



THE COMMUNITY

Whom You Continually Serve | PRIORITY OF WALK OVER RELATIONSHIPS

What Do I Need to Know About the Passage?

Daniel 6

The last verse of chapter five signified the conquest of Babylon by Darius the Mede. Just as God raised up Babylon to punish Israel, now He used the Medes to destroy Babylon. In the third administration (and second nation) of Daniel's tenure, he again distinguished himself so greatly that Darius desired to set him over the entire kingdom.

Daniel had been deported to Babylon in 605 BC. Darius took over the kingdom in 539 B.C. For 66 years, he's been a captive, and is now probably in his early eighties. He is still pursuing excellence in all he does, and thereby gaining opportunities for influence. As we'll see shortly, he is also as committed to walking with God as he ever was. He is not, however, doing very well at developing relationships with his colleagues.

In v. 4, we can see the obvious hostility from his colleagues; in fact, the whole chapter is predicated on their hatred of him. They were incensed that a Jew would be placed over the whole kingdom. It is very likely that at one time or another, the people in your study will have coworkers who don't appreciate their faith. If they remember this study (as we hope they will), they may recall the three foundations for ministry in the marketplace: an intimate walk with God, relationships with coworkers, and a commitment to excellent work. What do you do when you can't have all three? What do you do when your relationship with God causes people to hate you?

Daniel understood that those three values are not equal. Just as walking with God trumped obedience in chapter 3, here we see it also trumps relationships. Daniel is not willing to compromise to curry favor with anyone. He's not trying to pick a fight, but neither will he back down when God's honor is on the line.

The other administrators and satraps couldn't stand to have Daniel ruling the kingdom, so they sought to bring charges against him. But they couldn't. As they searched through his life, they found no corruption, nor negligence. He was above reproach. They realized that the only way to trap him, would be to pit his obedience to God, against his obedience to the government.

They tricked Darius into passing an immutable law that would forbid praying to anyone other than him, for the next thirty days. From Darius' perspective, this was a way to unify the kingdom, and secure his authority over it. Foolishly, he agreed, not

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What's the Big Idea?

In this final installment on Daniel, you'll want to summarize the lessons of the book, and show the priority of walking faithfully with God, over developing relationships with colleagues.

What's the Problem?

Some relationships can't be formed or strengthened without disobeying God. In those situations a great cost may have to be borne if we are to remain faithful to God.

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realizing the implications for Daniel. Daniel now had to choose between praying to his Lord whom he had served his entire life, and praying to a man who could neither hear his requests, nor grant them. I doubt it was a difficult decision for him.

He went home and prayed toward Jerusalem. Chapter nine gives some insight into what he was likely praying about, as his heart yearned for the restoration of that great city.

Daniel is discovered praying, and it is reported to Darius who is greatly distressed. He is unable to change the law, which requires any violators to be thrown into a lions' den. reluctantly, Darius orders the punishment, and his parting words to Daniel are, "May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you."

I'd love to see a split screen video replay of that night. In the top half we'd see Darius pacing in the bedroom of his palace. He's unable to sleep, eat, or take entertainment. He has no peace and is haunted by what he has just done. on the bottom half would be Daniel, sound asleep in the company of lions and angels. In eighty years of adventures and danger, he has learned to trust God.

At the first light of dawn, the anxious king hurries to the lion's den and cries out, "Has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to rescue you from the lions?" He has! Because Daniel trusted in God, he was rescued.

As a result, another letter is drafted and sent throughout the world declaring the praises of God. Twice, because Daniel and his friends are willing to place their relationship with God above all else they are rescued from certain death. And twice, this results in praise, glory, and honor to God being declared throughout the earth. everywhere Daniel goes, God receives glory. May the same be said for you and me.

As we place our relationship with God above everything else, develop relationships with those around us, and pursue excellence, we can trust that God will vindicate His glory through our lives. What greater privilege could there be?

What's Our Response?

Encourage the people in your study to begin to exercise their faith. It grows like a muscle. The more we use it, the stronger it becomes. Make decisions and do things, so that you will have to trust God. When you are eighty, don't you want to be like Daniel? What faith step can you take this week?

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What Are the Questions?

Daniel 6

Launch

Have you ever had to choose between a relationship with a person, and your relationship with God. What was the situation? What did you do?

Explore

Read vv. 1-5.

1. In chapter 2, God foretold that a new kingdom would arise and replace Babylonia. That “silver kingdom” is Me-do-Persia which conquered Babylon in 539 BC. That new kingdom is now in power in chapter 6. How old would this make Daniel?

2. young or old, it’s the same Daniel. He’s excellent in every way. What role does Darius want him to fulfill?

3. Why does this make the administrators so angry?

4. Have you ever been in a situation where you were hated, even though you’d done no wrong? How did you respond?

Read romans 12:17-20.

5. What does it mean to do right in the eyes of everybody?

6. What two clauses does Paul use to modify, “Live at peace with everyone?” What does this indicate?

7. What do you do when you can’t both walk with God, and please the people around you?

8. The other officials couldn’t find any legitimate charges against Daniel. What could a private eye (or roommate, old girlfriend, little brother) dig up on you?

Read vv. 6-9.

9. The administrators lied to Darius when they said “the royal administrators... all agreed.” still, it was a foolish decision. Why do you think he agreed to this law?

Read vv. 10-15.

10. Daniel, of course, goes home and as was his custom, prays toward Jerusalem. What do you think he’s praying about? (scan chapter nine for insight into this.)

Read vv. 16-23.

Notice how Darius describes God when he addresses Daniel in vv. 16 and 20. How great it must be to have people say that about you. 11. Don’t miss the irony in this scene. What kind of night does Darius have? How about Daniel? What is the critical difference that makes this so backward from what you’d expect?

Read vv. 24-28.

12. What, for the second time, is the result of Daniel’s great faith?

13. Despite all that’s been said about ministry, what are the primary reasons we walk with God? Develop relationships? Pursue excellence?

Apply

14. What do you need to do now, while you are young, to set your life on the right course?

15. Are there any relationships you need to demote because they influence you to disobey God?

16. What do you dream God will do through your life?

17. What do you need to trust God for if you are to move toward accomplishing that dream?

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What Are the Answers?

1. He was taken into Babylon in 605 BC, 66 years earlier, so he's probably in his early eighties.
2. To oversee the entire kingdom.
3. Probably because he is a Jew whom they regarded as inferior.
4. Allow the group to discuss.
5. Allow the group to discuss.
6. "If it is possible," and "As far as it depends on you." It may not be possible, and it doesn't entirely depend on you. We need to do everything reasonable to have peace. We are not called to peace at any cost.
7. The priority must always be to walk with God.
8. Allow the group to discuss.
9. He probably saw it through political, not religious, eyes. It likely seemed politically expedient to unify the kingdom and secure people's loyalty.
10. Probably for the restoration of Jerusalem.
11. Darius has horrible night, but Daniel is fine. Daniel had been trusting God for a lifetime, so he was able to trust Him again. Darius had no idea how loving and powerful God is, and did not trust Him.
12. Again, a letter goes out to the whole world declaring the praises of God.
13. Discuss. We walk with God because He is worthy of our lives, and we love Him. We pursue relationships, because all people were made in His image and bear His glory. God made us for relationships with other people. We work hard, because all work has dignity and was part of the created order before the fall. We are to work "unto the Lord."
- 14.-17. Allow the group to discuss.

Memorize

Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before.

Daniel 6:10



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