

Daniel

A Man of Influence

B I B L E S T U D Y



'...but the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits.' Daniel 11:32

Daniel's life was quite interesting for several reasons. He arrived in Babylon as a young slave boy and yet rose to the highest levels of leadership in the city. Daniel was a highly sought-after government official who never preached a single message, yet each king he worked with acknowledged the sovereignty of God because of their encounters with him.

Daniel had a full-time demanding career and excelled in the marketplace, yet he still had a thriving relationship with God. He faced life threatening persecution and yet stood steadfast in his walk with God.

There are definitely many lessons for us to learn from him as Daniel lived a life that influenced the destinies of men and of nations, both within his lifetime and beyond.

This 20-day study looks at the Book of Daniel from the perspective of the strategies he employed to excel both in his long spanning career and spiritual journey and how to apply those strategies to have a life of lasting impact.

Our prayer is that this study blesses you and positively impacts every aspect of your life.

Day 1

Courage & Determination

But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way. – Daniel 1:8

Taken from his noble family, Daniel must have been afraid and unsure of the future. Added to that he has to compete with his fellow Israelites for the opportunity to serve a heathen king. This was a sink or swim situation with Daniel expected to excel by embracing Babylon. However, he decided very early on that he may be in Babylon, but the spirit of Babylon wasn't going to be in him. Daniel still kept his eyes on the God of Israel, determined not to defile himself with the pleasures of Babylon.

Let's put ourselves in Daniel's shoes: a prisoner of war, refusing to eat the king's delicacies and sticking out when others would have jumped at the opportunity to conform. Thankfully he had strong allies in his friends Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah who trusted God with him. God came through as they were not just visibly healthier but also 10 times better than their peers. But they didn't know that when they said no. They just took a risk to obey their God, believing that He would see them through. Two lessons we can highlight are these:

Fight your battles before they come. Daniel and his friends didn't wait for the test before deciding how they would respond. They had established a walk with God and would not allow anything interfere with that. God was their priority and that set the benchmark for any decision they would make, including defying their captors.

Choose the right company. Surround yourself with the right people. Those who will stick with you to accomplish the unpopular, so long as it's something that will please God. The boys didn't break rank, they supported one another and held on to their belief. I pray God gives you your company, the people who will strengthen you, support you, pray with you and help you reach the fullness of everything God has created you to be.

Strategy: Ask God to help you make your relationship with him your daily priority. Ask also that God Himself chooses your friends, advisers, those you surround yourself with.

Day 2

The Control Key

“What the king asks is too difficult. No one can reveal it to the king except the gods, and they do not live among humans.” Daniel 2:11

I had a dream, tell me what the dream was and what it means otherwise you will die... That summarises what the King told those he summoned to his palace. The bible says, ‘sleep left him’ so we can assume all this took place from late at night to very early hours of the morning. Talk about pressure! So much so that the wise men had to exclaim that his request couldn’t be answered by a mere mortal. Imagine the king’s rage, the urgency he’d have placed on the immediate execution of all wise men in Babylon and the king’s special forces running from house to house forcefully entering the homes the wise men so they could be executed. Total pandemonium. Life can be like that sometimes with issues that seem to defy a logical solution.

In this high pressure situation, Daniel showed both wisdom and courage in approaching the captain of the king’s guard and petitioning the king for time to come back with the answer. The king accepting to wait was a miracle in itself considering others were killed for trying to gain time. Too often we treat prayer as a last resort having tried every other strategy. But Daniel understood that issues of life can only be resolved by going straight to the “control room”.

“...but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries...” Daniel 2:28

Daniel and his companions sought the mercies of God. They did not try and reason things out, but faced the one who had the capacity to help them. Imagine the fervency of the prayers by Daniel and his friends, likely lacking structure and order, but more passionate pleas for help. And God came through, giving Daniel not just the dream but the interpretation as well.

Nothing is too difficult for God. He’s the one that knows the end from the beginning, the one that sees the things done in darkness as though they were done in broad daylight and nothing is impossible for Him. Will you take a risk and trust God today for the impossible? He did it for Daniel, He can do it for you.

Strategy: Prayer is the control key that unlocks everything else. When last did you use it?

Day 3

Standing Your Ground

“...Whoever does not fall down and worship will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace.”
Daniel 3:6

King Nebuchadnezzar not only built a 90ft statue in his own honour which everyone was to bow down and worship, he also instituted dire consequences for disobedience- a painful death in a blazing furnace. In spite of this, Daniel’s good friends Shadrach, Meschach and Abednego didn’t obey the command even though they had prominent political appointments from King Nebuchadnezzar and it would have been very obvious when they failed to comply with the decree. When their colleagues reported them to the king for not obeying his decree, Nebuchadnezzar had an interesting engagement with them.

“...if you do not worship it, you will be thrown immediately into a blazing furnace. Then what god will be able to rescue you from my hand?” Daniel 3:15b NIV

That’s the way the enemy operates sometimes when we take a position for God – first making it look like our position is unreasonable and then making himself appear more powerful than God. What’s popular is not always what is approved by God, so there will be times as believers when we will have to take an unpopular stance. The Hebrew boys refused to worship another god and even when facing certain death, they would rather defy man than defy God. They were fully aware of God’s sovereignty and were confident and mature enough in their relationship with God to stand for Him, regardless of the outcome.

In this case the outcome was quite dramatic. The captors died in the process of throwing them into the furnace and the same king who placed himself higher than God had to acknowledge that there was a higher power present with the Hebrew boys. To crown it all, Shadrach, Meschach and Abednego walked out of the fire themselves with not so much as a smell of smoke around them. When issues arise because we took a stand for God, He has different ways of handling the situation depending on what His overall plan for our lives is. He may deliver us from them or be with us as we go through them. Either way, we come out stronger.

Strategy: Don’t let public opinion deter you from taking a stand for God.

Day 4

Open to God's correction

'King Nebuchadnezzar, please accept my advice. Stop sinning and do what is right. Break from your wicked past and be merciful to the poor. Perhaps then you will continue to prosper.' Daniel 4:27

In Daniel 4, King Nebuchadnezzar has another dream which Daniel again interprets for him. This time the dream was about the king himself and essentially was a warning from heaven to change his ways. We may wonder, why would God spend so much energy warning a proud heathen king?

'In the same way, there is more joy in heaven over one lost sinner who repents and returns to God than over ninety-nine others who are righteous and haven't strayed away!' Luke 15:7

'The Lord says, "I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over you.' Psalms 32:8

Because of God's love for His creation, He constantly sends us warnings, guidance and advice. For believers, because we carry the Holy Spirit in us, we have the benefit of also having an inner prompt which alerts us when we may be going off track. There are multiple paths we can take in life, but there is one that God designed specifically for us which is aligned to His plan for our lives. However He won't force us to go His way. God will always do His part to nudge us, whether we choose to respond or not is now left to us.

Sadly, for Nebuchadnezzar, he didn't heed the warning and a year to that interpretation the dream came to pass, however he was restored when he acknowledged the sovereignty of God. The lesson here is that while God is merciful and can restore us even when we derail, there are consequences to our actions. Imagine using a GPS to get directions on how to get to a specific place in the fastest time. If we choose to ignore it and end up missing our way, the GPS can recalibrate and reroute us and we will eventually get to our destination, but we would have lost some valuable time and possibly more. That's how life is when we choose to ignore God's corrections. The longer we wait to take the correction the more severe the consequences.

Strategy: Understand God's instructions are to prepare us not just for what's best for us now, but also the future.

Day 5

Learn from the Lives of others

“What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun.” Ecclesiastes 1:9

Time is finite and we are bound to make mistakes along the way, therefore it's of more benefit to us to learn from the lives of others rather than waste precious time making the same mistakes. There are many things in the Bible that we think only apply in historical times, however the principles are eternal in nature and the illustrations we see (also in daily life) are either examples we can adopt or cautionary tales we need to be mindful of.

'...And those who walk in pride He is able to put down.' Daniel 4:37

“But you, Belshazzar, his son, have not humbled yourself, though you knew all this...” Daniel 5:22

Belshazzar was a descendant of king Nebuchadnezzar who had been so filled with pride that he forgot the warning from heaven, lost his mind and was driven from the palace for 7 years until he acknowledged the sovereignty of God. Fast forward a few years and king Belshazzar exhibiting the same pride, took the gold and silver items that had been used in God's temple for his guests at a party for praising other gods. He took what was holy and made it profane. The response from God was swift and clear and Belshazzar lost his throne that night.

'These things happened to them as examples for us. They were written down to warn us who live at the end of the age.' 1 Corinthians 10:11

When we look at Belshazzar's situation we may ask: How did Belshazzar forget so quickly what had happened? Who were Belshazzar's counsellors and why didn't anyone remind him of what had happened to his predecessor? He couldn't claim not to know as it was a very public thing that happened close to home and Nebuchadnezzar had written to all nations, narrating his experience and giving as clear a warning as it gets. But Belshazzar had either forgotten or didn't care so had failed to put adequate structures around himself to keep him from repeating the same error.

Strategy: Take note of the mistakes, victories of others either in the Bible or around us and ask God for the grace and strategy to excel as they did while avoiding their pitfalls.

Day 6

A spirit of excellence

'Inasmuch as an excellent spirit... were found in this Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar, now let Daniel be called, and he will give the interpretation.' Daniel 5:12

We may imagine excellence as some great acts of grandeur and perfection, but really as someone said, excellence is doing ordinary things extraordinarily. There's consistency in excellence, not one-off flashes of brilliance. So when we speak of an excellent spirit, it's not that some people are separated and more able than others to do things well, it's that they choose to embody excellence and it eventually becomes a way of life. Daniel's life typified this, to the extent that even at a point where he was no longer in active service, his character spoke for him, and he was sought out to solve a problem.

"...We will never find any basis for charges against this man Daniel unless it has something to do with the law of his God." Daniel 6:5

'Now the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting... Also his sleep went from him. Then the king arose very early in the morning and went in haste to the den of lions.' Daniel 6:18-19

Mediocrity abounds in every sphere of life so anyone displaying excellence is bound to stand out, which will invariably attract some level of opposition. When his colleagues hatched a plan to eliminate Daniel, they knew that they couldn't find him wanting in any area and the only way they could trap him was if it had to do with worshipping his God. And so, the plan was hatched, and Darius was used as a pawn in the hands of the officials as they played on his pride. One thing to note is that the king did all he could to save Daniel and when that didn't work he stayed up all night and rushed out as early as he could to see if Daniel had been saved. Losing Daniel would clearly have been a great loss to Darius as he would have been difficult to replace.

Reflect: Can the same be said about us? Are we adding so much tangible value to the lives of others that there would be a hole left by our exit?

Strategy: Be intentional about functioning in excellence in every area of your life. Not just when you think you will get some form of a material benefit, but because you want to function as someone who brings light into every environment you may find yourself.

Day 7

Knowledge and Understanding

'God gave these four young men an unusual aptitude for understanding every aspect of literature and wisdom...' Daniel 1:17

What made Daniel and his friends stand out was that God blessed them with an unusual capacity for knowledge and understanding. They had the capacity to assess situations, circumstances, challenges, problems and come up with the accurate solution. This is a skill we can certainly all benefit from in all our areas of endeavour. As we partner with God in fulfilling His agenda for our lives, He equips us with the tools we need not just to succeed but also to stand out so His name is glorified.

'...All these men understood the signs of the times and knew the best course for Israel to take.' 1 Chronicles 12:32

'... I am the Lord your God, who teaches you what is good for you and leads you along the paths you should follow.' Isaiah 48:17

Today's world is volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguous and disruptive, so essentially change is the only constant. However, we have a supernatural advantage we can and should tap into so we know exactly what we should do per time. Imagine being able to always assess a situation accurately and give the appropriate solution. How sought after and valuable you'd be in the workplace, business arena, home, every facet of life. The Bible tells us that the 4 Hebrew boys were given these gifts which enabled them stand out among their peers. God is the same yesterday today and forever. If He could do this for the Hebrew boys in Babylon, then, He can certainly do it for His children in this age.

'Give me understanding and I will obey your instructions; I will put them into practice with all my heart.' Psalms 119:34

Let's not lose sight of the heart posture of these young men. They already had a heart for God and were willing to follow His instructions. As we seek understanding, we will receive prompts that may not necessarily appear logical based on what we see right now, but it's key that we keep trusting God that He who sees the end from the beginning will guide us accordingly.

Strategy: Ask God for knowledge and understanding today and the capacity to be a solution provider to any challenge that comes your way.

Day 8

The Gift of Boldness

'The wicked flee when no one pursues, But the righteous are bold as a lion.' Proverbs 28:1

Throughout the book of Daniel, it is difficult not to notice just how bold he was. Determined not to eat the food allocated by the king, Daniel boldly approached the officials appointed over them to allow he and his friends eat just fruit and vegetables for 10 days. This was not a simple request as defying the king was punishable by death (Daniel 1:8-14).

After King Nebuchadnezzar had given the order to kill the wise men in Babylon because they could not tell him the dream he had, Daniel approached the guard sent to his house to ask why the king had given the order and then approached the king himself - the same person who had commanded his execution to ask for more time! (Daniel 2:14-16).

When the same king had a dream without a positive outcome, Daniel still told the truth, risking the king's anger and possibly his own death, even though he could have lied and the king would be none the wiser (Daniel 4:19-27). We also see that Daniel's close friends were equally bold enough to defy the king's order to worship a statue and ended up being thrown into and delivered from a blazing furnace (Daniel 3). These are just a few of the many examples of the acts of boldness as shown in the book of Daniel.

'Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word' Acts 4:29

'What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?' Romans 8:31

Fear doesn't respect boundaries, and when it's allowed to enter in one area, it can quickly take over other areas if it's not checked early enough. However, fear should never dominate a believer. That's not to say we will never feel fear, rather when fear shows up we are to remind ourselves of who we are and who is for us, so we can step forward in spite of how we may feel. So while the issues we're facing today may look different, it's still the same God at work in us, giving us the boldness we need to be all He created us to be. Imagine all the things you could do if fear wasn't an issue.

Strategy: Ask God for boldness today.

Day 9

A Life of Integrity

'The integrity and moral courage of the upright will guide them, but the crookedness of the treacherous will destroy them.' Proverbs 11:3

The Bible tells us that integrity is a guide for the believer, with the word of God acting as a benchmark by which we can determine if we are still on track or have derailed from God's agenda and expectations. Integrity also acts a form of security as honest people aren't worried about inconsistencies in their lives. One thing that was clear from Daniel's life is that he lived a life on integrity, not compromising on any of his principles, regardless of the consequence.

At this, the administrators and the satraps tried to find grounds for charges against Daniel in his conduct of government affairs, but they were unable to do so. They could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent. Daniel 6:4

At king Belshazzar's feast, after being called to interpret the writing on the wall, Daniel rejected the gifts but still provided the interpretation. Why? It was clear that Daniel was not interested in the king or his offers and was very offended by the king's actions of desecrating God's temple items (Daniel 5:18-28). Even Daniel's enemies had to acknowledge that they couldn't find anything negative to pin on him and so had to go the long route of creating a policy just to attack Daniel's faith life.

'Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, but those who deal truthfully are His delight.' Proverbs 12:22

Integrity comes at a price, especially when dealing with crooked people who may view you as a stumbling block, or when it may cost you a material benefit. However, we have the assurance that we are secure as the Lord delights in those who walk in integrity. As the Lord delights in us, He protects, strengthens and equips us to continue to stand for what is right. But as always, we need to have a heart disposition that is determined to walk in integrity in the first place and having a clear conscience before God.

Strategy: Pray that God will help you as you determine to become a person of integrity, whose life will be pleasing to Him.

Day 10

Consistency

'Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.' I Corinthians 15:58

Success doesn't occur in a vacuum, it always leaves clues. When we look at Daniel and his ability to influence kings and nations, a running theme we see is that Daniel had a lifestyle of consistency. In every area he found himself, Daniel could always be relied upon to deliver – his skills, prayer and study life, relationship with friends.

'He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much...' Luke 16:10

Daniel was consistent in using his skills in a manner that glorified God across different administrations. His consistency in successful service to 4 kings during his exile in Babylon, led to all kings giving glory to God because of things he had done. Even when he was no longer working for the reigning monarch, we see that he was still recognised for his ability to consistently solve difficult problems.

'...he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days.' Daniel 6:10

Daniel was consistent in prayer, so much so that his prayer habit was the only way his enemies in government could entrap him. His prayer life also opened him up to visions of things that were yet to occur hundreds of years in the future as well as unlocking a prophecy concerning Israel. All this from one man's consistency in his prayer life.

'And he said to me, "O Daniel, man greatly beloved"' Daniel 10:11

Daniel's consistency got him noticed not just by men but also by heaven. He was consistent in his faithfulness to God gave him understanding of the period of exile Israel and ensured he could be entrusted with the several visions he was given. We need to ask ourselves how consistent we are in all spheres of our lives. If Daniel could do it, especially in an environment like Babylon, then so can we.

Prayer: Lord help me maintain the areas of consistency I'm doing well in and strengthen me in the areas I need to work on.

Day 11

Understanding God's Assignment

'Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet...'
Matthew 24:15

It's interesting that Jesus Himself called Daniel a prophet – this same Daniel who was essentially a government official. We aren't told that he ever preached a sermon or called a prayer meeting outside of his three close friends and he didn't fit the usual template of a prophet. Yet as far as heaven was concerned that is what he was, even if he didn't look like it to others. There are many things that God may have said about us that may not in any way resemble who we look like now or our current circumstances, yet God uses everything to achieve His purpose for our lives.

'He made known His ways to Moses, His acts to the children of Israel.' Psalms 103:7

'For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.' Jeremiah 29:11

God's character remains the same, but His methods vary from generation to generation. That's why it's critical for us to focus on who He is, not just what He's doing in our lives at a point in time. The Israelites struggled with God throughout their wilderness journey because they only knew his acts. So when God took them out of familiar territory, even though they were free from their Egyptian oppressors, they grumbled throughout until an entire generation was wiped out.

Daniel could also have chosen to grumble, after all he was a child of noble birth now in exile serving a heathen king. He could have jumped on the 'if you can't beat them, join them' bandwagon and yet he chose not to. He chose to align with God and the Lord rewarded him on earth and as Jesus Himself referenced him, it's safe to believe Daniel was also rewarded in eternity. Are there things that have been spoken over our lives that don't seem to be coming to pass? Let's not be discouraged – now more than ever we need to press into getting to know God better. His plans for us are much better than we could ever imagine.

Prayer: Lord help me understand Your assignment for me. Give me clarity where I am confused and help me find encouragement where I am weary.

Day 12

Tenacity in Prayer & Fasting

'In those days I, Daniel, was mourning three full weeks.' Daniel 10:2

Many of us are familiar with what is popularly called the 'Daniel fast' which lasts for 21 days. But the interesting thing is that Daniel didn't set out to fast for 21 days, he just set out to fast until he received an answer to his prayer and it just so happened that the answer came within that period. Sometimes we subconsciously or intentionally attach a specific time frame to the period by which we expect to have received a response to what we're fasting for and decide to move on to plan 'B' if we don't get an answer by then.

'One day Jesus told his disciples a story to show that they should always pray and never give up.'
Luke 18:1

Daniel was dogged in the place of prayer and fasting and was still in this state when the angel came to him. So we can probably infer that had the angel not shown up that day, Daniel would have continued with his prayer and fasting. Daniel didn't give in to any of the many legitimate reasons not to persist in prayer. His work schedule and other responsibilities aside, he still prioritized prayer. And this opened him up to a dimension of prophecy we are still unravelling today.

'Give the Lord no rest until he completes his work, until he makes Jerusalem the pride of the earth.'
Isaiah 62:7

As with anything worth having, there's a level of influence we simply cannot reach if we aren't persistent. There comes a point where we may say to ourselves that if indeed the word of God is true, then we must get an answer. We may not necessarily like the answer we get, but surely an answer will come.

Sometimes in our walk with God, we may have prayer points which are answered in a relatively short time, at other times, we may have prayer projects which may take more time depending on what we are praying for and God's agenda concerning it. In Luke 2:22-38 we see the stories of Simeon and Anna, both of whom had waited a significant amount of time to see the birth of Christ. No amount of fasting or prayer would have made that happen earlier, but because they had stayed faithful, they were both there to witness Jesus being brought to the temple.

Prayer: Lord give me persistence and stamina in the place of prayer. Help me to keep standing when I feel like giving up.

Day 13

Understanding the Times

'To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven' Ecclesiastes 3:1

The Bible tells us that there's a time for every activity under the sun, but do we take time to work with the Holy Spirit to consistently assess the times we're in? If not, how do we expect to know when the season has changed before it's too late? And even if we correctly identify a change in season, how do we know the next step to take? When we misinterpret the times we run the risk of making wrong decisions and may remain in jobs, businesses, relationships much longer than we should have because we didn't understand the season had changed. We see from Daniel's life that he had an understanding of the times and knew what to do.

'...I, Daniel, understood by the books ... Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes.' Daniel 9:2-3

We must have come across people who seem to always be one step ahead and well positioned to take advantage of future trends and we may wonder how they achieve this. Looking at Daniel, he studied prophecy regarding the tenor of Israel's exile in Babylon –information available to many – yet it appears Daniel was the only person who not only understood the timing but knew what to do which triggered his fast. The question is how did Daniel get this understanding and how did he know what to do?

'The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding...' Isaiah 11:2

The Lord has given us the gift of the Holy Spirit and part of His characteristics include wisdom and understanding. When these are activated in the life of a believer, the person automatically has an added advantage. The Holy Spirit gives us insight into what is really going on at a point in time, in the future and what to do about it. We can ask for wisdom and understanding to be activated in our lives when we face a perplexing situation. Better yet, we can ask that this spirit rests upon us so we constantly have understanding of the times and know exactly what to do about it.

Prayer: Father let the Spirit of wisdom and understanding be activated in me, help me function with this all my days.

Day 14

Navigating the Schemes of Men

“He frustrates the devices of the crafty, so that their hands cannot carry out their plans.” Job 5:12

The favour of the Lord and the spirit of excellence will always distinguish a believer from others. But we must note that being distinguished also brings contention. This contention may come from envy or because the spirit of excellence exposes areas others would prefer to keep hidden. Daniel certainly faced contention and we can learn from how he addressed the issue.

King Darius planned to set Daniel as overall head of his governing structure to ensure he would suffer no loss (Daniel 6:2). For Daniel to have distinguished himself, it stands to reason that he was more trustworthy than the other governors, who must have been looking out for their own interests. Having Daniel in charge of them all wouldn't be beneficial to their selfish interests so over 100 people came together to hatch a plan to get him out of the system (Daniel 6:4-15). When the plan was set in motion Daniel's response to the scheming to get him to stop praying wasn't to worry or negotiate with the king. He simply faced the one who could deliver him from the matter. Whatever the outcome would be, Daniel wouldn't turn away from worshipping the Lord.

“No weapon formed against you shall prosper, and every tongue which rises against you in judgment You shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is from Me,” Says the Lord.” Isaiah 54:17

'...But the king spoke, saying to Daniel, “Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you.”' Daniel 6:16

The Bible never said weapons won't be formed against us, the assurance we have is that these weapons will not prosper against the servants of the Lord. The officials felt they had a foolproof plan to get Daniel out of the way but the Lord intervened on behalf of His servant. Not only was Daniel saved unharmed from the lion's den, the men who had accused Daniel were sent to the same fate and all perished. We need not worry when people scheme against us if we are walking closely with God in uprightness.

Prayer: Father help me to walk uprightly with you, frustrate every scheme against me and all that concerns me.

Day 15

Our Security Base

'Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding.' Proverbs 3:5

What do we base our security on: our reputation, finances, network? These are often the things we rely on as it's easier to trust in what we can engage with physically. But the Lord says there's a more secure way, as any of these can fail us literally overnight. Have you ever made a promise which couldn't be kept because their circumstances changed? Have you planned something important to the finest detail and then something totally out of your control happens and usurps all your planning? Life happens to us all in various ways. However there is One in whom we can trust who holds the keys to every circumstance.

'I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust."' Psalms 91:2

Daniel based his security in his knowledge of and relationship with God. His intimacy with God through prayer and study of the scripture gave him insight into God's character and a conviction that encouraged him to keep his eyes fixed on God alone. This helped him stay focused and unmoved regardless of the circumstances he found himself in, favourable or otherwise.

"... the Most High rules in the kingdom of men..." Daniel 4:17

'The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, like the rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes.' Proverbs 21:1

The Bible names 4 kings that Daniel served in Babylon during his lifetime and he served them all staying loyal to God. He knew his future was not in their hands, but in the hands of God so Daniel served without fear. He defied the orders of a king when it ran contrary to God's word (Daniel 6), he rejected the promotion offer of a king who had deliberately defiled items taken from the temple in Jerusalem (Daniel 5). He was diligent and excellent in all areas and his lifestyle consistently brought glory to God. If God could make Daniel an example, He can do the same with us as we yield to Him.

Prayer: Lord reveal to yourself to me, help me keep my heart fixed on your instructions and guidance on my life's journey.

Day 16

Divine Acceleration

'Then the hand of the Lord came upon Elijah; and he girded up his loins and ran ahead of Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel.' I Kings 18:46

God isn't limited by time, space or any of the other factors that affect people. He has the capacity to move things supernaturally within what would appear to be an impossible amount of time. Elijah outran Ahab who was in a chariot which most likely was powered by the fastest horses in Israel and by the help of the Holy Spirit as Philip also did the same (Acts 8:29). While this is exciting, the divine acceleration we need may not be in terms of physical speed. There are a multitude of ways God can distinguish us from others.

'And I have filled him (Bezalel) with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship' Exodus 31:3

'As for these four young men, God gave them knowledge and skill in all literature and wisdom; ... And in all matters of wisdom and understanding about which the king examined them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers who were in all his realm.' Daniel 1:17,20

Three critical things to note with acceleration. First is that alignment with God's agenda is a must as the enablement is to equip us fulfil our divine mandate. Bezalel was building the temple and the Hebrew boys were standing for God in Babylon. Second is that acceleration happens when something is already in motion. Bezalel was already a hardworking craftsman and the Hebrew boys were already diligent in their studies. So it wasn't as though a special skill came upon idle people.

'...“Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net.” And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking.' Luke 5:5-6

Third is obedience. Simon was a skilled fisherman, yet obedience to one instruction from Jesus brought a dramatic increase. We don't know how God will bring an acceleration in our lives, our responsibility is to keep working hard, maintain a vibrant relationship with Him and obey His instructions.

Prayer: Father I ask for Your divine acceleration in my life in the name of Jesus.

Day 17

Preparation for 'Suddenly'

'For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept...' Isaiah 28:10

It's amazing when God does things suddenly. Sudden healing, breakthroughs, etc. are part of His calling card demonstrating His ability to move beyond the spheres of natural limitations. However, there are some 'suddenlies' we won't see in our lives if we aren't prepared for them. What we see as 'overnight success' can have two sources. If it's from God, it will be the result of a long stretch of processing to prepare us for what we are coming into. If it's from the enemy, we may be suddenly exposed to what we're not yet ready to handle successfully and sustainably without losing our walk with God. God never skips the process part.

'Then Pharaoh took his signet ring off his hand and put it on Joseph's hand; and he clothed him in garments of fine linen and put a gold chain around his neck... So he set him over all the land of Egypt.' Genesis 41:42-43

We are inspired by Joseph's story of going from the jail to leadership literally in one day, but the story didn't start there. Joseph had been through tough situations, betrayal by family, wrongful accusation, being forgotten by those he helped. Through it all he matured in his relationship with God, realizing that God was with him through the good and bad times. He had also demonstrated leadership at various levels, from Potiphar's house to the jail. So when the opportunity came to step into high level leadership over a nation, Joseph was ready.

'He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much...' Luke 16:10

The process may not necessarily be pleasant – it's unlikely Joseph enjoyed the prison, Moses the wilderness, David taking care of sheep or Daniel being in Babylon. Yet they all went through a process. They all demonstrated commitment to God at various stages so they could be elevated to even higher levels. Whatever it is we're asking God for more of, we need to have cooperate with the Holy Spirit's process for building capacity in us.

Prayer: Lord help me submit to Your preparation processes for my destiny.

Day 18

Bearing Kingdom Burdens

'Carry one another's burdens and in this way you will fulfill the requirements of the law of Christ [that is, the law of Christian love].' Galatians 6:2 AMP

Carrying another's burden doesn't mean we don't have our own issues, rather It's from a heart of love that we can begin to see beyond our personal needs and start looking out for the interests of others. The more we do so, the more grace is supplied to us by the Holy Spirit to carry not just individual but kingdom burdens. Let's see how this played out in Daniel's life.

'Also Daniel petitioned the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego over the affairs of the province of Babylon; but Daniel sat in the gate of the king.' Daniel 2:49

Daniel was the one who interpreted Nebuchadnezzar's dream and got the rewards and promotions. He could simply have moved on from there, however he didn't forget his friends and requested that the king give them favourable appointments also. Those around would have observed that Daniel wasn't selfish at his hour of breakthrough and heaven would have taken note as well.

"While I was speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel and making my request to the LORD my God for his holy hill..." Daniel 9:20-21

During his scripture study, Daniel realised that the time for deliverance for the Jews was at hand and so he took it upon himself to intercede for his nation. Even though at this stage of his life it was unlikely he would make the journey back to Israel as he would have been around his 80s at the time. But Daniel had moved beyond himself and was focused on God's agenda.

Daniel was clearly a man who took responsibility for others and he was intentional and deliberate about all he did as the kingdom agenda was always foremost in his heart. This should challenge us When we pray is it always to ask God for things for ourselves or do we intercede for others? When last did we ask God what's on His mind and how we can be useful to Him?

Prayer: Lord help me look beyond myself. Give me a heart for the things that are important to you.

Day 19

Fulfilling Destiny

'For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.' Jeremiah 29:11

God has a divine agenda for everyone of His children, the end point of which is what we call destiny – meaning the final destination. We also have our own personal agendas and likewise the enemy has an agenda for us so the agenda we follow will determine our final destination. So the question is, whose agenda are we following? The Lord knows the plans He has for us and the ideal path He would like for us to follow. That's why we must take the time to confirm from the Lord that we are actually on His path and not another's, because every provision we require for a life of impact and meaningful influence is connected to the path He has designed for us.

“There is so much more I would like to say to you, but it's more than you can grasp at this moment. But when the truth-giving Spirit comes, he will unveil the reality of every truth within you. He won't speak on his own, but only what he hears from the Father, and he will reveal prophetically to you what is to come.' John 16:12-13

We may wonder why God doesn't just show us the end result of His plans upfront so we can align. If He did, we may actually backtrack as the journey and end picture could be so far removed from what we think we can achieve. Daniel was certainly influential in his time yet His path was highly unconventional. If anyone had told him when Israel was being exiled he would be a leading figure in Babylon and in God's prophetic agenda he may not have believed it. He may also have had concerns if he knew how many challenges he would have to face on the way. So the Lord in His mercy gives us a snippet of what we can receive at that time, and the Holy Spirit helps us receive progressive revelation as we mature in our walk with Him. Destiny in God isn't just about the final destination, but the entire journey.

Prayer: Lord help me understand and align with what You are doing in my life now. Help me grow in revelation of Your thoughts and Your ways and give me a better understanding of my journey to becoming who You created me to be.

Day 20

Kingdom Impact in the Marketplace

"'You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden... Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.' Matthew 5:14-16

For a number of people we come into contact with we are their first introduction to Jesus. Not necessarily through our preaching to them, but by the manner in which we function. Because we carry the Holy Spirit, we are meant to walk in knowledge, wisdom, understanding, with the fear of the Lord. We are to act as light in every environment we find ourselves as light illuminates and gives clarity and direction. We are also called to walk in love – not by emotion but sharing the love of Christ. We are to be solution providers and value enhancers wherever we function. There is no one who embodies these traits that won't wield influence within their given sphere of operation. The objective of all the giftings the Holy Spirit gives us is very simple – to point people to Jesus.

"'I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.' John 15:5

If we were to focus on just improving our skillsets at the cost of our relationship with the Holy Spirit, we may advance in our careers/businesses, but we won't make kingdom impact. There is no neutral zone in the spirit realm, so if we keep removing Jesus from our pursuits, it will just be a matter of time before the enemy gains access to our lives and begins to wreak havoc.

Daniel had a full-time demanding career and excelled in the marketplace, yet he still had a thriving relationship with God. He faced life threatening persecution and yet stood steadfast in his walk with God. Daniel earned the respect of everyone he came in contact with. Even his colleagues who did not like him must have grudgingly respected his exceptional qualities. His light clearly shone bright in the marketplace and here we are discussing his life and principles he lived by thousands of years later. If God can do this in one man's life He can do it in ours as we yield to the Holy Spirit.

Prayer: Lord, let me live a life of kingdom impact.

Thanks for completing the study. We'll love to hear from you, connect with us on:

[Instagram](#)

[Facebook](#)

[YouTube](#)

You can also listen to our Podcasts on:

[Spotify](#)

[Anchor FM](#)

[Google Podcasts](#)

[Apple Podcasts](#)

Or send us an Email: aheartofwisdom@gmail.com

©Aheartofwisdom