

Days with Daniel

Welcome to Days with Daniel! This 21-day emphasis will begin March 10, 2014, and conclude March 30, 2014. You are welcome to participate in this spiritual deepening challenge at whatever level you wish! Here is the challenge, and you can take it from there:

--We'll focus on Daniel on three Sundays: March 9, 16 and 23. The messages will cover the entire book of Daniel, divided between those Sundays.

--Everyone is challenged to do a "Daniel Fast" over these 21 days. What's a Daniel Fast? It can range from "vegetables and water" to "vegetables, fruits, whole grains and nuts" to "avoiding 'fancy' foods or processed foods" or anything in between. Figure out what you want to do (if you want to at all), and go with that. You can also do a Daniel Fast for just part of the emphasis, or just part of the day.

--I have prepared a daily devotional for Days with Daniel, covering each day and the whole book of Daniel. You are welcome to use this any way you desire. I divided it up into three sections per day for any who would like to follow Daniel's pattern of praying three times a day. You can do it that way, or all at once, or catch up with several days at a time. Whatever you like!

--In addition to personal devotions, I would encourage you to meet with others, whether it's one-on-one or in small groups. (If it's one-on-one, please make sure the pairing is not inappropriate). You are welcome to use "Devotions with Daniel" for these gatherings. If you'd like to meet with me, you are welcome to come to NSCN at the following times: Mondays at 7:00 AM, Wednesdays at 7:00 PM, and/or Thursdays at 12:00 PM.

The bottom line is that anything we do in the direction of spiritual deepening will probably help us! Whether you accept part of this challenge or all of it, I invite you to go deeper with God in these Days with Daniel.

Pastor Dave Ness



DEVOTIONS WITH DANIEL: DAY 21 (Last day!)

MORNING

1. Read Daniel 12
2. Are there things which really pop out to you in Daniel 12?
3. Something which hits me is when I see, *“Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.”* (Daniel 12:4) Here in the Information Age, where worldwide travel is no big deal, and worldwide communication is instant, we still desperately need to know what God has said. That’s the journey we’ve been on together for these 21 Days with Daniel. Thank you for making the trip! God always notices, when we seek to go deeper with Him, and some of the pursuits which help us in that area are fasting, study of the scriptures, prayer, and of course, obedience. And when you put them all together, expect big results! God bless you! In a world which is a lot like Babylon, dare to be a Daniel, and watch God come through, every time!

PRAYER TIME: Give thanks to God for this journey, and for the examples of real-life people like Daniel, who have gone before us.

NOON

4. What would be a good book in the Bible for you to read next? If you’re not directed otherwise, try Revelation—and notice how very similar parts of it are to Daniel!

PRAYER TIME: Thank God for the scriptures!

NIGHT

PRAYER TIME: Thank God for these Days with Daniel. Ask Him to help you make a plan for what’s next for you.

DEVOTIONS WITH DANIEL: DAY 20

MORNING

1. Read Daniel 10-11

PRAYER TIME: Ask God to reveal truth to you.

NOON

2. What has God taught you through these Days with Daniel?
3. Is there anything you wish to continue after the Days with Daniel emphasis ends tomorrow?

PRAYER TIME: Thank God for everything you can think of.

NIGHT

4. Daniel 11 is so minutely fulfilled in the reign of a king named Antiochus IV that some commentators think it must have been written after the fact. (I don't; I believe Daniel was a real person and a true prophet. And when it comes to prophecies which have already been "fulfilled," I can't help but look for a re-fulfillment, a doubling of the prophecy. What do you think? Could Daniel 11 be fulfilled once more in the future?)

PRAYER TIME: Pray for your nation, using some of the things you learned from Daniel's prayer in Daniel 9.

DEVOTIONS WITH DANIEL: DAY ONE

MORNING

Daniel was one of the young captives brought from Judah to Babylon, when King Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem. This book gives us wonderful examples of how to serve God in extremely difficult circumstances, as well as some prophecies of the end times.

Daniel was a young Hebrew/Israelite/Jew far from home, a captive in a foreign society with no regard for his heritage or his God. He had lost his home, his country, his family,... even his name. In such a desperate situation, Daniel turned to God for wisdom and strength, and God honored him in ways which few in history have ever seen. Daniel and his friends are an example to us of how to live victoriously, even when we find ourselves living in "Babylon."

PRAYER TIME: Thank God for someone He has put in your life who has been a good example to you.

NOON

1. Do you think the people of Judah believed they could ever lose their country, since they were God's chosen people?
2. Do you think it's possible the United States would ever face a similar fate? Why, or why not?

PRAYER TIME: Ask God's mercy for our country.

NIGHT

3. For someone in Daniel's situation, what would you expect, in terms of attitude and behavior?
4. Are you using any excuses of life situation, background, etc. to justify ungodly attitudes or behavior in yourself? If so, what do you think God would have you do?

PRAYER TIME: Ask God to reveal to you anything in your attitudes or behavior which is ungodly. Then ask Him what He would have you do.

DEVOTIONS WITH DANIEL: DAY 2

MORNING

1. Read Daniel 1.
2. What was the goal of Nebuchadnezzar concerning these young captives from Judah?
3. How long were they to be educated in the literature and language of the Babylonians? (1:5)

PRAYER TIME: Do you want to learn some new things from God? Ask Him to teach you.

NOON

4. Why would Daniel have a problem with the king's food and wine? (Leviticus 11)
5. Considering the indignities and losses Daniel had already suffered, why do you think he bothered to try to avoid food which was unclean for Jews?

PRAYER TIME: Do you think God cares about your eating habits? Ask Him. Ask Him what He would have you do.

NIGHT

6. What do you think you would have done in Daniel's situation? Why?

PRAYER TIME: Thank God for His blessings to you, including the blessing of food.

DEVOTIONS WITH DANIEL: DAY 19

MORNING

1. Read Daniel 10
2. What do you think the connection was between Daniel choosing to do a partial fast for three weeks, and his receiving a "word" from God?
3. What has been your experience with fasting? Has it proved helpful? What effect does fasting have on you, personally?

PRAYER TIME: Do you want to learn more about fasting? Ask God to teach you.

NOON

4. In this chapter, Daniel is rewarded for his spiritual discipline by a vision, by affirmation sent from God Himself ("O man greatly loved"), and by "insider" knowledge of what's going on in the unseen spiritual realm. Have you ever desired to know more about these things?
5. Here's a passage which has always meant a great deal to me. Daniel 10:12 ESV: *Then he said to me, "Fear not, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand and humbled yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come because of your words."*
That tells me that if I desire to go deeper into God's truth, trying to understand what He is really saying to us, if I humble myself before Him and try to learn all I can from Him, not only does that honor God, but it is *immediately* noticed! I love the Bible, and I love learning from God.

What do you desire to know more about, when it comes to spiritual things? Ask God. Seek His truth. Try to understand. He will help you! The pursuit itself is a blessing.

PRAYER TIME: Ask God to help you understand what you need to know.

NIGHT

6. Do you see the "unseen" in this chapter? Spiritual battles rage all around us, which are unseen to us, yet very, very real. These battles are won through prayer. Pray! Get in the fight.

PRAYER TIME: Ask God to reveal to you where the spiritual battles are. Ask Him to teach you how to pray, when it comes to spiritual warfare.

DEVOTIONS WITH DANIEL: DAY 18

MORNING

1. Read Daniel 9
2. What happened to Daniel while he was praying for his nation? (Daniel 9:20-23)
3. This passage is the main reason I use the English Standard Version (ESV) translation of the Bible--Daniel 9:22-23: *He made me understand, speaking with me and saying, "O Daniel, I have now come out to give you insight and understanding. At the beginning of your pleas for mercy a word went out, and I have come to tell it to you, for **you are greatly loved**. Therefore consider the word and understand the vision."*
4. Had it been me, the angel Gabriel could have quit right there! God sending a special messenger just to tell me, "You are greatly loved!"? That's the accurate translation, though, and it's not just once, but three times that he is told that! (Daniel 9:23, 10:11, 10:19)
5. Do you believe you are *greatly loved* by God? You are! And sometimes we even get a messenger from God just to tell us that! Even if the messenger looks like Mom.

PRAYER TIME: Tell God you love Him back.

NOON

6. Dwell on God's love. Think about it. Think of the ways He has shown you love, throughout your whole life.

PRAYER TIME: Thank Him for it.

NIGHT

PRAYER TIME: Tell God you love Him. Listen for His response.

DEVOTIONS WITH DANIEL: DAY 3

MORNING

1. Read Daniel 1
2. What are some of the different ways Daniel could have approached his "food problem"? What would have been the outcome of these different ways?

PRAYER TIME: Ask God to give you wisdom today for each challenge.

NOON

3. What word would you use to describe how Daniel approached a solution to his problem? Why?
4. Are there situations in your life where you are pressured to conform to ungodly standards by those who have influence and authority over you? How about in the culture?
5. Is there a way you can do what you believe honors God, at the same time you are showing respect to those who disagree with you?

PRAYER TIME: Ask God to reveal to you His wisdom concerning any situations where you are faced with pressure to compromise.

NIGHT

6. How do you think Daniel's respectful, prayerful solution set him up for both a powerful witness for God, as well as recognition from man?

PRAYER TIME: Ask God to help you make a plan which shows respect for others, even as you are obedient to Him, in situations where you are pressured to compromise.

DEVOTIONS WITH DANIEL: DAY 4

MORNING

1. Read Daniel 2

2. What is your reaction when people place upon you unreasonable demands? What was Daniel's?

PRAYER TIME: Ask God to speak to your spirit today, and reveal things to you which you need to know. Then listen.

NOON

3. Once again, in this whole process, Daniel has shown respect for everyone. How important do you think that attitude was in this situation?

4. Who gets the credit for the miraculous interpretation of the dream? Why is that important?

PRAYER TIME: Do you want more faith or wisdom? Ask God for it.

NIGHT

5. This was a prime opportunity for Daniel to be rid of his rivals (who would later cause him plenty of problems). Why do you think he spared their lives, too?

6. What do you do when you have the chance to bring an enemy down? Does the way you treat your "enemies" honor God?

PRAYER TIME: Pray for any "enemies" or problem people who are in your life.

DEVOTIONS WITH DANIEL: DAY 17

MORNING

1. Read Daniel 9

2. How would you describe the spiritual condition of our nation, these days?

PRAYER TIME: Pray for a personal spiritual Awakening.

NOON

3. How did Daniel come to know God's timetable for Jerusalem? What happens when we set our hearts to try to understand the scriptures?

4. Daniel 9 is a chapter I call, "How to Pray for Your Nation." Read Daniel 9:3-19 and pick out what Daniel does as he's praying for his people.

PRAYER TIME: Pray for your nation. Try to do it similarly to how Daniel prayed for Israel.

NIGHT

5. Why is confession and repentance such a vital part of prayer for a nation?

6. How much of Daniel's prayer is about "them" and what "they" did?

PRAYER TIME: Repent for your nation, but don't confess "their" sins; confess "ours."

DEVOTIONS WITH DANIEL: DAY 16

MORNING

1. Read Daniel 8

PRAYER TIME: What do you like best about God? Tell Him.

NOON

2. Daniel 8 is a chapter which is often written off as having been completely fulfilled, already, since the conquests of the Medes and Persians, and Alexander the Great, from Greece, seem to all fit perfectly. What do you think? Are we done with this chapter, or will God fulfill it a second time in the future?
3. Why would there be a purpose in “doubling” everything in a culture which relied on oral communication and seldom wrote anything down? By “doubling,” I’m referring to the practice where a proverb, for instance, makes a statement, then repeats itself on the next line, saying the same thing, but in a slightly different way. The effect is that if you can remember any part at all of the couplet, you can figure out what the rest of it was, too, or at least come close. Do you think God sometimes does this in prophecy, as well?

PRAYER TIME: Pray for unbelievers you know.

NIGHT

4. As I was working on this devotional, I got a call from California from a mom requesting prayer for her son, trapped in a cult. Guess what his name is? Daniel. Pray for Daniel and all those who are trapped in darkness, thinking it’s light.
5. Daniel 8 describes a deceiver with great power. What is our best defense against deception?

PRAYER TIME: Pray that truth and light will prevail—in our lives, and in the lives of those around us.

DEVOTIONS WITH DANIEL: DAY 5

MORNING

1. Read Daniel 2
2. What are the different ways Daniel could have approached this entire problem? Why was the way he chose the best way?

PRAYER TIME: Where do you currently need God’s wisdom and guidance in your own life? Ask God to grant you what you need in these areas.

NOON

3. What do you think made Daniel believe that what he had received in the night was the answer?
4. Read James 1:5-8. What does this passage teach us about wisdom and faith?

PRAYER TIME: Ask God to show you very clearly what His will is for you in any areas where you need guidance or wisdom.

NIGHT

5. Why do you think God revealed this dream to Nebuchadnezzar?
6. What is “the kingdom that shall never be destroyed” which it talks about in Daniel 2:44?

PRAYER TIME: Do you believe you have heard from God in regard to your need for wisdom and guidance? If what you have received corresponds to God’s character as revealed in the Bible, and it is confirmed by the Holy Spirit’s peace, thank God for His leading, then do whatever you believe God would have you do.

DEVOTIONS WITH DANIEL: DAY 6

MORNING

1. Read Daniel 3
2. What do you think motivated Nebuchadnezzar to set up this image in the first place?
3. What is the outcome of pride?

PRAYER TIME: Come to God humbly this morning, asking Him to forgive you and cleanse you.

NOON

4. What would have been the effect and outcome had Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego simply bowed down and worshiped the king's image of gold in the first place, without calling attention to themselves?
5. Why was it important for them to stand their ground? Wouldn't compromise have been O.K. with God, in this situation where their lives were at stake?

PRAYER TIME: Pray for those who are enduring persecution for the sake of Jesus.

NIGHT

6. Do you think the three Hebrew's were at peace or terrified as the day came where they had to choose between compromise and death?
7. Where did their peace come from?

PRAYER TIME: Pray for peace—for yourself, for others, for our world.

DEVOTIONS WITH DANIEL: DAY 15

MORNING

1. Read Daniel 7

PRAYER TIME: Ask God to open your mind to the scriptures.

NOON

2. Read Revelation 11. Any similarities with Daniel 7?

PRAYER TIME: Pray for your family.

NIGHT

3. Some are of the opinion that all the prophecy contained in Daniel 7 has already been fulfilled, while others of us believe it points to the future, as well as events which have already taken place. I see Daniel 7 as a "double prophecy," already at least partially fulfilled, and yet to be fulfilled again, even more completely. How do you see it?
4. Where do you see Jesus, in Daniel 7?
5. Do you see anti-Christ in Daniel 7? What happens to him?

PRAYER TIME: Ask God to prepare you for whatever is to come. Ask Him if there is anything you need to do to be walking in the Light. If He reveals something to you, obey.

DEVOTIONS WITH DANIEL: DAY 14

MORNING

1. Read Daniel 7

2. Did you get anything out of that? What?

PRAYER TIME: Ask God to reveal any mysteries to you that He wants you to know. (Hint: The mystery might have something to do with interpersonal relationships, instead of end times! J)

NOON

3. Why do you think Daniel didn't seem to have dreams and visions of his own until "the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon"?

PRAYER TIME: Do you have any questions for God? Write them down, then ask Him in prayer. Listen to Him, expecting an answer. If you get something, write it down.

NIGHT

4. Has God ever spoken to you in some way? What did He say to you?

5. Is there anything God has told you clearly to do that you haven't done, yet?

PRAYER TIME: Spend time listening and talking to God, just conversing with Him.

DEVOTIONS WITH DANIEL: DAY 7

MORNING

1. Read Daniel 3

2. What are some of the rationalizations Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego might have been hearing as they were confronted by this situation? For instance, "We're not going to do anyone any good dead, so..."

PRAYER TIME: Ask God to speak to you today, clearly, through whatever avenue He chooses.

NOON

3. Why was it important that the three Hebrew's made their speech to Nebuchadnezzar about a God who was able to save them, prior to their being thrown in the fiery furnace?

4. What do you think about the "fourth man" in the furnace?

PRAYER TIME: Listen for God's leading and voice, expectantly. Be ready to write something down so you will remember it, when He speaks to you.

NIGHT

5. We serve a God who is able to rescue us, a God who is with us in the furnace. Think about some of the times when God has rescued you, and the times when you were in the "furnace," but He was there with you.

PRAYER TIME: Thank Him for those times!

DEVOTIONS WITH DANIEL: DAY 8

MORNING

1. Read Daniel 4

2. Why do you think God let Nebuchadnezzar go through all of this experience, when it would have been so easy to simply eliminate him? And why would God let him know what was going to happen in advance, rather than just doing it?

PRAYER TIME: Do you have any questions for God? Ask Him! Then listen for an answer.

NOON

3. What is the importance of a prophet? What is their job?

4. Think about what Nebuchadnezzar had cost Daniel: homeland, family,... Do you think Daniel was tempted to be glad that Nebuchadnezzar would be brought down?

PRAYER TIME: Think of a leader you have a hard time respecting. Pray for them.

NIGHT

5. There are several ways which Daniel could have chosen to use in breaking the news to Nebuchadnezzar regarding his future. Why did Daniel choose such a respectful, helpful way to communicate God's message to a proud, ungodly king?

6. Did King Nebuchadnezzar listen to Daniel's plea for repentance on his part?

PRAYER TIME: Ask for God's mercy, first for yourself, then for our leaders and our nation.

DEVOTIONS WITH DANIEL: DAY 13

MORNING

1. Read Daniel 6

2. When has your devotional life been the best in your life? What made it so good? How are you doing with it, these days?

PRAYER TIME: Ask God to reveal something to you in regard to your devotional life.

NOON

3. Daniel's devotional pattern was so predictable that his enemies saw it as an opportunity to destroy him. Why do you think Daniel was so methodical about his prayer life?

4. Why did Daniel have his devotions openly, where everyone could see him? Can you think of someone else who prayed "alone, with His disciples"? Why did Jesus do that?

PRAYER TIME: Pray out loud today, even if others can hear you.

NIGHT

5. Why did the king care so much about Daniel?

6. What do you like best about this famous story?

7. What are the benefits of a regular prayer time?

PRAYER TIME: Tonight, don't bring any requests to God; just spend time with Him.

DEVOTIONS WITH DANIEL: DAY 12

MORNING

1. Read Daniel 6

2. Why is this one of the most famous stories in the whole Bible?

PRAYER TIME: Ask God for boldness and courage, like the Early Church did.

NOON

3. By this time, Daniel would have been quite old, especially for those times: 80's or 90's. What kinds of things become more difficult for us as we age? What sort of things become easier?

4. How do you think Daniel had attained such an amazing, prestigious position in the kingdom? He had come there as a captive teenager from Jerusalem!

PRAYER TIME: Ask God what He would have you do for a devotional life in these days.

NIGHT

5. Why would the other administrators have reason to try to take Daniel down? What does it say of his character when they realized their only hope in derailing his career was something having to do with his God?

6. Why is the power of our witness so integrally linked to our competence and character?

PRAYER TIME: Pray for your witness!

DEVOTIONS WITH DANIEL: DAY 9

MORNING

1. Read Daniel 4

2. Did it take some courage for Daniel to tell the most powerful man on earth that he was a sinner? (Daniel 4:27) Why did he do that? *How* did he do that?

PRAYER TIME: Are you willing to be used of God, even if the assignment is a difficult one? Tell God of your availability, if you are.

NOON

3. How do you think our Lord wants us to approach ungodly, sinful leaders? Are we to try to help them? Confront them? Condemn them? Is there any hard and fast rule when it comes to dealing with ungodly people who are in authority over us?

4. How long did Nebuchadnezzar's New Year's Resolution to humble himself last until he fulfilled the prophecy?

5. What was Daniel's attitude toward Nebuchadnezzar after Nebuchadnezzar's fall, despite Daniel's warnings?

PRAYER TIME: Pray for our leaders, particularly the ungodly ones.

NIGHT

6. Is it ungodly to help ungodly people succeed? Should we only help fellow believers, or does God want us to show mercy, kindness and grace to those who don't even believe in God?

PRAYER TIME: Ask God to give you a new measure of grace.

DEVOTIONS WITH DANIEL: DAY 10

MORNING

1. Read Daniel 5

2. This is a sad chapter. Why?

PRAYER TIME: Ask God to help you in the area of patience, today. (And forget the tired line about, “Don’t pray for patience! You might get some!” Patience is a fruit of the Spirit—something God wants to grow in our lives!)

NOON

3. How is King Belshazzar different from King Nebuchadnezzar? Why is this difference so critical?

PRAYER TIME: Ask God to help you in the areas of listening and pride: more listening, less pride!

NIGHT

4. Why do you think King Belshazzar didn’t even seem to know who Daniel was?

5. Why is respect such a vital component when it comes to leadership?

PRAYER TIME: Give thanks and praise to God. Honor Him. Listen to Him.

DEVOTIONS WITH DANIEL: DAY 11

MORNING

1. Read Daniel 5

PRAYER TIME: Pray for America.

NOON

2. Why do you think Daniel’s approach to Belshazzar was so different from his approach to Nebuchadnezzar? Daniel repeatedly told Nebuchadnezzar about what his dreams meant, plus Daniel was a top administrator in the whole kingdom. With Belshazzar, Daniel seems to have only one conversation, in which he is summoned in to interpret the handwriting on the wall, reads and interprets the dire prediction, and hours later, Belshazzar is dead! Why the difference in approach?

PRAYER TIME: Ask for wisdom and grace for our leaders.

NIGHT

3. Nebuchadnezzar seems to have possessed so much more grace and wisdom than his descendant, Belshazzar. When it comes to “fools,” the advice given in Proverbs is often to save our breath, since they won’t listen, anyway, and they only get upset when confronted. Wise men listen, and change. For Daniel, this seems to have been an occasion where he was simply to do his job, and let the chips fall where they may. How do you, personally, make the determination of when or if to approach a person with something difficult for them to hear?

PRAYER TIME: Ask God to grant you wisdom, in regard to how, when or if to confront.