



LESSON 37

God delivers Daniel from the lions' den

DANIEL 6:1-30



God is glorified through the faithfulness of His people.



“I make a decree, that in all my royal dominion people are to tremble and fear before the God of Daniel, for he is the living God, enduring forever; his kingdom shall never be destroyed, and his dominion shall be to the end. He delivers and rescues; he works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth, he who has saved Daniel from the power of the lions” (Dan 6:26–27).

Supporting Truths

1. God’s people must be faithful.
2. God is glorified when believers suffer for doing what is right.
3. God is glorified in His power to save the faithful and destroy the wicked.
4. God is glorified when believers are uncompromising in godliness.
5. God is glorified when Christians obey God rather than men.

Objectives

1. Define what it means to be faithful.
2. Explain what Daniel’s enemies accused him of.
3. Contrast the fate of Daniel with the fate of his accusers.
4. Describe the impact of Daniel’s life on King Darius.
5. Explain when a Christian should obey human government.

STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

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Lesson Summary

God used Daniel's faithful and uncompromising testimony to demonstrate His power to the leaders of the Medo-Persian Empire. When his fellow government officials became jealous of Daniel's upcoming promotion, they convinced the king to enact a law prohibiting prayer to anyone or anything except the king. Because Daniel refused to obey the king's law, he was thrown into the lions' den. But God protected Daniel from the lions, saving His servant and demonstrating His power to King Darius.

Spotlight on the Gospel

Jesus commanded His followers to go into all the world and proclaim the gospel. It is the duty and privilege of every Christian to obey God's command, taking the gospel—the good news of man's freedom from the penalty, power, and one day the presence of sin—to every corner of the earth. This message of forgiveness purchased with the precious blood of Christ, is communicated through the words, actions, and attitudes of all those who faithfully follow God's command.

LAST WEEK



God judges Belshazzar for his pride

Daniel 5:1-31

THIS WEEK



God delivers Daniel from the lions' den

Daniel 6:1-30

NEXT WEEK



God brought about the restoration of the temple

Ezra 1:1-6:22

EXILE

RETURN

Lesson Commentary

God is glorified through the faithfulness of His people.

Nebuchadnezzar's vision of a statue (Dan 2:31–35) began to come true when the Babylonian Empire (2:36–28) fell to the Medo-Persian Empire (2:39; cf. 5:30–31). This proved God's sovereignty, challenging Gentile rulers to submit to God. It also gave hope to the exiled Jews—and to all believers—that God will one day restore Israel and establish His kingdom according to His plan. But God shows His glory not just through the rise and fall of nations but also through the lives of faithful individuals. In Daniel 6 God did just that, using Daniel's trustworthy testimony to reveal His sovereign power to the rulers of the Medo-Persian Empire.

Government officials plotted against Daniel (6:1–9)

After faithfully serving the kings of Babylon for decades, the 80 year-old Daniel continued in leadership when the Persians took over (6:1–2). As before (1:20; 2:48; 5:12), Daniel's diligence and God's blessing caused him to excel, so the king planned to promote him to the highest position (6:3). It seems incredible that a captive Jew could attain such authority, but this is just the sort of thing God does by His power (Gen 41:40; Esth 10:3). He powerfully uses those who faithfully serve Him (2 Tim 2:21).

Instead of glorifying God, Daniel's fellow administrators envied Daniel and tried to accuse him (6:4). But after living in Babylon for 65 years, Daniel's character was so spotless that even his enemies recognized his faithfulness to God! He was known for his habit of prayer and for continually serving God (6:10, 16). Daniel was *blameless* before God, *unstained by any known sin* (6:22–23). If one day we

should suffer like Daniel, may it be for the sake of righteousness, so that God will be glorified and our accusers put to shame (1 Pet 2:12; 3:13–17).

In response to Daniel's honesty, his enemies responded with dishonesty. They pretended to act in the king's best interests (Dan 6:6). They lied that all the rulers agreed (6:7). They acted as if the law they proposed was for the good of the whole empire. Their flattery worked (6:9). This is how the wicked often act, turning to deceit and unjust laws to oppress the righteous (Ps 109:3; Isa 10:1). This is what they did to Jesus (Luke 23:2). This is what they will do to us if we do what is right (John 15:20). We should not be surprised, for they are sons of the devil, who is the father of lies (8:44). They refuse to admit God's power or honor Him (Rom 1:20–21).

Daniel stayed faithful to God (6:10–18)

Even though threatened with death, Daniel did not change his habit of prayer (6:10). He was *uncompromising*, *unwilling to stray from his commitment* to God. Instead of compromising, he pleaded with God in prayer (Dan 6:11). When we are falsely accused, we must respond by devoting ourselves to prayer (Ps 109:4). Why? Because God is powerful. He is our rock of refuge and mighty stronghold (62:7).

But was Daniel right to deliberately disobey the king's law? Yes, because he did so in order to obey the law of the supreme King.

Although God commands His people to obey the laws of their governments (Rom 13:1–7; 1 Pet 2:13–17), when these laws contradict God's law, believers must obey God rather than men (Acts 5:29). They must entrust themselves completely to God (Dan 3:16–18) and be willing to accept the consequences (3:19–23). Like Daniel, we must be especially careful to obey our government's laws when they do not contradict God's. That way, if we ever do need to disobey, everyone will know that we are not just being rebellious. They will know that we are doing what is right for the glory of God.

THINK ABOUT IT

Those who trust in God are not shaken even when attacked unjustly (Ps 62:4–6).



THINK ABOUT IT

Could it be said of us that we are completely free from carelessness or corruption?

STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

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Daniel's accusers twisted his **faithfulness**, his **unwavering commitment to God**, to make it look like disloyalty to the king (6:12–13). This is what the wicked do: they call evil good and good evil (Isa 5:20). The king realized his mistake, but now he was trapped (Dan 6:14–15). Even this powerful king was powerless to rescue Daniel. Darius realized that Daniel's life depended entirely on the power of God (6:16). Perhaps Darius had heard how Israel was rescued from Egypt, or how Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were saved from the fiery furnace. Perhaps Daniel's own testimony convinced him that this God was not like the other so-called gods. So Darius fasted all night, humbling himself for Daniel's sake before the power of Daniel's God (6:18).

God showed His power to the new king (6:19–28)

The king was so concerned that he rushed to the lions' den as soon as possible, at the first light of dawn (6:19). Now he would find out: did Daniel's God have the power to rescue him (6:20)? Yes! By shutting the hungry lions' mouths, God proved two things: His own power and Daniel's integrity (6:21–22). Daniel was completely uninjured because he trusted God (6:23). Thus God used Daniel's faith to display His glory, just as He had done when He rescued Daniel's three friends from the fire (3:26–27).

So can a believer expect God to rescue him from unjust death? On the one hand, the answer is no, for God often allows His servants to be killed (Heb 11:35–38). But on the other hand, the answer is yes, because even if his body dies, he will have eternal life (John 3:16). Because Jesus is Lord of the living and the dead, a believer belongs to the Lord whether he lives or dies (Rom 14:8–9). So the victory is not survival. The victory is faith (1 John 5:4–5), because faith is the only response that depends on God's power and rejoices in God's glory. Therefore, God displays His glory and power through everyone who trusts God, as He did through Daniel.

God also displays His glory and power by destroying the wicked. Daniel's accusers, including their families, suffered the exact fate they had planned for Daniel (Dan 6:24). Because God is just, He often arranges for the wicked to fall into their own trap (Prov 26:27). God's justice is also swift (Ps 73:19), for the lions crushed the accusers before they even hit the bottom of the den. In a single moment the wicked are broken beyond healing (Prov 6:15). Instead of waiting with a sense of false security, sinners must repent quickly, today, before it is too late (Heb 3:15).

Like Nebuchadnezzar so many years earlier, Darius responded to God's awesome display of power by glorifying Him (6:26–27; cf. 3:28–29). Darius ordered everyone in his kingdom to tremble in fear before God, and we should do the same. Why? Because He is not imaginary and powerless like a lifeless idol. He is alive and real. He alone is powerful to deliver, unlike even the most powerful kings like Darius. His kingdom alone lasts forever, unlike any human kingdom like Babylon or Persia.

In response to God's power, we should give God glory by imitating Daniel's faith (Heb 11:33). As we do, our faith will inevitably shape us to be people of integrity (Dan 6:4), godliness (6:5), prayer (6:10), and loyalty to God (6:16). Then, like Daniel, we also may be used by God to proclaim God's glorious power—not just His power to save from lions, but His ultimate power to save from sin, Satan, and death (Col 2:12–15).

THINK ABOUT IT

When people watch our lives, may they praise God for the power of the gospel of Christ (Rom 1:16; 1 Cor 1:22–24).



Lesson Outline

God is glorified through the faithfulness of His people.



AGES 3–5 LESSON OUTLINE

1. Bad guys set a trap for Daniel (6:1–9).
2. Daniel kept praying to God (6:10–18).
3. God saved Daniel from the lions (6:19–24).
4. King Darius praised God for His power (6:25–28).



AGES 6–11 LESSON OUTLINE

1. **Government officials plotted against Daniel (6:1–9).**
 - Darius planned to set Daniel over the whole kingdom (6:1–3).
 - The officials could not find no fault in Daniel's work or character (6:4–5).
 - The jealous officials made a law to trap Daniel (6:6–9).
2. **Daniel stayed faithful to God (6:10–18).**
 - Daniel kept praying to God (6:10).
 - The officials accused Daniel of breaking the law (6:11–13).
 - Darius was unable to save Daniel from the lions' den (6:14–18).
3. **God showed His power to the new king (6:19–28).**
 - God was able to save Daniel from the lions (6:21–23).
 - The wicked officials were eaten by the lions (6:24).
 - Darius praised God for His glorious power (6:25–28).





Lesson Questions

Use these questions to teach or to review this week's lesson.



Ages 3–5 Lesson Questions

- 1. Did Daniel do anything wrong?**
No. He was blameless.
- 2. What did Daniel's enemies do to him?**
They got him thrown into the lions' den.
- 3. Did Daniel die?**
No. God sent an angel to shut the lions' mouths.
- 4. What does that tell us about God?**
God is powerful. We can trust Him.



Ages 6–11 Lesson Questions

- 1. Why did the other rulers hate Daniel?**
They were jealous because Daniel was so successful that the king was going to put him in charge of everyone.
- 2. How did Daniel's enemies catch him?**
The lied, made an unjust law, and made Daniel's godliness look like a crime.
- 3. Did Daniel obey the law? Why not?**
No. Daniel knew he had to obey God rather than men. He prayed because he trusted God.
- 4. Was King Darius able to protect Daniel?**
No. Even this powerful king was powerless to save him. Darius fasted because he realized only God had the power to rescue Daniel.
- 5. Was God able to protect Daniel?**
Yes. God sent His angel to shut the lions' mouths.
- 6. What happened to Daniel's enemies?**
They got the exact punishment they had planned for Daniel. They were eaten by the lions.
- 7. How did King Darius respond to Daniel's deliverance?**
The king praised God and said that others should fear Him also.
- 8. Can God's power be displayed through us like it was through Daniel? How?**
Yes. When we put our trust in Jesus, He shows His power in us by rescuing us from sin and death. When we are faithful to Him, others will see His glory in our lives.

Lesson Activities

Choose from the following ideas to introduce, illustrate, and apply this week's lesson.

AGES 3–5



INTRODUCE

MUZZLE

Bring in a dog's muzzle. Ask the children what it is for. Explain that a muzzle is used to keep a dog quiet and to prevent it from biting people. Ask what animals you could use a muzzle on. Then ask the children whether they think a muzzle would stop a lion from biting them. Ask what they would do if they were locked in a cage with hungry lions. Instruct them to listen to today's lesson and see what happened when Daniel was facing a hungry lion.

AGAIN AND AGAIN

A habit is something that you do repeatedly, again and again. Some habits are good and some are bad; some are necessary and some are optional. Ask the children what some of their habits are (brushing teeth, bathing, eating, etc.). What are some things they do every day? Daniel was in a habit of praying every day, and he would not go without it even to save his own life.



ILLUSTRATE

FAITHFULNESS

Faithfulness is being true to your word and your commitments. God is faithful. He never breaks a promise and always does what He says He will do. God expects us to be faithful like Him. Have the children ever made a promise and then broken it, or said they would do something and then forgot? Have the children agree not to smile or talk, and then play a game in which you attempt to get them to smile or to talk. Daniel was faithful in prayer even when his life was at stake.

HUNGRY LIONS

At the beginning of class, give the children a snack they will like a lot (make sure to ask the parents whether the snack is acceptable). Tell the children that they cannot eat the snack, no matter how hungry they are, until you say so. As you describe the hungry lions and how God stopped their mouths from eating Daniel, ask the children how many of them have saved their snack. God stopped the lions from even leaving one scratch on Daniel!



APPLY

DANIEL'S HABIT

See Year 2 Craft Book, Book 2.

Materials: Craft sheets, scissors, glue, and crayons.

Directions: Pre-cut both circles from the craft sheets. Cut slits along the black lines on the circle that has numbers like a clock. Have children glue that circle on top of the other circle. Glue the arrows onto the clock. Color the three pictures of Daniel praying.

Daniel's Habit
See Year 2 Craft Book, Book 2



TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

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AGES 6–8



INTRODUCE

EYES WIDE OPEN

Hold a competition to see which child is able to stop blinking for the longest time. Blinking helps keep our eyes healthy, and so our body does it without us even thinking about it. How important is praying for our health? Daniel was in a habit of praying every day, and as we will see in today's lesson, Daniel would not go without it even to save his own life.

ACTIONS SPEAK

Ask the children if any of their younger siblings ever act like them or try to copy things they do or say. What about them? Have they ever done something because they saw an older sibling or parent do it? Use this discussion to talk about how our actions—often more than our words—are seen and noticed by those around us. What kind of an example are we giving? In our lesson today, we'll learn about a man whose actions made a great spiritual impact in the lives of others.



ILLUSTRATE

JELLO

Show the class a piece of jello. Pinch it between your fingers and ask the children what they think will happen to the jello if you squeeze it hard between your fingers. Explain that jello is easily reshaped by outside forces, twisting and conforming to everything around it. Its shape is easily compromised. But not Daniel. He continued to pray three times a day to his God even though he knew it might ultimately lead to his death. No matter what was happening around him, Daniel continued to live faithfully for God.

ONE BIG CAT!

Lions will eat anything they can catch, including fish, rodents, birds, and other small prey. They cannot chew their food and have to swallow it in chunks. They can eat 75 pounds of meat at one meal (about 300 quarter-pound hamburgers!). Lions spend 20 hours a day resting or sleeping and live to be about 15 to 20 years old. Full-grown males weigh approximately 350–400 pounds and are about 9 feet in length. Females weigh less, approximately 250–300 pounds, and are about 8 feet in length. Each has a roar that can be heard up to five miles away.



APPLY

DANIEL IN THE LION'S DEN

See *Year 2 Craft Book, Book 2*.

Materials: Craft sheet, brown construction paper, scissors, glue, tape, and crayons.

Directions: Have students fold a sheet of construction paper in half, and then in half again. There will be four squares. Make a cut along a crease between only 2 squares. Fold the paper to form a half box, as shown below. Tape together. Color and cut out the pictures from the craft sheet and glue inside the half box.

Daniel in the Lion's Den
See *Year 2 Craft Book, Book 2*



AGES 9–11



OLD FAITHFUL

Old Faithful is the name of a geyser located in Yellowstone National Park. This geyser, named for its faithful eruptions, is very predictable. It erupts every day (roughly every hour), shooting thousands of gallons of boiling water over a 100 feet into the air. Many people travel to Yellowstone each year to see Old Faithful erupt. In our lesson today, we'll learn how the faithfulness of Daniel also attracted a lot of attention. However, as we'll see, Daniel's faithfulness to God attracted the attention of both friend and foe.

TESTIMONY OF A LIFE

Daniel's unwavering commitment to God did not go unnoticed. King Darius, in particular, was well aware of Daniel's faithful testimony. As an introduction to today's lesson, tell the class about a faithful brother or sister in Christ that has greatly impacted your life and service for God.



EVERYONE HAS A PRICE

Or so the saying goes. Ask the children if they have ever heard this saying before. Sadly, many people do have a price at which they're willing to sell their integrity (Achan, Ananias and Sapphira, and Judas to name a few). Other times it's the threat of punishment that causes people to abandon their commitment to God. But more often than not, it's something much more subtle. Many times it's the fear of being left out or being mocked or being rejected that results in compromise. Ask the children if they've experienced any of these temptations to unfaithfulness.

RAIN OR SHINE

The record for most consecutive days running at least one mile is reported to be 16,436 (<http://abcnews.go.com/blogs/headlines/2013/07/man-ends-running-record-after-16436-consecutive-days/>). That's 45 years straight without missing a day! A streak like this does not come easy. The record holder, a cross country coach in the state of California, reportedly ran on a broken foot, through three surgeries, the removal of his wisdom teeth, and kidney stones. Use this illustration to begin a discussion about Daniel's uncompromising commitment to God.



PRAYING CONTINUALLY

Do you worry? Many people think about things and end up worrying about them. But there is no reason to worry. God says that we should cast our cares on Him because He cares for us. Believers are also called to pray without ceasing. To cease means to end. So, believers should always be praying. They should be constantly in an attitude of prayer. When troubles and worries come, they should not be worried about them. The troubles should be turned over to God in prayer. Praying continually is possible. Direct your thoughts toward God; make every worry a prayer. He hears His children and wants them to come to Him.