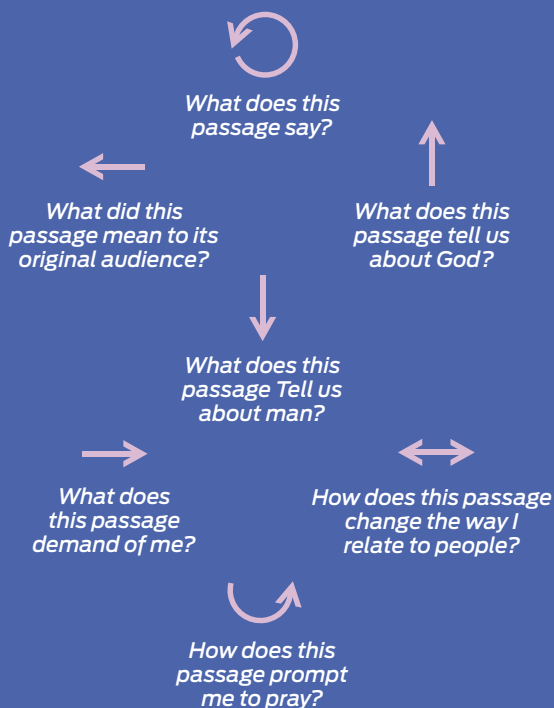
# Daily Devotions



Day 1

## Daniel 4:1-27

### The 7 Arrows of Bible Reading



Despite his observation of God's repeated glory and power, Nebuchadnezzar's pride continued to blind him to the authority of his Maker. Though he gave lip service to the unrivaled strength of Yahweh, Babylon's king saw himself as omnipotent and ultimate. To him, the strength of his kingdom was from the work of his own hands. Thus, God again came to Nebuchadnezzar in a dream, but this time with a warning of his impending humility. Daniel not only interpreted the vision, but also pleaded unsuccessfully with his leader to repent.

Unfortunately, we often fall victim to the sin of self-reliance as well. Though every good and perfect gift in our lives is from above (James 3:17), we dangerously live as if we are the source of the blessings we enjoy. In order to appreciate the grace of Christ fully, however, God desires that we walk in faith and humility. Failing to do so blinds us to the authority God has over our lives while also creating the illusion that we chart our destiny. Because Jesus submitted to the will of the heavenly Father, we must seek to do the same. Unless we humble ourselves, God's greatest blessings in our lives can actually become stumbling blocks that foster sinful arrogance.

**In what ways are we capable of mishandling God's blessings in our lives?**

# Daniel

## 4:28-30

How do you respond to bad news? Despite God's revealed intention to humble Nebuchadnezzar like an animal, Babylon's king continued to boast in his strength. In his mind, the strength of the kingdom was a testimony to his power and majesty. Though he claimed the Hebrews worshiped the Most High God, the wayward king lived as if he was above all others. Tragically, it is not difficult to see ourselves falling into the same destructive pattern.

Though we say that Christianity is not about us, we sometimes live to the contrary. We may nod our heads in agreement with declarations about the priority of God's kingdom, yet we might also reduce the kingdom to whatever makes us happy or fulfilled. Knowing that God's glory takes precedence over our own does not prohibit us from magnifying ourselves at the expense of our Savior. Like Babylon's ancient king, our hearts gravitate toward what we perceive to be testimonies of our strength. In our efforts to be like God, we sometimes recklessly compete with Him.

**What are some ways you have looked to your own strength and alleged achievements instead of Christ?**

# Daniel

## 4:31-33

Grace takes many forms and is not always immediately recognizable. Yet, what sometimes appears to be God's harsh judgment often turns out to be one of His blessings in disguise. Driven from the throne to the field in order to eat like cattle, Nebuchadnezzar endured the harshest of circumstances from the hand of God. The goal of this plight, however, was to rescue the king from himself. Because the only remedy for pride is humility, the Lord was actively wooing His subject to repentance. We should expect no less today.

Because life is no more than a vapor (Jas. 4:14), we should often remember that the temporary inconveniences we dislike so much are intended to humble us. In fact, we can rejoice knowing that God compassionately interrupts our temporal lives in order to reward us eternally. Rather than get upset with Him for every problem we face, we should first look for ways to humble ourselves before the Lord instead. What we mistakenly perceive as His absence in our lives is often the greatest evidence of His activity.

**What inconveniences has God used in your life to humble and sanctify you?**

# Daniel

## 4:34-37

Nebuchadnezzar's journey comes full circle in these verses. After enduring a time of great distress, the king was able to see reality much more clearly. By recognizing God's supreme sovereignty over his life, Nebuchadnezzar was now able to appreciate his achievements as gifts from the Lord rather than evidence of his equality with the Most High God. Because he yielded to God's chastening hand, the former pagan felt compelled to Yahweh.

For us, abandoning the subtle deceptions of pride can be just as painful. Though God will not likely force us to the ground like an animal, He will strip us of any stumbling blocks that prevent our total dependence upon Him. In His providence, God is willing to hurt us in order to help us. Praise readily falling from our lips is a good indicator that we, like Nebuchadnezzar, finally realize how undeserving we are of the good gifts in our lives.

**What season or event in your life has led you to praise the Lord more deliberately than before?**

# Daniel

## 5:1-31

Our lives would be much easier if we could learn from the mistakes of others without repeating them. Yet, the sins of the past, in this case pride, seem to rear their ugly realities in every generation. After King Nebuchadnezzar's reign in Babylon ended, Belshazzar began to rule. Despite knowledge of his predecessor's costly arrogance, this new king also refused to walk with humility (Dan. 5:22-23). As a result, God stripped the kingdom from Belshazzar in dramatic fashion, proving that He would not be mocked. The same is true today.

The Bible repeatedly warns that God will not share His glory with anyone. Wisdom beckons us to avoid great heartache by not following in the devastating examples of how pride destroys us. Are our modern idolatries any less significant than Belshazzar's? Do we expect our disregard for God's commands to go unnoticed? As difficult as humbling ourselves before the Lord might be, facing the His judgment for pride is much more painful.

**How have you learned from the sins of others? In what ways have you failed to do so?**