



LIVING FAITHFULLY
KEY SCRIPTURE | Daniel 6

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2024

DISCUSSION GUIDE

In Daniel 6, we come to one of the most famous stories in the Old Testament—Daniel and the Lion's Den. About 70 years have gone by since chapter 1 and Daniel is in his 80's. The story echoes the fiery furnace in Daniel 3—a decree that can't be revoked and God's deliverance from death for the faithful. When we open chapter 6, there is yet another new king ruling the land, King Darius, the Mede, who defeated Babylon at the end of Daniel 5. Even though there is a change in government, Daniel continues to have favor with this new king. But jealousy from other leaders put Daniel in a deadly situation. Amid huge difficulty, Daniel remained faithful to God. Daniel 6 reminds us that God's plan for His people will be accomplished and we must remain faithful and trust in God while we wait for His kingdom to be established. Just like Daniel, we can see that living faithfully in a shifting culture is rarely popular, will bring conflict, and is our great opportunity to bring glory to God. My difficulties are my opportunities.

QUESTIONS

Icebreaker: Name a habit you do every single day. Why is it important to you to do it each day?

1. Read Daniel 6:1–5. What do we learn about the character of Daniel in these verses? What do you recall about his character from the first five chapters? (Remember, about 70 years has passed!)
2. Why would the king establish Daniel in such a prominent position?
3. Why is Daniel's character so important to this story? How does our character reveal what we believe in?
4. What motivated the satraps and administrators to plot against Daniel? Have you ever been targeted by someone unfairly? How did you respond to that situation?
5. Read Daniel 6:6–16. What was Daniel's response to the decree? How do you think you would've responded in this situation?
6. Are you satisfied with your prayer life? Where do you want to grow in your knowledge and application of prayer?
7. How would you handle it if prayer was outlawed? What fears do you already have about others seeing you live out your faith?
8. Read Daniel 6:17–28. How does this passage speak to the justice of God?
9. After reading Daniel 6, we see that the difficulty Daniel faced brought an opportunity to bring glory to God. What difficulty are you facing now? Do you currently see an opportunity to bring glory to God in your difficulty?

NOTES

Reminder of the context and background of the book of Daniel:

- We saw in chapter 1 that the southern kingdom of Israel, Judah, had become so wicked under King Jehoiakim that God allowed the Babylonians to invade them and take captives.
- Among the captives was an outstanding young man named Daniel and his friends Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.
- Darius is now the 4th of five successive kings we'll see in the book of Daniel.
- And Darius has now divided the kingdom into 120 provinces and appointed someone to rule over each province.
- He employs a political structure to make sure that all the revenue and support that should be coming his way will absolutely come to him.

DIGGING DEEPER

Why did Daniel pray toward Jerusalem with the windows open?

Though Jerusalem and the temple had been destroyed in 586 BC, Daniel continues to look toward Jerusalem in prayer.

“Verse 10 supplies welcome evidence concerning prayer habits during the later biblical period. *Windows... open toward Jerusalem* is a literal understanding of Solomon's petition, when he comes and prays toward this house (1 Kings 8:41–43; 2 Chron. 6:34). The fact that Jerusalem was in ruins (in Daniel's time) called forth faith that it would again be restored because the God who had set His name on the city was the continuing, unchanging God, in control of history. There is evidence for both standing and kneeling in prayer (1 Kings 8:54; Psalm 95:6). Three times a day may take literally Psalm 55:17–18, where David in a time of danger also testified to the value of set habits of prayer.... Daniel's practice of prayer probably reflects a custom that grew up among the Jewish exiles in the eastern Diaspora.”

—Joyce Baldwin, *Daniel: An Introduction & Commentary*, and John Walton, *IVP Old Testament Bible Background Commentary*

Why couldn't the king reverse his own decree?

This story echoes the book of Esther (Esther 1:8, 8:8) where a decree is given that cannot be repealed, even by the king. But why can't he repeal his own decree? Most likely this is because if a king reversed the law it would somehow diminish his authoritative voice (Royal Code of Honor). Therefore, for him not to appear weak in the kingdom, a king could add another decree that would modify the previous decree.

—taken from a lecture by Dr. Tremper Longman III

Daniel 6:19–23 “describes innocence by ordeal. “Ordeal” describes a judicial situation in which the accused is placed in the hand of God using some mechanism, generally one that will put the accused in jeopardy. If the deity intervenes to protect the accused from harm, the verdict is innocent. Most trials by ordeal in the ancient Near East involve dangers such as water, fire, or poison. When the accused is exposed to these threats, they are in effect being assumed guilty until the deity declares otherwise by action on their behalf.”

—Dr. John Walton, *The IVP Old Testament Bible Background Commentary*.