

Courageously & Confidently Serving the Lord for a Lifetime
Message 6 of 6 in the series: "Daniel: Living with Courage and Confidence"

A. After the Medes and Persians conquered Babylon, Daniel was elevated to a high position of leadership in the new government.

"Darius the Mede decided to divide the kingdom into 120 provinces, and he appointed a high officer to rule over each province. The king also chose Daniel and two others as administrators to supervise the high officers and protect the king's interests. Daniel soon proved himself more capable than all the other administrators and high officers. Because of Daniel's great ability, the king made plans to place him over the entire empire. Then the other administrators and high officers began searching for some fault in the way Daniel was handling government affairs, but **they couldn't find anything to criticize or condemn**. He was faithful, always responsible, and completely trustworthy. So they concluded, '**Our only chance of finding grounds for accusing Daniel will be in connection with the rules of his religion.**'" Daniel 6:1-5 (NLT)

IMPORTANT! Like Daniel, God wants us to be faithful, responsible, and trustworthy employees no matter who we work for. "For the Lord's sake, submit to all human authority—whether the king as head of state, or the officials he has appointed. For the king has sent them to punish those who do wrong and to honor those who do right. It is God's will that **your honorable lives should silence those ignorant people who make foolish accusations against you.**" 1 Peter 2:13-15 (NLT)

"Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. Remember that the Lord will give you an inheritance as your reward, and that the Master you are serving is Christ." Colossians 3:23-24 (NLT)

B. The other administrators and high officers were jealous of Daniel, and they plotted together to trick King Darius into having Daniel executed because of his faith.

"So the administrators and high officers went to the king and said, 'Long live King Darius! We are all in agreement—we administrators, officials, high officers, advisers, and governors—that the king should make a law that will be strictly enforced. Give orders that for the next thirty days any person who prays to anyone, divine or human—except to you, Your Majesty—will be thrown into the den of lions. And now, Your Majesty, issue and sign this law so it cannot be changed, an official law of the Medes and Persians that cannot be revoked.' So King Darius signed the law. But when Daniel learned that the law had been signed, he went home and knelt down as usual in his upstairs room, with its windows open toward Jerusalem. **He prayed three times a day, just as he had always done, giving thanks to his God.**" Daniel 6:6-10 (NLT)

Note: Daniel prayed facing Jerusalem because Solomon had asked God to hear the prayers of exiled Israelites who prayed this way. "If they turn to you with their whole heart and soul in the land of their enemies and pray toward the land you gave to their ancestors—**toward this city** you have chosen, and toward this Temple I have built to honor your name—**then hear their prayers** and their petition from heaven where you live and uphold their cause." 1 Kings 8:48-49 (NLT)

IMPORTANT! As followers of the Lord, we're not supposed to go out looking for trouble, but we're not supposed to run from it, either. "If you are insulted because you bear the name of Christ, you will be blessed, for the glorious Spirit of God rests upon you. If you suffer, however, it must not be for murder, stealing, making trouble, or prying into other people's affairs. But it is no shame to suffer for being a Christian. Praise God for the privilege of being called by his name!" 1 Peter 4:14-16 (NLT) (*Acts 5:41*)

IMPORTANT! Daniel valued his daily time with the Lord more than his life. "Yes, **everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord**. For his sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ and become one with him." Philippians 3:8-9a (NLT)

IMPORTANT! Daniel gave thanks to the Lord. "Never stop praying. **Be thankful in all circumstances**, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus." 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18 (NLT)

C. After Daniel was caught praying in defiance of King Darius' law, it appeared that Daniel's enemies had won.

"Then the officials went together to Daniel's house and **found him praying and asking for God's help**. So, they went straight to the king and reminded him about his law. 'Did you not sign a law that for the next thirty days any person who prays to anyone, divine or human—except to you, Your Majesty—will be thrown into the den of lions?' 'Yes,' the king replied, 'that decision stands; it is an official law of the Medes and Persians

that cannot be revoked.’ Then they told the king, ‘That man Daniel, one of the captives from Judah, is ignoring you and your law. He still prays to his God three times a day.’ Hearing this, the king was deeply troubled, and he tried to think of a way to save Daniel. He spent the rest of the day looking for a way to get Daniel out of this predicament. In the evening the men went together to the king and said, ‘Your Majesty, you know that according to the law of the Medes and the Persians, no law that the king signs can be changed.’ So at last the king gave orders for Daniel to be arrested and thrown into the den of lions. The king said to him, ‘May your God, **whom you serve so faithfully**, rescue you.’ A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den. The king sealed the stone with his own royal seal and the seals of his nobles, so that no one could rescue Daniel. Then the king returned to his palace and spent the night fasting. **He refused his usual entertainment and couldn’t sleep at all that night.**” Daniel 6:11-18 (NLT)

IMPORTANT! We can be confident that God is in control even when it doesn’t look like it. “Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish **infinitely more than we might ask or think.**” Ephesians 3:20 (NLT)

D. The Lord sent an angel to rescue Daniel from the lions, and Daniel’s accusers ended up receiving the very punishment they had intended for him.

“Very early the next morning, the king got up and hurried out to the lions’ den. When he got there, he called out in anguish, ‘Daniel, servant of the living God! Was your God, **whom you serve so faithfully**, able to rescue you from the lions?’ Daniel answered, ‘Long live the king! My God sent his angel to shut the lions’ mouths so that they would not hurt me, for I have been found innocent in his sight. And **I have not wronged you, Your Majesty.**’ The king was overjoyed and ordered that Daniel be lifted from the den. Not a scratch was found on him, for he had trusted in his God. Then the king gave orders to arrest the men who had maliciously accused Daniel. He had them thrown into the lions’ den, along with their wives and children. The lions leaped on them and tore them apart before they even hit the floor of the den.” Daniel 6:19-24 (NLT)

IMPORTANT! “...the Lord knows how to rescue godly people from their trials, even while keeping the wicked under punishment until the day of final judgment.” 2 Peter 2:9 (NLT)

“The wicked conceive evil; they are pregnant with trouble and give birth to lies. They dig a deep pit to trap others, then fall into it themselves. **The trouble they make for others backfires on them.** The violence they plan falls on their own heads. I will thank the Lord because he is just; I will sing praise to the name of the Lord Most High.” Psalm 7:14-17 (NLT)

E. Daniel’s confident, courageous witness allowed the Lord to be praised throughout the Persian empire.

“Then King Darius sent this message to the people of every race and nation and language throughout the world: ‘Peace and prosperity to you! **I decree that everyone throughout my kingdom should tremble with fear before the God of Daniel. For he is the living God, and he will endure forever.** His kingdom will never be destroyed, and his rule will never end. He rescues and saves his people; he performs miraculous signs and wonders in the heavens and on earth. He has rescued Daniel from the power of the lions.’ **So Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian.**”

Daniel 6:25-28 (NLT)

IMPORTANT! Serving the Lord humbly, consistently, and confidently for a lifetime is a powerful witness for the Lord to our unbelieving family members, coworkers, and friends. “In the same way, you wives must accept the authority of your husbands. Then, even if some refuse to obey the Good News, your godly lives will speak to them without any words. **They will be won over by observing your pure and reverent lives.**”

1 Peter 3:1-2 (NLT)

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Connect Group Discussion Questions:

Read Daniel 6, and then discuss the following questions:

1. How does it make you feel to learn that Daniel, although he was a captive, carried out his duties with such excellence that he was elevated to the highest positions of leadership in multiple kingdoms over a 70-year period? What can we learn from his example? (1 Peter 2:12-15, Colossians 3:23)
2. Why do you think Daniel went home and prayed just as he’d always done even though he knew all about the trap the other administrators had set for him? (Philippians 1:20-24 & 3:8-9) What would you have done?

3. How could Peter say we should regard it a privilege to suffer for Christ? (1 Peter 4:14-16, Acts 5:41)
4. What on earth could Daniel have been thanking God for when he prayed? How is it possible to thank God in all circumstances? (1 Thessalonians 5:17-18)
5. Read Ephesians 3:20, Psalm 7:14-17, & 2 Peter 2:9. Why does it continually surprise us when we realize that God has been working in ways we never expected?
6. Spend some time as a group discussing what it looks like to live for years as faithful witnesses in front of our unbelieving family members, coworkers, and friends. (1 Peter 3:1-2) Then spend some time praying for each other and for specific individuals to see Christ in us.