

## **STRIVE TO BE A PERSON OF EXCELLENCE IN MISSION MINISTRY**

### **THE LESSON OVERVIEW**

#### **SCRIPTURES:**

**Daniel 1:3-8, 6:3, 4, 10**

3 Then the king commanded Ashpenaz, his chief eunuch, to bring some of the people of Israel, both of the royal family and of the nobility,

4 youths without blemish, handsome and skilful in all wisdom, endowed with knowledge, understanding learning, and competent to serve in the king's palace, and to teach them the letters and language of the Chaldeans.

5 The king assigned them a daily portion of the rich food which the king ate, and of the wine which he drank. They were to be educated for three years, and at the end of that time they were to stand before the king.

6 Among these were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah of the tribe of Judah.

7 And the chief of the eunuchs gave them names: Daniel he called Beltshazzar, Hananiah he called Shadrach, Mishael he called Meshach, and Azariah he called Abednego.

8 ¶ But Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself with the king's rich food, or with the wine which he drank; therefore he asked the chief of the eunuchs to allow him not to defile himself.

Daniel 6

3 Then this Daniel became distinguished above all the other presidents and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom.

4 Then the presidents and the satraps sought to find a ground for complaint against Daniel with regard to the kingdom; but they could find no ground for complaint or any fault, because he was faithful, and no error or fault was found in him.

10 When Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open toward Jerusalem; and he got down upon his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously.

**KEY VERSE:** Daniel 1:8 But Daniel purposed in his heart. That he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, or with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.

#### **LESSON OBJECTIVE:**

To discover how Daniel maintained his witness for God in a multi-cultural environment and to discover principles that we can apply to our own lives that will assist us in mission ministry.

### **INTRODUCTION**

All of us are familiar with the pressures of life to conform to this world. Often we speak of peer-pressure as it relates to teens, but all of us face the pressure to compromise. Today's lesson is taken from a dark period in the life of Judah and Jerusalem. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, in the first year of his reign, invaded Jerusalem, and carried away whom and what he pleased. A

part of his strategy was to select the brightest and most talented young men for his personal use. These wise young men, which included Daniel and the three Hebrew boys, were groomed, trained and shaped to serve the king of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar ordered that these chosen youths should be taught the Chaldean language and customs.

Can you imagine being abducted, uprooted from your home, family, and friends, and carried hundreds of miles away from home with little hope of rescue? You don't know the language or the customs. You are encouraged to do many things that you know are not right. The local customs and beliefs are against everything you have been taught to believe. If you refuse to follow the demands, it could result in death. Daniel, our main character of the lesson, faced all the above and yet lived out his faith as a witness for God. God blessed Daniel, and his witness impacted the entire kingdom of Babylonia. Think about what God can do in your life. Think about how you can impact your family, your neighborhood, and your school, if you follow Daniel's example.

How was Daniel able to be a man of excellence in a corrupt nation? How was Daniel able to reach a position of power and influence without compromising his position as a Godly young man? Daniel, as a teenager in the University of Babylon, faced the same temptation as teenagers face in your city, county, and your state. What was his secret? A close look at the book of Daniel reveals his secret, and shows how we too can be successful without selling our souls.

## **THE LESSONS**

- 1. DANIEL WAS A MAN OF PURPOSE AND PRINCIPLES**
- 2. DANIEL WAS A MAN OF PURITY**
- 3. DANIEL WAS A MAN WHO PICKED GODLY FRIENDS**
- 4. DANIEL WAS A MAN OF PRAYER**
- 5. DANIEL WAS A MAN WHO'S LIFE AND WITNESS POINTED OTHERS TO GOD**

## **LESSON ONE - DANIEL WAS A MAN OF PURPOSE AND PRINCIPLES**

**PROPOSITION:** Mission ministry requires us to live a life that matters. This means living on purpose, intentionally functioning as true disciples of Christ.

### **SCRIPTURE LESSON: Daniel 1:3-9**

3 Then the king commanded Ashpenaz, his chief eunuch, to bring some of the people of Israel, both of the royal family and of the nobility,

4 youths without blemish, handsome and skilful in all wisdom, endowed with knowledge, understanding learning, and competent to serve in the king's palace, and to teach them the letters and language of the Chaldeans.

5 The king assigned them a daily portion of the rich food which the king ate, and of the wine which he drank. They were to be educated for three years, and at the end of that time they were to stand before the king.

6 Among these were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah of the tribe of Judah.

7 And the chief of the eunuchs gave them names: Daniel he called Belteshazzar, Hananiah he

called Shadrach, Mishael he called Meshach, and Azariah he called Abednego.

8 ¶ But Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself with the king's rich food, or with the wine which he drank; therefore he asked the chief of the eunuchs to allow him not to defile himself.

9 Now God had brought Daniel into favour and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs.

### **LESSON OBJECTIVE:**

To discover how Daniel maintained his witness for God in a multi-cultural environment and to discover principles that we can apply to our own lives that will assist us in mission ministry.

### **LESSON OUTLINE:**

**SELECTED FOR PURPOSE (vv 3-7)**

**STAND ON PRINCIPLES (v 8)**

**SUPPORTED BY GOD (v 9)**

### **LESSON INTRODUCTION**

How was Daniel able to be a young man of excellence in a corrupt nation? How was Daniel able to reach positions of power and influence without compromising his position as a Godly young man? Daniel, as a teenager in the University of Babylon, faced the same temptation as teenagers face in your city, county, and your state. What was his secret? A close look at the book of Daniel reveals his secret, and shows how we too can be successful without selling our souls.

Besides being uprooted and carried in to Babylon, their original Hebrew names were changed. Their original names connected them and reminded them of their Hebrew God; but in order to cause them to forget their God, the God of their fathers who had been the Guide of their youth, the Babylonians gave them names that reflected the name of the Babylonian God, Dagon. Names are still powerful. Many today have fallen under Satan's deception which began with a name change. Under an alias, a stage name or a pen name, you can say anything and do anything. Why do you think people use aliases on the internet accounts such as Facebook and Twitter, etc.?

In this lesson, we will discover the first attribute about the character of Daniel that allowed him to maintain his faithfulness to God in a strange land.

### **SELECTED FOR PURPOSE (vv 3-7)**

Daniel became a prime target for the Babylonians because he had great potential. He possessed high noble qualities. He was well trained, handsome, likeable and young. Daniel chose to live a life of purpose. As a young boy in a strange land, Daniel was immediately faced with a challenge to violate God's law by eating the king's food. Despite his youth and the obvious pressures to conform, Daniel "purposed in his heart" to uphold the law of God, no matter the cost. His willingness to put God first, was demonstrated by the decision he made. God's law prohibited the Jews from eating certain kinds of food.

Every child of God needs to be a person of purpose. No one respects a "wishy-washy" person, someone with no direction in their lives. When people have a strong purpose, others often respect and admire them. What should be the "purpose" of the Christian? Jesus makes it clear in Mt. 6:33 that we should "seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." The conditions demand that we (1) seek the kingdom first in the use of time, first in priority, and first in our affections. (2) We must "love the Lord our God with the whole heart and then allow him to reign in our heart. Will you be a person with a purpose like Daniel? No matter how young one may be, it is never too early to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness". Throughout his life, Daniel had a strong sense of purpose, and followed his purpose making right decisions.

### **STAND ON PRINCIPLES (v8)**

Daniel stood on his principles even though he was in a strange land away from the watchful eye of his parents. Many people tend to lose control when they are away from home. "What happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas!" is a phrase often used. What does that phrase imply? Another word for "principles" is "convictions." Convictions reflect your core beliefs. Daniel could have legally eaten the king's required diet and legally drank the king's wine, but his personal convictions would not allow it. As a disciple of Christ, we must represent Him and His kingdom everywhere we go and in everything we do.

How can we represent God in our schools? Should we have convictions about what we wear, where we go and with what we permit ourselves to get involved? Is there a line you will not cross?

### **SUPPORTED BY GOD (v 9)**

God granted Daniel favor in the sight of prince of the eunuchs and others. (The term "eunuch" refers primarily and literally to an emasculated man (Deut. 23:1) who could be used in sensitive positions without sexual temptation.) How God did this is not explained, but maybe Daniel served with the right attitude and with a spirit of humility and excellence. Daniel was well mannered and polite. He was obedient and respectful. Those are great character traits in any location.

Daniel purposed in his heart to put God first in all that he did and God gave him favor. When we walk obedient to God's commands and live out our Christian character, we can be sure, God will support us too. Mission ministry will require us to live life on purpose as His faithful witnesses, to stand on our Godly principles, knowing that we're supported by God. Has God ever demonstrated His support for you personally? Daniel refused to compromise his convictions. As a young man, by refusing to eat the king's meat or drink his wine (Dan 1:8); later in life, as a mature man, he refused the gifts of Belshazzar (Dan 5:13-17). Even under the threat of persecution, he refused to obey the decree of King Darius and prayed three times a day (Dan 6).

### **LESSON APPLICATION:**

People admire persons of principles. Outwardly they may ridicule them, but inwardly they wish

they had the same intestinal fortitude. And when they need someone that can be trusted and depended upon to carry through with an assigned task, who do you think they will turn to? God also admires individuals who will stand by their principles, and by their words. Read Psalms 15. Our society is in great need of people with principle. Our church needs people of principles. Persons of conviction and principles are highly valued by God, but also by their fellow man. Daniel's character is demonstrated in the way he approached the chief of the king's eunuchs. He had great respect for authority. He asked for permission "not to defile himself." Principles we stand on should be reflected not only in our action towards God, but also in our conduct with men.

## **LESSON TWO - DANIEL WAS A MAN OF PURITY**

**PROPOSITION- The best Christian witness in mission ministry must be undergirded by solid holy living. Christians do not just witness with words, they practice a lifestyle.**

### **SCRIPTURE LESSON - Daniel 6:1-10**

1 ¶ It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty princes, which should be over the whole kingdom;

2 And over these three presidents; of whom Daniel was first: that the princes might give accounts unto them, and the king should have no damage.

3 Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm.

4 Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him.

5 Then said these men, we shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God.

6 ¶ Then these presidents and princes assembled together to the king, and said thus unto him, King Darius, live forever.

7 All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counselors, and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions.

8 Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not.

9 Wherefore King Darius signed the writing and the decree.

10 Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.

### **LESSON OBJECTIVE:**

To discover and emulate the character traits demonstrated in the life of Daniel that made him a Godly witness and a useful vessel.

## **LESSON OUTLINE**

**EXCELLENT IN HIS SPIRIT (vv 1-3)**

**FAITHFUL IN HIS CONDUCT (vv 4, 5)**

**LOYAL IN HIS COMMITMENT (vv 6-10)**

## **LESSON INTRODUCTION**

Daniel's opponents could not find any fault in his life or affairs. He was faithful and faultless when it came to management of his business affairs. There are those who are somewhat faithful, but their work leaves something to be desired. There are those who try to be excellent but they lack the people skills. Daniel could easily be elevated and rise to positions of great responsibility and power because he did an excellent job and he had an excellent spirit. Of course, his purity in business affairs was related to his overall purpose to please God first, and the fact that as a man of principle he could be trusted.

Daniel also maintained purity in his conduct. We should strive to be faithful and faultless, whether young or old, whether slave or free. How important is the work of God to you? Do you strive for excellence? People who maintain purity in their dealings with others and strive for excellence are often given positions of great responsibility and privilege, because they can be trusted to use them wisely. When God entrusts us with positions of power and privilege, we are to strive for excellence. Yes, Daniel was a man of purpose, principle, and purity and how the world needs more like him!

## **EXCELLENT IN HIS SPIRIT (vv 1-3)**

This heathen king, Darius, preferred Daniel, a stranger to all his nobles and those he was familiar with, because the graces of God were more excellent in him than in others. Daniel had an excellent spirit, first of all, because he was attuned to God. God used Daniel to prophesy the downfall of Babylon so accurately that King Darius recognized Daniel's gift. Secondly, Daniel had a wonderful demeanor in dealing with people and the affairs of the kingdom. He was honest, fair, and at all times protected the king's interest so that "the king should have no damage." He was fair in administering his office. What a wonderful combination! Daniel was in touch with God, in touch with the people, and in touch with the reality of business.

Have you heard the expression, "They are so heavenly minded until they are no earthly good!" What does it mean to you? Have you met people like that? How do we properly balance our relationships?

## **FAITHFUL IN HIS CONDUCT (vv 4, 5)**

Darius made Daniel the prime minister of his empire, and this excited the envy of those beneath him. Several of the other presidents and princes conducted secret audits on Daniel's conduct in the affairs of the kingdom and found him faithful and faultless. They were hoping to have found him guilty of treason, or some other high misdemeanor, unfaithfulness, and falseness in the

king's business; but all their wit and malice could find none, forasmuch as he was conscientiously faithful.

We should conduct ourselves faithful in all our responsibilities, in the classroom, at church, in the community, and on the job. What would your enemy find if they began to scrutinize your deeds and actions?

### **LOYAL IN HIS COMMITMENT (vv 6-10)**

Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible says, "Daniel's adversaries could have no advantage against him from any law now in being; they therefore contrive a new law, by which they hope to ensnare him, and in a matter in which they knew they should be sure of him; and such was his fidelity to his God that they gained their point."

Daniel had proved himself loyal to His God, loyal to the kings of Babylon and loyal to Darius, the new king of the empire. The adversaries of Daniel conspired to establish a new royal statute that would cause Daniel to violate a firm decree, whose penalty would result in being cast into the den of lions. These men knew that Daniel would not forsake his God. "Daniel made no alteration, not even in the mode of his worship, lest there should be thought to be any wavering in him. To him life or death was not the question, but loyalty to his Lord was all in all. He would not bate one jot in his adherence to his God, and he took care that his enemies should know this at the very outset." (Spurgeon Devotional Commentary)

The world needs people who are loyal in their commitments. The church needs it. The kingdom of God needs it. Daniel was willing to pray with his window opened towards Jerusalem under the threat of being cast in the den of lions. Some Christians seem ashamed to pray a blessing of their food in the cafeteria. Why should we pray publicly? Or should we? Are you embarrassed to pray openly? Or share your faith with others? Why? How can we overcome our fears?

### **LESSON APPLICATION**

Just as the Babylonians of Daniel's day attempted to brain wash Daniel and the other Hebrews to abandon their beliefs, our society will try to influence Christians today in the same matter. We are bombarded with ideas from culture. Society seeks to change your habits, your faith, your thinking and even your identity. Think about what Daniel went through, read the verse below and then compare your own life to Daniel's by answering the following questions.

Roman 12:2 And do not follow the customs of the present age, but be transformed by the entire renewal of your minds, so that you may learn by experience what God's will is--that will which is good and beautiful and perfect.

In what ways does the culture you live in try to get you to follow the customs of the present age?

What is the most difficult thing about maintaining your convictions at school, in the neighborhood, and in the community? What can you do to prevent from being brain washed by the world?

Make a list of all the things the world says are important. Then make a list of the things God says are important. Decide to follow God!

### **LESSON THREE - DANIEL WAS A MAN WHO PICKED GODLY FRIENDS**

**PROPOSITION – We must never underestimate the value of companionship, commitment, and care needed by the mission ministry witness.**

#### **SCRIPTURE LESSON: Daniel 1:11-20; 2:16-19**

11 Then said Daniel to Melzar, whom the prince of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah,

12 Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink.

13 Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee, and the countenance of the children that eat of the portion of the king's meat: and as thou seest, deal with thy servants.

14 So he consented to them in this matter, and proved them ten days.

15 And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat.

16 Thus Melzar took away the portion of their meat, and the wine that they should drink; and gave them pulse.

17 ¶ As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.

18 Now at the end of the days that the king had said he should bring them in, then the prince of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar.

19 And the king communed with them; and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: therefore stood they before the king.

20 And in all matters of wisdom and understanding that the king enquired of them he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm.

Da 2:16 Then Daniel went in, and desired of the king that he would give him time, and that he would shew the king the interpretation.

17 Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions:

18 That they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret; that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

19 Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven.

#### **LESSON OBJECTIVE:**

To discover how Daniel maintained his witness for God in a multi-cultural environment and to

discover principles that we can apply to our own lives that will assist us in mission ministry.

## **LESSON OUTLINE:**

**GODLY COMPANIONS SHARE OUR CONCERNS (vv 11-14)**

**GODLY COMPANIONS HELP US KEEP OUR COMMITMENTS (vv 15-20)**

**GODLY COMPANIONS HELP US PRAY (Ch 2: 16-19)**

## **LESSON INTRODUCTION:**

It has been said, “No man is an island, and no man stands alone.” Who you choose as your companions on your spiritual journey makes all the difference in the world. Companionship which means company, camaraderie and friendship can greatly impact your success in life. One of Daniel’s greatest assets was his ability to choose Godly friends. Godly friends give much needed moral support and encouragement.

Can you imagine being abducted, uprooted from your home, family, and friends, and carried hundreds of miles away from home with little hope of rescue? You don’t know the language or the customs. You are encouraged to do many things that you know are not right. The local customs and beliefs are against everything you have been taught to believe. If you refuse to follow the demands, it could result in death. Daniel, our main character of the lesson, faced all the above and yet lived out his faith as a witness for God. God blessed Daniel, and Daniel’s witness impacted the entire kingdom of Babylonia. Think about what God can do in your life. Think about how you can impact your family, your neighborhood, and your school if you follow Daniel’s example.

Will you live a life that matters? Will you choose to blend in or stand out? Daniel’s life and pattern shows how we too can take a stand and make a difference in mission ministry.

## **GODLY COMPANIONS SHARE OUR CONCERNS (vv 11-14)**

Through the first six chapters of the book of Daniel, there is close association between Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. Daniel chooses to fellowship with these like-minded companions who loved God and wanted to live according to God’s law. A great number of Hebrews were carried into Babylon and a few were groomed, trained and shaped to serve the king of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar ordered that these chosen youths should be taught the Chaldean language and customs. Daniel and his companions chose to live differently.

When Daniel made his appeal about the menu, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, agreed to stand with him. I know we can stand alone, but it’s easier to stand with friends that share your concerns. They stood together. Daniel chose companions who had a history of standing for right. They were allowed to eat from a different menu; they prayed together and communed together. Do your friends make you want to live closer to God or far away from God? Choose companions that share your concerns.

## **GODLY COMPANIONS HELP US KEEP OUR COMMITMENTS (vv 15-20)**

It was probably hard to eat the same menu every day. Daniel and his companions requested a simple vegetable diet with no meat, and water as their only beverage. They helped each other keep their commitment to God. Throughout the book of Daniel, these four names are closely associated. They walked together on their spiritual journey.

One of the Peanuts cartoons gives us an interesting picture of unity: Lucy came into the living room to find Linus in control of the TV. She demanded that he change the channel. "What makes you think you can walk right in here and take over?" asked Linus. "These five fingers," said Lucy. Individually they're nothing but when I curl them together like this into a single unit, they form a weapon that is terrible to behold." "Which channel do you want?" asked Linus.

Turning away, he looked at his fingers and said, "Why can't you guys get organized like that?" Alone we may tend to waver in our commitment, but together we can stand strong. Select friends who will help you keep your commitments. Why do you think it is important to pick Godly friends? Who do you run with? Godly friends give moral support as they stand together for a righteous cause. Godly friends will hold us accountable to our commitments to God and His Kingdom. A popular service announcement says, "Friends don't let friends drive drunk." Godly friends will encourage you to do the right thing in the face of strong opposition.

## **GODLY COMPANIONS HELP US PRAY (Ch 2: 16-19)**

Daniel was a man of prayer. He was a teenager when he was carried into Babylon. Prayer was a great source of strength in his life. He met the first challenge with prayer, but he also maintained a consistent prayer life. Daniel picked Godly friends who would pray with him. We all need friends who will pray with us and for us. Whenever Daniel faced a crisis, he and his friends would pray together. It is wonderful to have friends who care about your concerns and pray for your spiritual progress. Finally, Godly friends will work to strengthen us and promote us. When Daniel was promoted and received special gifts, he recommended his companions for promotion also. And the king accepted Daniel's recommendation. Learn to pick Godly friends; you will need them on your journey.

Daniel maintained a solid prayer life throughout his ordeal in Babylon. Even though Daniel was aware of the plot to entrap him, "he prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime." He knelt in prayer towards Jerusalem, a demonstration of his humility. He prayed three times daily, a demonstration of his continual dependence upon God. He gave thanks in the midst of persecution, a demonstration of his gratitude and the fact that he had not lost sight of God's blessings.

## **LESSON APPLICATION**

Since Christians today must witness in a hostile environment, we would do well to follow Daniel's example. We should be persons of purpose, putting God first in all we do; persons of principles, who will not compromise our convictions for God; persons of purity who are both faithful and faultless striving for excellence; and we should be persons of prayer, who are willing

to fall on our knees, continually depending on God, and praising God for all that he Has done and is going to do. As Christians, we are to pray often. If our efforts to live purposeful, principled, and pure lives are not what they should be, maybe it's because we have not surrounded ourselves with Godly friends who care about our concerns, help us keep our commitment and pray with us and for us. We need the favor of God and the support of Godly friends. Daniel grew in the favor of God and the favor of men.

What criterion do you use in selecting your friends? It has been said, "Birds of a feather, flock together." Who are you influencing and who is influencing you? In an age of larger than life, superstars and ego maniacs, we must choose our role models carefully.

## **LESSON FOUR - DANIEL WAS A MAN OF PRAYER**

**PROPOSITION – Prayer is the stabilizing power for any successful mission ministry. Don't leave home without it.**

### **SCRIPTURE LESSON – Daniel 6:10, 11, 16-22; 9:3,4**

6:10 Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.

11 ¶ Then these men assembled, and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God.

16 Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions. Now the king spake and said unto Daniel, Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee.

17 And a stone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords; that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel.

18 ¶ Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting: neither were instruments of musick brought before him: and his sleep went from him.

19 Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions.

20 And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel: and the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?

21 Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live forever.

22 My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt.

Da 9:3 And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes:

4 ¶ And I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments;

## **LESSON OBJECTIVE:**

To study and examine the prayer life of Daniel that we too may fortify our lives with prayer and courageously live out our Christian witness before the world.

## **LESSON OUTLINE:**

**PRAYER – A DEMONSTRATION OF HUMILITY (v 10)**

**PRAYER – A CONTINUAL DEPENDENCE UPON GOD (vv 11, 16 -22)**

**PRAYER -A DEMONSTRATION OF GRATITUDE (Ch 9: 3 and 4)**

## **LESSON INTRODUCTION:**

Daniel maintained a solid prayer life throughout his ordeal in Babylon. Even though Daniel was aware of the plot to entrap him, “he prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.” He knelt in prayer towards Jerusalem, a demonstration of his humility. He prayed three times daily, a demonstration of his continual dependence upon God. He gave thanks in the midst of persecution, a demonstration of his gratitude and the fact that he had not lost sight of God's blessings.

“The moment you wake up each morning, all your wishes and hopes for the day rush at you like wild animals. And the first job each morning consists in shoving it all back; in listening to that other voice, taking that other point of view, letting that other, larger, stronger, quieter life come flowing in.” (C.S. Lewis)

The idea of mission ministry is a God idea. God set the agenda for the Church of Jesus Christ. God alone commissioned His church to the work of making disciples of all men. This is a spiritual work that requires spiritual power - prayer power. Prayer keeps heaven's door open to us. The line of communication with God is maintained through prayer. Prayer is not the only thing we do, but it is the first thing we should do. Daniel was a man of prayer.

## **PRAYER – A DEMONSTRATION OF HUMILITY (v. 10)**

Daniel demonstrated great humility of his prayer life. There are several interesting points in the text. Daniel had a specific (1) time, (2) place, (3) posture, and (4) method for praying. Daniel had a secret prayer closet, so to speak. It was a specific place to meet with God. His humility is demonstrated by his posture, on his knees, facing Jerusalem, at the Jewish hour of prayer. Daniel was in a strange land, but he maintained his Jewish traditions. (2 Chronicles 7:12-14)

Daniel's prayer included partitioning God, praise and adoration to God, and Thanksgiving. He humbled himself before God. Luke 18:1 says, “And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;” A strong prayer life helps us to stand and stay focused.

## **PRAYER – A CONTINUAL DEPENDENCE UPON GOD (vv 11, 16 -22)**

There are two phrases we should notice. The first is, “as he did aforetime” and the second, “whom thou servest continually.” Many in Babylon had witnessed Daniel’s continual dependence upon God. His pattern was to pray continually. Some pray only when there is a crisis, but Daniel chose to pray always. This difficult period in Jewish history had not discouraged him from praying. Even though Jerusalem had been overrun and the Temple was in ruin, Daniel had confidence in his God. He prayed about the present personal predicament, his homeland, and for his fellow Jews in exile with him.

We too can depend on God to see us through our great trials. In mission ministry, Jesus instructed us to pray to the Lord of the Harvest. Luke 10:2 says, “Therefore said he unto them, the harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest.” We must pray, depending on God to open doors, open hearts, and open our mouth to witness for him.

Daniel knew that only God could vindicate him. Only God could free the nation of Israel. Only God revealed Himself to men who walk in darkness. So Daniel prayed, depending upon God for deliverance.

## **PRAYER -A DEMONSTRATION OF GRATITUDE (Ch 9: 3 and 4)**

Daniel interceded for Judah and Jerusalem. This prayer revealed the deep sincerity of Daniel’s heart. His prayer included prayer, fasting, repentance, and gratitude. Daniel acknowledged the sinfulness of his people, and then celebrated the greatness and goodness of God in spite of his present dilemma.

He was grateful that God had not consumed Israel. God is great and dreadful or deserves to be revered. God is faithful to His covenant even though Judah and Jerusalem failed to keep the covenant agreement. God is merciful and gracious even though Judah and Jerusalem deserved their punishment. Daniel celebrated the goodness of God even though they had completely neglected God.

Daniel’s prayer was full of gratitude because he realized that God assured Jeremiah that after seventy years, Israel would be restored. God desires to restore his people. God desires to be known to all mankind. 2Peter 3:9 says, “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”

What does that verse mean to you? Can God save anyone? Are there some people too far gone? What part do we play in reaching lost humanity with the good news? The first step is to pray to the Lord of the Harvest that He would send forth laborers in His harvest field, and then participate in answering that prayer.

## **LESSON APPLICATION**

You are the key to reaching your friends for Christ. You can make a big difference for Christ in your community, the way Daniel did in Babylon. (1) Look around. Your mission field is where you live, work, or go to school. List the names of individuals you know who need Jesus Christ and then Pray for them regularly. (2) Look up to God because God changes people through prayer. Pray each day for those on your list that God will provide an opportunity for you to share His love with them. (3) Look out for ways to cultivate friendship with each person on your list. An invitation to a special event can provide a wonderful door to talk about Christ. (4) Look for God to provide an opportunity to share your faith with them. (5) Look after those who respond to Christ or even those who begin to show interest in Christ. Continue to love people and remember the power of prayer.

How is your prayer life? When do you feel closest to God? Cecil B. De Mill once said, "I have found the greatest power in the world is the power of prayer." Seek to maintain a consistent prayer life that helps us be aware of the presence of God. God is with us and will hear and answer prayer. Choose Godly friends, pray often and dare to share your faith with others.

## **LESSON FIVE - DANIEL WAS A MAN WHO'S LIFE AND WITNESS POINTED OTHERS TO GOD**

**PROPOSITION – Mission ministry requires us to point people to Jesus and not to ourselves. Make sure you are not the star of your testimony.**

### **SCRIPTURE LESSON – Daniel 2: 26-30; 6:19-22; 25-28**

2:26 The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, Art thou able to make known unto me the dream which I have seen, and the interpretation thereof?

27 Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, The secret which the king hath demanded cannot the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, shew unto the king;

28 But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these;

29 As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came into thy mind upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter: and he that revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall come to pass.

30 But as for me, this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living, but for their sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king, and that thou mightest know the thoughts of thy heart.

Da 6:19 Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions.

20 And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel: and the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?

21 Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever.

22 My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt.

Da 6:25 ¶ Then king Darius wrote unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you.

26 I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: for he is the living God, and stedfast for ever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end.

27 He delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.

28 So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

## **LESSON OUTLINE:**

**GOD IS THE DIVINE REVEALER OF SECRETS (2: 26- 30)**

**GOD IS THE DIVINE PROTECTOR (6:19-22)**

**GOD IS THE DIVINE DELIVERER, RESCUER AND WONDER WORKER (6:25-28)**

## **LESSON OBJECTIVE:**

To examine the faithfulness of God and His involvement in Daniel's life that we might discover how God has been working and is at work in the lives of Christians today, that we might His faithful witnesses in this present world.

## **LESSON INTRODUCTION**

Daniel's life and witness pointed others to God. He and his companions were allowed to abstain from eating the king's diet because of their commitment to God. He prayed, facing Jerusalem in public view, because of his commitment to God. Notice how he pointed people to God. He testified that his ability and revelations were given by God alone. He further described God as one who changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding: He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him" (Daniel 2:19-23).

Daniel was protected, promoted and privileged by God during his stay in Babylon. His life and witness pointed others to God. He refused to take credit for his great wisdom and knowledge. He gave the credit to His God who knows all things. How does your life and witness point others to God?

Daniel pointed others to God by what he did and he said. His Godly companions were a source of support and his prayer life was a source of strength. We as Christians are called to fulfill God's great commission to "Go and make disciples of all nations and teach them to observe the commands of Jesus." Sometimes we may feel timid about sharing the Gospel. But remember we

too have the same source of support and strength. In fact, Jesus promised, “Lo’ I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

### **GOD IS THE DIVINE REVEALER OF SECRETS (2: 26- 30)**

King Darius had become troubled about a dream he could not remember. The king said that his learned men must tell him the dream, or they should all be put to death as deceivers. His command was urgent, fueled by anger and frustration. When Daniel heard about the king’s decree, he asked for additional time to consider the matter. Daniel and his companions sought the Lord for an answer. The Lord clearly revealed the dream and its interpretation. When the king asked Daniel, Art thou able to make known unto me the dream which I have seen, and the interpretation thereof? Daniel quickly pointed the king’s attention to God who alone can reveal secret things.

In a land of idol gods and superstitions, Daniel envisioned God for them as one “who changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding: He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him” (Daniel 2:19-23).

We must help the world around us see God. During the ministry of Jesus, he constantly helped people to understand what God was like and what His Kingdom was like. Our world needs to see God.

### **GOD IS THE DIVINE PROTECTOR (6:19-22)**

Daniel was kept perfectly safe, because he believed in his God. Those who boldly and cheerfully trust in God to protect them in the way of duty, shall always find him a present help. Psalms 46:1 reminds that “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.” Early the next morning the king rushed out to the lion’s den and said to Daniel, “O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?” Again, he pointed the king’s attention to God who was able to shut the lions’ mouths and keep him safe. God alone is our divine protector.

The same power of God that protected the three children in the fiery furnace also protected Daniel in the lion’s den. Only God had power to protect from these fierce creatures! God takes care of his faithful servants. God’s divine protection is a testimony to His faithfulness. Daniel believed God and God delivered Him.

### **GOD IS THE DIVINE DELIVERER, RESCUER AND WONDER WORKER (6:25-28)**

Daniel served successfully five kings in Babylon: Nebuchadnezzar, Evil-Merodach, Belshazzar, Darius, and Cyrus. He served them without flattery or compromise. He successfully managed the public affairs of the state in such a way as to remain useful in his office, and faithful to his God.

Where shall we find ministers like Samuel and Daniel? Not many conduct themselves so wisely, so holy, so disinterested in self exaltation, so useful to God as he did. After witnessing God’s

power to deliver, rescue and do wonders, King Darius made a decree that the God of Daniel be revered and worshiped throughout his empire.

This experience may not have converted the king, but it caused him to recognize the true and living God. Darius could have forsaken his idolatry, and set up the worship of the true God in his kingdom that his subjects might turn from dumb idols to the living God and worship Him. Daniel's witness pointed people to God. King Darius probably learned this doctrine from Daniel, whom he heard and honored. This miraculous deliverance of Daniel from the lions had to be God.

Matthew 5:16 says, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Spurgeon Devotional Commentary says, "Do not shine by proud pretensions, but by real holiness, not for your own glory, but the glory of God."

### **LESSON APPLICATION**

Adam Clark's Commentary gives revelations of the character of God. (1) He is the Living God, the Author and Giver of life. (2) He is steadfast forever. All things change; but he is unchangeable. (3) He has a kingdom; for as he made all things, so he governs all things. (4) His kingdom shall not be destroyed. (5) His dominion is without end. (6) He delivereth them that are in danger and bondage. (7) He rescueth those who have fallen into the hands of their enemies. (8) He worketh signs in the heavens. (9) And wonders upon earth; showing that both are under his sway, and are parts of his dominion. (10) And to complete all, He hath delivered Daniel.

Daniel used his experiences with God to point others to God. We should use our wonderful experiences with God to point others to God. We might not have been in a lion's den, but we too have been given proof of his power and goodness, as He rescued us spiritually and physically. How will you demonstrate your faith in God to your personal world? Share a short testimony about what God has done in your life? What is God doing presently? Have you ever share your testimony with others? How do you see God?