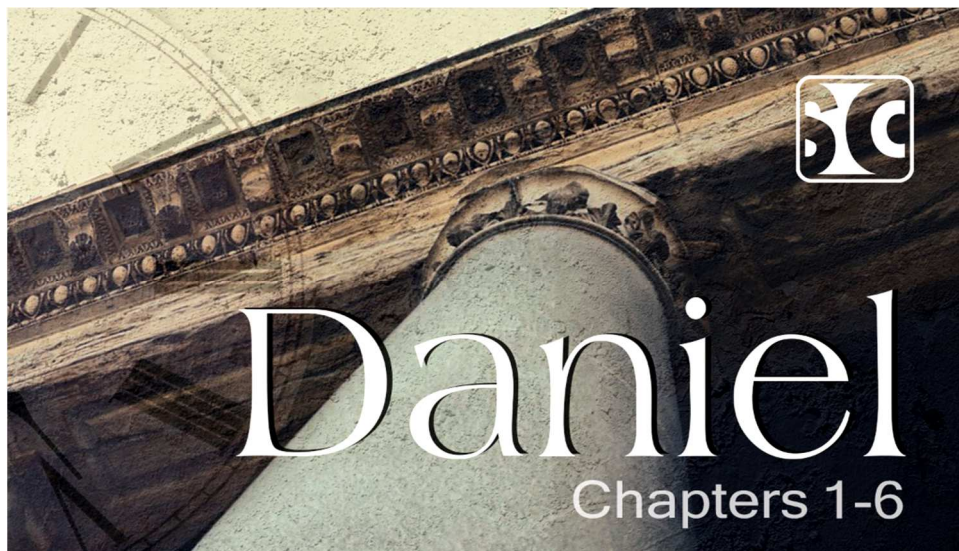


# SCC Life Group Study Guide

Fall 2016



# Daniel

Chapters 1-6

## Exiled to Babylon

In 605 BC, Daniel was one of several young men chosen to serve in Nebuchadnezzar's court. When Persia conquered Babylon in 539, Daniel was again given a position of power. He remained faithful to God in both of these hostile environments. From the interpretation of dreams, to the familiar stories of the fiery furnace, the lions' den, and the handwriting on the wall, to the prophetic visions, the recurrent theme is God's sovereignty over human affairs. In the historical sections (Chs. 1–6) God supernaturally rescued Daniel and his friends. The rest of the book consists of visions of future judgment and deliverance by the Messiah. Some of Daniel's prophetic themes are echoed in the New Testament, especially in Revelation. (ESV)



# Daniel Overview

Find messages online [wearescc.org/teaching](http://wearescc.org/teaching)

## Part One: Daniel 1-6 (605 B.C. to 539 B.C.)

Study 1	The Tragic Result of Disobedience
Study 2	Staying Committed Under Pressure
Study 3	Trusting God in Times of Difficulty
Study 4	Trusting God With Your Future
Study 5	Living Well in the Furnace
Study 6	Pride- Learning the Hard Way
Study 7	Pride- Generational Blindness
Study 8	The Delivering Power of God

## Themes in Daniel

God's Sovereignty | Resolute Living | Christian Character  
Light to Unbelievers | The Return of Christ

## Daniel the Man

Daniel's name means, "God is my judge," and he was in the first group of captives taken from Jerusalem to Babylon. He was of royal or noble blood. As the Scripture shows, he was resolute and unwavering in his faith despite his love for the idolatrous king. The ministry of Daniel was prophetic.

## Daniel the Prophet

Some debate the writings of Daniel in its authorship and prophetic nature, however, as we read, "Daniel the Prophet" is referenced by Christ Himself in Matthew 24:15. Here, Christ recognized both the authority of Daniel's writing and prophetic title. Daniel's letter serves as one of the most comprehensive prophetic books and a key to understanding all other biblical prophecies.

# Prophets | Prophecy | Prophecy Today

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## Prophets

The prophetic office was instituted by God in Deuteronomy 18:15-18. Prophets had a key role in declaring Israel's future and calling them back to obedience. The term “*nabhi*” used to describe a prophet denotes “one who has been called or appointed to proclaim as a herald, the message of God himself”. Other terms “*roeh*” or “*seer*” mean “to see or behold.” -*Moody Handbook of Theology*

## Prophecy

In Scripture, prophecy is always presented as the infallible, authoritative declaration of God's inerrant revelation. It was not an impression on the mind, whether clear or vague, but a verbal declaration, using words the prophet vocalized audibly or wrote legibly in the presence of others who could hear or read them. Scripture never uses the terminology of prophecy to speak of mystical, intuitive impressions. - *John MacArthur*

## Prophecy Today

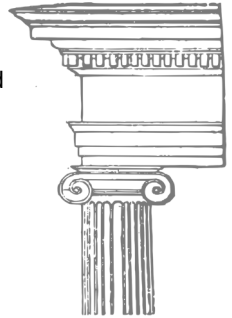
The prophets were greatly instrumental in building up and strengthening the early church. Both apostles and prophets have passed from the scene (Eph. 2:20), but the foundation they laid is that on which all of Christ's church has been built.

## City of Babylon

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Babylon, the place of Daniel's ministry, was a wonder city of the ancient world. Built near the region of the Garden of Eden and around the Tower of Babel, it contained beautiful gardens and incredible architecture displaying their wealth and security. The sheer size of Babylon was incredible, with 60 miles around and over 250 towers perched on 300 feet high by 80 feet thick walls.

The Babylonians were innovators and engineered the first irrigation system that watered the Hanging Gardens of Babylon—one of the Seven Wonders of the ancient world. The Empire lasted 70 years and Daniel was there from its rise to its fall, prophesied in Isaiah 13:19-20.



## Prayer

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Through this study of Daniel's life, it is our prayer that God will stir in His people a greater devotion to Him and that His own will live resolved lives committed to following His Word while expectantly looking toward Jesus' return.

# The Tragic Result of Disobedience

(Daniel 1:1-2)

**Study# 1**

**9-18-16 Message**

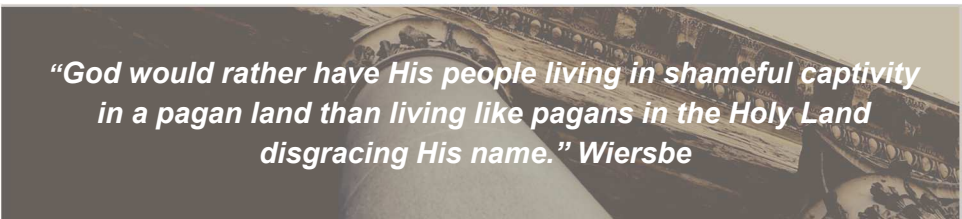
Israel was chosen by God to be a light to the Gentiles. He wanted His people to be a light of hope in a dark world and to point them to a living God. But instead of Israel worshipping God, they turned to false idols. Therefore, God fulfilled what Jeremiah and Isaiah prophesied- warning His people against their rebellion.

For a number of years, God had sent prophets to the leaders of Israel warning them of pagan living. And as warned by God, He ends up giving Nebuchadnezzar victory over His people and their possessions... and Israel is brought into captivity (vs. 1-2) -a dark time for God's people. But God does not leave them without a leader and witness -the prophet Daniel.

## Scripture: Daniel 1:1-2 Fulfilled Warnings

In these verses God gives Israel over to Babylon for captivity and Jerusalem is destroyed. Their destruction looked like a triumph for Babylon as Nebuchadnezzar burned the temple of God and took the sacred temple items to worship his own god. Because of Israel's disobedience, God would fulfill His warnings and scatter them among the Gentiles. (Deut 28:64)

- “The Lord gave” King of Judah, Jerusalem and its vessels over to Babylon. What does this verse tell us about God?
- How do God's people tend to respond poorly in times of prosperity? What does this tell us about ourselves?
- What did Israel neglect to do that brought about God's judgment?



*“God would rather have His people living in shameful captivity in a pagan land than living like pagans in the Holy Land disgracing His name.” Wiersbe*

### **Parallel Passage:**

Compare Deuteronomy 28:1 with vs. 28:15

Then read together Deuteronomy 28:36

- How clear was God in this early warning to His people? What did God's chosen neglect to do?
  - How can these verses be applied to the believer's life today?
  - Read Deuteronomy 30:1-3. What hope did a captive Israel have in being restored?
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## Application Questions and Notes

### **Discuss and Apply 1 Timothy 3:16-17**

Although we have a high regard for the Bible and receive it as God's Word, we sometimes find ourselves not knowing it as well as we should.

1. Why is it important for believers to hold firmly and to study scripture?
2. How can you personally do a better job in dealing with God's Word?

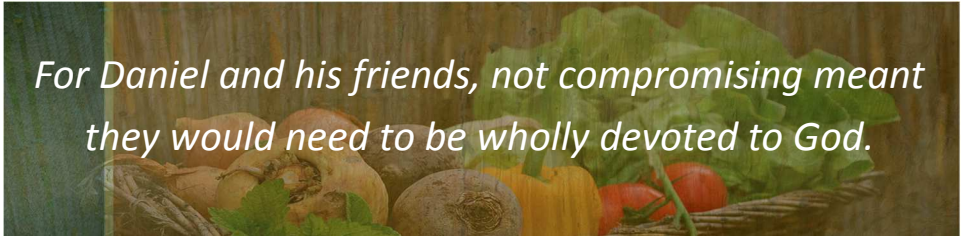
# Staying Committed Under Pressure

(Daniel 1:3-21)

## Study# 2

9-25-16 Message

*It was an honor to be trained as officers in the king's palace, but it was also a trial. The purpose of selecting Israel's finest youth was to transform them into Babylonians; learning a new language, new culture and new ideas. These dedicated youth would have to adapt themselves to secular thinking while remaining resolved to their commitment to follow God and His Word.*



*For Daniel and his friends, not compromising meant they would need to be wholly devoted to God.*

### **Daniel 1:3-7 Wholly Devoted to God**

Daniel's heart– the totality of his being belonged to the Lord.

- We see the list the king was looking for in his new captives (vs. 4). But what did God see in Daniel? What set him apart?
- What convictions did Daniel and his friends have about eating the King's food (vs.8)? Why was their conviction different than the other captives?
- Do we see Daniel or his friends compromise or relax in their commitment to follow God? What does this tell us about these young men?

### **Daniel 1:8-16 Dedicated to the Word**

A heart that loves the Lord, trusts the Lord and therefore obeys the Lord!

- Everyone in Babylon followed Nebuchadnezzar, but Daniel and his friends resolved to follow God. What enabled Daniel to stand firm in his convictions while still honoring the king and his authority?
- When it came to eating the king's food, do you think Daniel had Deut 8:3 in mind, "man does not live by bread alone, but lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord"? How did this inspire Daniel to not defile himself with the king's food?
- Note Matthew 4:3-4 in how Jesus used Deut. 8:3 to overcome temptation. How can believers today make similar use of it?

## Daniel 1:17-21 God's Graces

Distinguishing between what is "good" and what is "right"- discernment!

- How many times in Daniel 1 does the phrase "the Lord gave" appear? Why is this significant?
- As for Daniel and his friends, "God gave them learning and skill in all literature and wisdom" more than anyone in Babylon. What kept Daniel from being conformed to the Babylon culture while being totally submerged in it? What can we do to follow his model today?
- How does God's Word give us perspective (renew our thinking) and enable us to be resolved in our convictions?

*Quote: "If you try to put knowledge before heart-purity; if you try to put a grasp of scripture truth before conscientious living in the presence of God, you are almost certain to have a fearful fall awaiting you." - H.A. Ironside*

## Application Questions and Notes

Each believer is either a conformer or transformer, either being squeezed into the world's mold or we are transforming things in the world where God has placed us.

- Reflect: "Am I personally right with God?" "Am I seeking to honor Him in all that I do?" Invite anyone who is feeling convicted from the study to share how the group can pray for them.
- Identify ways as a group you can ask God to help you live transformed lives.

# Trusting God in Times of Difficulty

(Daniel 2:1-30)

Study# 3

10-9-16 Message

## Daniel 2:1-16 A Distressed King

Nebuchadnezzar had become one of the most powerful leaders the world had known and he would begin to consider what was next for Babylon. As he wondered about the greatness of his city, he began to have troubling dreams of what the future had in store. He would soon learn there was a limit to his knowledge and that he was at the end of all his wisdom.

- Why couldn't these wise men interpret the dream? Why didn't the king's counselors make an attempt to interpret the dream?
- The King's dream was "away from him" and he demanded his counselors to make known the dream and its interpretation. Was the response of his counselors surprising?
- God was bringing Nebuchadnezzar to the end of all his wisdom. How would this become key in bringing Daniel onto the scene?

- ◇ Magicians: root word is "pen/stylus" and more than likely refers to a scholar rather than a traditional magician.
- ◇ Astrologer/Enchanters: consider the stars as having particular significance or power to predict the future.
- ◇ Sorcerers: practice sorcery or incantations.
- ◇ Chaldeans: military conquerors and the acting spokesmen for the group.

***Let's not forget that God wanted the Israelites to be a light to the gentiles. In the midst of Israel's discipline and captivity, God continues to show His desire for Babylon's redemption.***

# REMINDER

The darkness does not hide anything from God- Psalm 139:12



## **Daniel 2:17-30 Readiness to Pray**

Nebuchadnezzar had issued a death sentence for all of the wise men of Babylon. His captains were in the process of rounding up all the wise men when they encountered Daniel and his companions. In prayer, to spare his own life, Daniel would learn the king's dream would soon reveal the matchless wisdom of God!

- Daniel's life is on the line in a defining moment. How did Daniel approach his uncertain future?
- Daniel's immediate response after requesting an appointment with the king was to pray. What can we learn from verses 17-19? What do you imagine that might have looked like for Daniel and his companions?
- Compare Daniel's source of wisdom to the king's counsel (vs. 27-28).

***James 5:16 "The prayer of the righteous person has great power as it is working."***

## **Application Questions and Notes**

Discuss and Apply James 5:16

1. Prayer sustained Daniel in his time of exile. Do you turn to prayer in difficult times?
2. If applicable– take time with your group to discuss the basics and importance of prayer.

# Trusting God With Your Future

(Daniel 2:31-49)

**Study# 4**

**10-16-16 Message**

## Daniel 2:31-45 The Dream Revealed

God revealed the rise and fall of the gentile empire while announcing His kingdom in a distressing dream to King Nebuchadnezzar. In the chaos of rounding up the wise men to be killed, God selected His servant Daniel to reveal the dream and its meaning to the king. In these verses we see that God is the main character in Daniel's writings, and that He is in control of human affairs!

- Why do you suppose God gave King Nebuchadnezzar such a distressing dream?
- Daniel's fate was unknown even as he described the dream to the king. What enabled Daniel to continue to trust God in the middle of uncertainty?
- What did King Nebuchadnezzar's dream mean? What is the kingdom that will last forever?

The image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream not only changed in value from head to foot (gold to clay), but it also changed in strength; it would have been extremely top heavy. "From age to age, nations and kingdoms appear durable, but they're always in danger of falling over and crashing." - Warren Wiersbe

## Daniel 2:46-49 Daniel Distinguished

King Nebuchadnezzar was an unbeliever who had now witnessed the incredible power of God. The mysterious dream was made known, in one of the greatest empires and to one of the most powerful kings in history. God's light was burned brightly in Daniel and his companions, and in an instant they were appointed as chief leaders over all of Babylon. God's hand not only brought Israel into Babylon, but He was going to use their captivity as a light to the unbelieving world!

- How did Nebuchadnezzar recognize the God of heaven? What stands out in his response (vs. 47)?
- Do you think this brought Nebuchadnezzar closer to God? Explain your answer.
- Why is it significant that God chose His servants to be chief leaders in Babylon? (vs. 48/49)

## Application Questions and Notes

Discuss and apply Hebrews 11:1 and 33-34

1. What does it look like today to have the same faith as Daniel when facing uncertainty?
2. What is a step of faith you need to take this week?

# Living Well in the Furnace

(Daniel 3:1-30)

**Study# 5**

**10-23-16 Message**

## Daniel 3:1-7 A Dream Come True

About 20 years later, after hearing the interpretation of his dream, King Nebuchadnezzar decided to build a statue much like the one he saw in his vision. However, this statue would be cast entirely from gold, not just the head (as it was in his dream), but the whole body representing his entire empire. Overcome with pride in his vast kingdom, the king gathered his officials, uniting them in worship of his statue –it's very likely that the king saw himself as a god.

- King Nebuchadnezzar gave credit to God and even recognized Him as the “God of gods, and Lord of kings” (2:47), but something key was still missing. What more did Nebuchadnezzar need to be a follower of God?
- What did the king hope to accomplish in gathering all his officials in the plain of Dura? What significance was there in having an orchestra present? Why do you suspect the king gave an ultimatum to worshipping the golden image (vs. 10-11)?

*Many will have a certain admiration for the ministry and Word of God, but yet will go all their lives living as a stranger to Him. - H.A. Ironside*

## Daniel 3:8-25 Relying on the Word

The believer lives by faith in the living God and what He has revealed in His written Word! Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were committed to upholding God's Word. Their faith wasn't swayed by threats or large crowds, but they stood firm in what they believed.

- These three men held firm to the Word of God! What verse do you suspect they held to through this trial (Exodus 20:3-5)?
- How would you characterize the response of the three men in verse 16-18? What is the relationship between belief and conviction?
- Note that these men were not certain God would deliver them (vs. 18). What encouragement can we find from their faith?

## **Daniel 3:26-30 Witnesses to Babylon**

Consider that there were thousands of believers in exile and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego represented them. If they bowed to the golden statue, it would have destroyed their testimony and fellowship with God.

- Not only were the men's lives spared from the fire, but the Lord was there with them! How did this impact the three believers, the onlookers, and the king? Check out Isaiah 43:1-3!
- Do you think this brought Nebuchadnezzar any closer to surrendering his life to God? Why or why not?

**Mark 13:9:** *"You will stand before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them."*

## Application Questions and Notes

### **Discuss and Apply Mark 13:9**

1. As a group, come up with some ways believers are expected to compromise within our culture.
2. How can this group pray for you in your confidence, convictions, and commitment to the Lord?



# Pride— Learning the Hard Way

(Daniel 4:1-37)

## Study# 6

10-30-16 Message

In this autobiographical chapter from King Nebuchadnezzar (passed throughout his entire kingdom,) we have the account of how a proud and self-willed man was brought to repentance and the saving knowledge of God!

### Daniel 4:1-18 From Peace to Distress

It's likely that its been 20 years since the fiery furnace, and Babylon has flourished in prosperity and peace. King Nebuchadnezzar was filled with pride and boasted in the unstoppable might of his power, honor and majesty, despite the distressful dreams and warnings of God. Nebuchadnezzar was a stranger to God, he had a false sense of peace and security in his accomplishments, and unbeknownst to him, he was going to be forced into humility in order to find repentance and a true and lasting peace.

- An unbeliever lives in a false sense of peace and security. What is the difference between the world's peace and eternal peace (vs. 4)?
- What part of King Nebuchadnezzar's second dream do you think disturbed him the most (vs. 10-17)?

### Daniel 4:19-27 A Call for Repentance

Kings often lived in splendor and isolation from their kingdom; they only heard the good-news and were not concerned for the poor or those in need. This is not God's model of leadership and where God cannot rule, He over-rules! King Nebuchadnezzar discovered the meaning of his dream and was warned by Daniel to repent (4:27).

- We know that God opposes the proud and gives grace to the humble. Compare Proverbs 29:14 with King Nebuchadnezzar's rule. What did the king's dream mean?
- Why do you think God gave King Nebuchadnezzar 12 months before He fulfilled the prophecy from his dream (vs. 28-29)?

### **Daniel 4:28-33 Ignoring God's Word**

King Nebuchadnezzar ignored the warnings in his dream and Daniel's call to repent. Before long, his nightmare became a reality. For several years he would live as an animal, which would ultimately bring about his humility and repentance.

- The king was warned of God's coming judgment yet did nothing about it. What does this reveal about his faith?
- What kept the king from repenting even when he was aware of his wrongdoing?

### **Daniel 4:34-37 The King Witnesses to Babylon**

God not only wanted King Nebuchadnezzar's heart, He wanted him to tell the entire empire what He had done! It was Israel's responsibility to be a light to the lost, but because of their rebellion, God used a pagan king to bring glory to His name!

- What similarities are there between King Nebuchadnezzar's praise (4:35) and Isaiah's words in Isaiah 40:15?
- After receiving this letter from the king, how do you think the unbelieving Babylonians responded?

*Romans 5:20 "Where sin has abounded, grace abounded even more"*

## Application Questions and Notes

### **Discuss and Apply: Romans 5:20**

1. How does Daniel's courage in speaking God's truth relate to our responsibility to speak God's Word in our world today?
2. Talk about the miracle of conversion; how God has the power to change the soul. Pray for someone who you know that is in need of salvation.



# Pride– Generational Blindness

(Daniel 5:1-31)

**Study# 7**

**11-13-16 Message**

## Daniel 5:1-5 Indulgence, Indifference, and Irreverence

King Belshazzar, the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, took great pride in his peace and safety. Even though an army of Medes and Persians camped outside the walls of Babylon ready to invade, King Belshazzar was indifferent as he indulged in an elaborate party. Blinded by pride, he took from storage the sacred vessels captured in Jerusalem by his grandfather and used them to party.

- Many years earlier, King Nebuchadnezzar had declared everyone was to give respect to the God of the Jews (3:29). How did using the consecrated vessels violate the law and dishonor God?
- How would you describe King Belshazzar's character and priorities?

## Parallel Passage:

"While people are saying, 'There is peace and security,' then sudden destruction will come up on them."

**I Thessalonians 5:3**

## Daniel 5:6-12 Warnings on the Wall

Without any warning, the fingers of a human hand appeared and began to write on the wall. Not even the finest food and dress in Babylon could distract from the pale faces and utter silence as the finger wrote. King Belshazzar called on Babylon's wisest men to provide some sort of explanation and interpretation of the writing.

- Why is God's use of a human hand and finger significant? Compare this to Exodus 31:18
- What do you think King Belshazzar was so afraid of? Was it only the hand that frightened him?



## **Daniel 5:13-31 Pending Judgment**

- What does Daniel's reply to the king's offer tell us about Daniel (vs. 17)?
- Why is it significant that Daniel took time to summarize Nebuchadnezzar's spiritual journey for his grandson, Belshazzar (vs. 18-21)?
- Why do you think the writer includes the fact that Belshazzar "knew all this" about the life of Nebuchadnezzar?
- What did the prophecy mean for King Belshazzar and his kingdom (vs. 24-28)? Which of the three do you think worried him the most?

***MENE:** God has numbered the days of your kingdom and brought it to an end (immediate judgment).*

***TEKEL:** you have been weighed in the balance and found wanting (eternal judgment).*

***PERES:** your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians*

## **Application Questions and Notes**

### **Discuss and Apply: Genesis 18:19**

1. In your own family, identify people who were faithful to pass along God's grace. By what means did they share passion and love for Jesus?
2. What measure can we take to establish a contagious faith in our children or the next generation?

# The Delivering Power of God

(Daniel 6:1-28)

## Study# 8

11-20-16 Message

The Medes and Persians eventually entered into war and defeated Babylon. In another transition of royal power, King Darius the Mede, began the reorganization of his newly acquired kingdom. As an elderly man (in his 80's), Daniel was appointed as an administrator over the entire kingdom. Tensions began to rise between Daniel and King Darius' other officials.

### **Daniel 6:1-15 Resolved to Live Holy**

Daniel had developed a reputation of being resolved in wisdom and honesty for an "excellent spirit was in him" (1:3). He managed the kingdom's affairs and oversaw 120 area leaders who were notorious for using their position for personal profit. These men opposed Daniel, possibly for being a Jewish exile, but mainly because he kept them accountable to leading justly. As tensions rose, these leaders devised a plan to remove Daniel from his position (vs. 7).

- Daniel was "distinguished above all" the other leaders (vs. 3). Was it surprising that Daniel was chosen by the new Mede king to be one of his top officials (equivalent to a prime minister)? What made Daniel such a distinguished leader?
- Daniel was targeted and sidelined on an impulsive decision the king would eventually regret (vs. 14). With the decree in place, Daniel remained devoted to the Lord, still seeking Him (vs. 10). Clearly prayer was important to Daniel. Describe Daniel's prayer life. How is his prayer life similar/different than yours? What can we learn and apply?

### **Daniel 6:16-24 Resolved to Relying on God**

Daniel was committed to following the Lord, he was steeped in honesty and wisdom -but most importantly, he was resolved in his ability to rely on God! Despite being forced out of leadership by the other officials, a mandatory decree to pray to King Darius, and the threat of death by lions, Daniel didn't waver when it came to depending on the Lord.

- What experience do you think Daniel looked back on to be reminded of God's faithfulness? What experiences do you look back on to remember God's faithfulness?
- Daniel was also dedicated to God's Word, as he had a copy of Jeremiah's prophecy (9:2). Look up Jeremiah 32:27 concerning Israel's captivity in Babylon. How do you think these words encouraged Daniel and what do you imagine his response was (vs. 32:17)?

## Daniel 6:25-28 Resolved to Worship

Note the power of God in King Darius' life. He originally saw himself as a god, and his first decree declared that all prayer and worship be directed towards himself. However, "there is nothing too hard for our Lord" (Jeremiah 32:27) as He captured the king's heart through Daniel's ministry and witness. King Darius' next decree would state that all of Babylon was to show reverence and fear to the true and living God!

- With the issue of his second decree, King Darius, like King Nebuchadnezzar before him, gave public testimony to the power and glory of God. How do you think the people of Babylon responded to King Darius' new decree?
- How did Daniel's faith impact the king? Discuss the power of the Christian witness. How can believers today be more intentional in our witness?



*Consider attending Conversations Class this fall/spring at SCC. See [wearescc.org/groups/adult-classes](http://wearescc.org/groups/adult-classes)*

## Application Questions and Notes

### **Discuss and Apply: Philippians 1:6**

1. What do we know about God's work in people's lives? What hope do we have for those who, like King Darius, walk a long path of self-fulfillment before turning to the Lord?
2. What area of your life are you still hopeful that God will continue to shape? Share with the group how they can be praying for you.





Prayer Requests /Notes

Date

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Prayer Requests /Notes

Date

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Prayer Requests /Notes

Date

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# Tips for studying Daniel

## **READ**

the chapter/verses a couple days before hearing it taught

## **LISTEN**

be sure to catch our weekly teaching on Daniel (available online or app)

## **APPLY**

discuss and grow your faith with a group of other believers

## Getting into a Life Group

[wearescc.org/groups/life-groups](http://wearescc.org/groups/life-groups)

1. Consider attending a Group Link event for more info
2. Check out the Life Group finder online
3. Complete an inquiry form on Sunday or online

Need more help? Email Pastor John at [jdoty@wearescc.org](mailto:jdoty@wearescc.org)



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