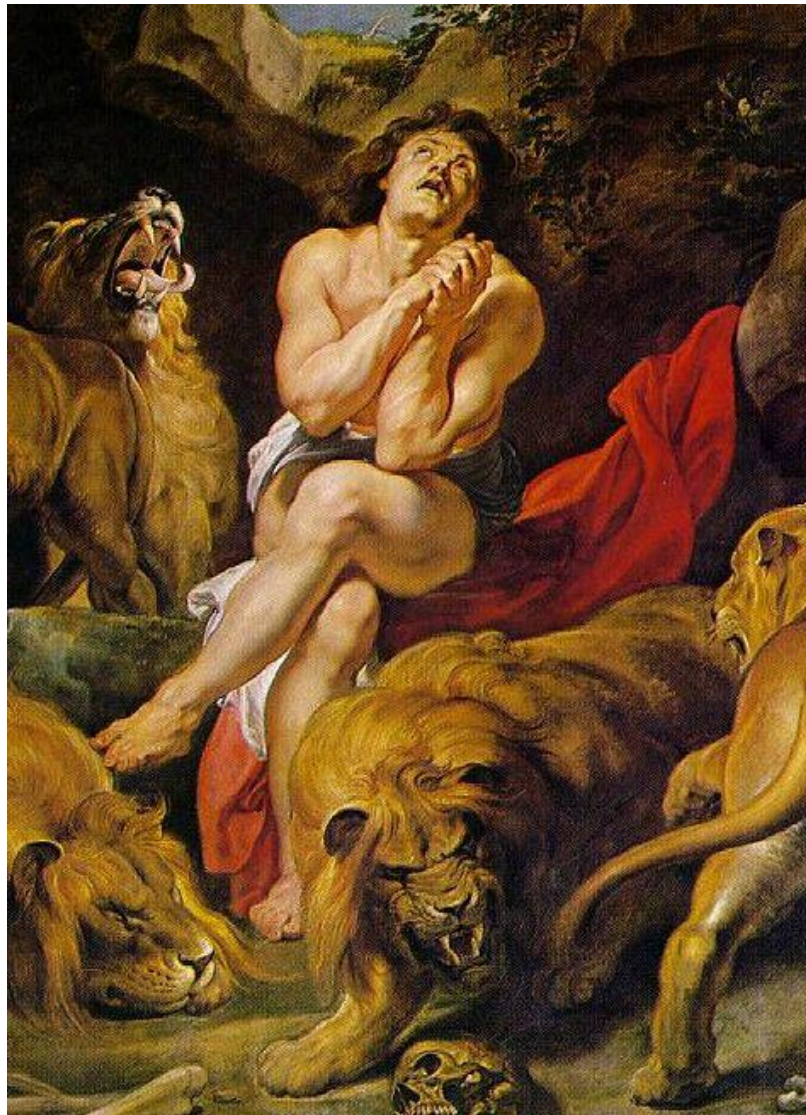


UC Navs

daniel the insider



introduction

It was an OE, of sorts, but not of choice! And it wasn't really overseas. At 19, Daniel was forcibly removed from Jerusalem with a few mates and taken 800 kilometres to Babylon where he encountered a completely different world; a new culture, language, lifestyle, climate, you name it, everything was different! Here Daniel lived as **God's Insider** for 66 years from 605 – 539 BC. In Babylon he had a remarkable influence on three successive empires. God used him to touch the hearts of kings and leaders at the highest levels of political and civil life.

But it all began disastrously. In Jerusalem, where Daniel grew up, prophets like Jeremiah, Habakkuk and Zephaniah had been speaking darkly about God's coming judgement on Judah. The religious and moral life of God's people was in steady decline. Then King Josiah discovered the Word of God and instituted sweeping religious reforms. Most of Daniel's childhood and early teens was heavily influenced by this short-lived spiritual revival. He was most likely part of a generation of young people who were full-on for God.

But the rot was deep-seated and eventually God's judgement fell on Israel in the form of the all-conquering army of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon. He sacked Jerusalem, destroyed the temple and took the cream of the young people, Daniel included, to Babylon to be 'educated' in Babylonian ways. (You can read all about this in 2 Chronicles 34 – 36 and 2 Kings 22 - 25)

It was here that Daniel lived so powerfully for God as an insider.

approach

There is a lot of prophetic and apocalyptic writing in Daniel, especially in the later chapters, but that is not our focus here. In this series we are going to let Daniel's **story as an insider** inspire us.

We have selected four chapters to study. In each of these chapters we will focus on a key theme that is prominent in the chapter. These themes also thread throughout the entire story so we have included a section in each study where you can collect additional insights as you work through the studies.

1st Study (Daniel 1) – Fitting in without Hiding

Building Rapport while remaining distinctive.

2nd Study (Daniel 2) –Speaking up and Teaming Up

Speaking appropriately about God. Finding support from friends.

3rd Study (Daniel 6) – Walking the Talk

Character and Integrity - Being real no matter what

4th Study (Daniel 9) – Staying in Step

Staying in step with God and his big plan

*"The intent in reading Scripture ... is to extend the range of our **listening** to the God who reveals himself in word, to become acquainted with the ways in which he has spoken in various times and places, along with the ways in which people **respond** when he speaks." Eugene Peterson*

Studying the book of Daniel brings two stories together – Daniel's story and our story. As we read Daniel's story and see how he **responded** to God we need to be **listening** as God speaks into our own story.

thinking it through

Read the chapter through again and try to make as many connections as you can between Daniel's story at the Babylonian "Uni" and your own story as an insider in your Uni.

Fitting In and Building Rapport

Daniel's Story	My Story
<p>List all the people in Daniel's new life in Babylon</p> <p>List all the ways Daniel fitted in. Use your imagination a bit here! What did Daniel have to adjust to in his new world?</p> <p>How did Daniel gain the respect of the chief official, the guard and Nebuchadnezzar?</p>	<p>Draw a 'relational map' of the people in your life. (A relational map pictures the connections and contexts of the various people in your life – friends, classmates, family, relatives, etc)</p> <p>In what ways can you more fully connect and fit in with the people in your world? (see also 1 Corinthians 9:19-23)</p>

No Hiding – Being Open about God and Being Distinctive

<p>How did the people in Daniel's world discover how important God was to him? What was the underlying issue here? (See also, Daniel 3:8-12; 6:10-15)</p> <p>Can you reconcile this with Jesus teaching in Matthew 6:1-6 and Matthew 5:14-16?</p> <p>What can we learn from the way Daniel took his stand? (see also 1 Pet 3:15)</p>	<p>Who in your relational map above knows how important God is to you?</p> <p>How did they come to know this?</p> <p>Under what situations and over what issues do you find it most challenging to be open about your relationship with God?</p> <p>How could you go about letting your friends see how important God is to you?</p>
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Finish your discussion by praying for the people on your **relational map**. Pray for courage to be **open** about God. Pray about the ideas you have for better **connecting** with the people on your relational map.

thinking it through

Read the chapter through again and try to make as many connections as you can between Daniel's story at the "Babylonian Uni" and your own story as an insider at your Uni.

Study Skill – Reflecting – listening to our own story. Sometimes we become so involved in the bible story that we become oblivious to our own story. The Holy Spirit is speaking to our hearts constantly. As you read, ask yourself: "What issues, experiences, memories, situations, or people from my own life come to mind?" What am I feeling as I read? Does this fit into a theme God has been developing with me lately?"

Speaking about God

Daniel's Story	My Story
<p>How would you describe Nebuchadnezzar's' receptivity to spiritual matters and spiritual advisors?</p> <p>Compare Daniel's and the Astrologer's conversations with Nebuchadnezzar both in terms of <i>approach</i> and <i>outcomes</i>. (see also: Colossians 4:2-6, Proverbs 15:1, 18, 23, and Paul's example Acts 26)</p> <p>What picture of God is Daniel communicating to Nebuchadnezzar?</p> <p>How does Daniel portray his own role in all this to Nebuchadnezzar?</p>	<p>Who is someone I would like to talk to about God?</p> <p>Describe where you think they are in their spiritual journey. What are their questions?</p> <p>How could you enter into a conversation about God with them? Ask other group members for ideas.</p>

Teaming With Others

<p>Daniel and his friends were in it together. One tell-tale sign of real support and teamwork is Daniel's use of "us", "we" in Daniel 2:23, 2:36. In what ways did they stand with one another and help one another? (See also; Daniel 1:11-12, 17)</p>	<p>Who among your Christian buddies share some connections with the people on your <i>relational map</i> from study one?</p> <p>As a small group what can you do to support one another as insiders?</p>
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Finish your discussion by praying about the ideas that surfaced for talking about God. Also pray about the ideas you came up with for supporting and teaming with one another.

thinking it through

Read the chapter through again and try to make as many connections as you can between Daniel's story and your own story.

Walking the Talk – A Life of Integrity

Daniel's Story	My Story
<p>Look at Daniel's life through the eyes of Darius the King. What did Darius see? What qualities stood out?</p> <p>What did Darius learn about God from Daniel?</p> <p>Look at Daniels life through the eyes of the administrators and satraps. What qualities did they see?</p> <p>How do you account for the big differences in response to Daniel?</p> <p>What can we learn from Daniel about how to a life of real integrity and character?</p>	<p>(Complete the Character of an Insider section below and then answer the following questions)</p> <p>Are there one or two character qualities you particularly want to live out among the people on your 'relational map' (first study)?</p> <p>What can you do to grow in these qualities?</p> <p>In what practical ways can you live out these qualities among your friends?</p>

The Character of an Insider

In Daniel we have a few important character qualities coming through, especially those that relate to his role as a high ranking government official. It would be helpful to broaden this out a bit and think about **other qualities** that are important in the life of an Insider in everyday life. One way to do this is through Cross-referencing.

Study Skill – Cross Referencing

"The best argument for Christianity is Christians; their joy, their certainty, their completeness. But the strongest argument against Christianity is also Christians – when they are sombre and joyless, when they are self-righteous and smug in complacent consecration, when they are narrow and repressive, then Christianity dies a thousand deaths." *A Severe Mercy* - Sheldon Vanauken.

Word Search - Locate cross-references on the **Character of an Insider** using a concordance (back of bible), bible software program (like E-Sword) or www.biblegateway.com. (Search on key words and their synonyms - e.g. in our case words like; character, love, honest, fruit, good, etc)

Recall – related passages that you have read before. Locate these by skim reading or doing a word search on words you remember in the passage.

Look - in the cross-reference column or footnotes of your bible for links to other passages

(If you are having trouble getting started look at 1Corinthians 13)

Finish your discussion by praying for one another about the character qualities you would like to grow in.

4. Staying in Step

setting the scene

How did Daniel get to be like he was? Where did this faith in God come from? In this study we draw back the curtain on Daniel's *inner relationship* with God.

We know how important prayer was to Daniel. In chapter 6 a heavy workload and even direct threats to his life could not keep him from his daily appointments with God. Why was this habit so important and what happened when Daniel was alone with God?

A. W. Tozer said the most important thing about a person is what comes to mind when he or she thinks about God. So who was God to Daniel? Chapter 9 takes us right into the heart of Daniels private prayer life where we can see how he thought about God, how he talked to God.

As in Chapter 6, the background is the tumultuous events surrounding the change of Emperor in Babylon. Belshazzar has been assassinated and Darius has taken over. Hundreds of kilometres away in Judah Jerusalem still in ruins after the conquest by Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel is an old man, but he is very excited. He senses God is up to something. A new chapter in Israel's history is about to be written and he wants to be right in step with God playing his part to the full!

Daniel decides to pray but this isn't one of Daniel's short daily prayer sessions. The momentous events taking place in Babylon led Daniel to spend extended time in prayer.

As we unpack Daniel's prayer let's explore the things that shaped and defined Daniel's relationship with God. Be listening to God as he speaks to you and invites you into a deeper relationship with Himself.

Initial Observations – Chapter Nine

Read **Daniel 9** through 2-3 times picking up as much as you can about the *context*, *content* and *feel* of the chapter. Jot down your observations, especially as they relate to our study of Daniel's life with God as an Insider.

<p><u>General observations</u></p> <p><u>Observations about the Study Theme – Relationship with God</u></p>	<p><u>Other Themes</u></p> <p>Fitting in without hiding</p> <p>Speaking For God</p> <p>Teaming with Others</p> <p>Walking the Talk</p>
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thinking it through

Focus on Daniel's prayer in verses 1 – 19. Daniel was praying for the Jewish people of his day to recover their role as agents in God's great plan of bringing salvation to all nations. Daniel may have been isolated from the religious world of Israel but he sure had a big view of God and what he was doing in the world at large. As Insiders we need this if we are to keep serving God where he has placed us.

Relationship With God

Daniel's Story	My Story
<p>What can you learn about how Daniel saw God? Find as many descriptions of God and hints about how Daniel saw God, in this prayer.</p> <p>Where did Daniel get his ideas about God from?</p> <p>Look at the way Daniel prayed. Look at how the prayer develops; its various parts; the words used; what he asks for; etc. What do you notice?</p> <p>What motivated Daniel to pray like this?</p>	<p>How do you see God when you pray? What qualities of God are you most aware of? How is this different from/similar to Daniel's view of God?</p> <p>How does the way you normally pray compare with the way Daniel prayed? What is similar? What is different?</p> <p>In what ways would you like to develop your prayer life as God's insider?</p>

Study Skill – Cross Referencing. Can you locate a similar prayer in the New Testament? What do you notice?

<p>Word Search - Locate another prayer passage by using a concordance (back of bible), bible software program (like E-Sword) or www.biblegateway.com. (Search on key words and their synonyms - e.g. in our case words like: pray, prayed, praying, ask, supplication, intercession, petition, confession. etc)</p> <p>Recall – if you can remember a prayer like this somewhere in the New Testament, locate it by skim reading or by doing a word search on words you remember in the prayer.</p> <p>Look - in the cross-reference column or footnotes of your bible for links to other prayer passages</p> <p>(If you are having trouble locating a prayer skim read one of Paul's letters like Ephesians or Colossians)</p>

Finish your discussion by doing some 'Daniel'-like praying for God to work out his big plan in, through and around you.