

Message Discussion Guide

THE GOD-CENTERED LIFE

The Church at Brook Hills

Dr. David Platt

September 19, 2010

Daniel

This guide is to help you facilitate discussion with your Small Group. Use it as a resource to lead your group in discovering and owning the truths of God's Word. There may be questions you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on their relationship with God. Your role is to facilitate this experience not to complete the discussion guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid teaching task list.

Connect . . .

Use one or both of the following options to introduce the discussion time to follow.

Option 1

Ask your group: Think about a time when you realized you could not depend on your own power to do something. Describe how you were humbled and what that felt like. Did the experience bring you closer to God?

Option 2

Ask your group: What are some popular attitudes toward prayer in our culture? What are common things that people pray for? Are these likely to be God-ordained ends? Why or why not?

Review the Message . . .

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God is sovereign over all things in the past, present, and future.

A God-Centered Perspective...

- God humbles the proud.
 - We are prone to self-sufficiency...
 - Dependence on our own power.
 - We are prone to self-exaltation...
 - Desire for our own praise.
- God exalts the humble.
 - We trust in His power.
 - We live for His praise.

Discussion . . .

- Read Daniel 2:17–23. How do these verses, especially 20–23, summarize the message of the Book of Daniel—that God is sovereign and supreme over all gods and nations, including Babylon.
- Read Daniel 4:24–33.

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- Did Daniel tell the king what was going to happen to him? Did Daniel counsel the king regarding what he should do (v. 27)? Did King Nebuchadnezzar do anything differently?
- Who does Nebuchadnezzar credit for the greatness of his kingdom? Whose glory was the king living for (v. 30)?
- What happened to the king (v.33)? Why did this happen and who got the glory from it (vv. 34–37)?
- Read Daniel 2:46–48. By whose power did Daniel interpret the king’s dream? Who got the glory? How?
- Read Daniel 3:26–29. Who saved the three Hebrew men from the fiery furnace? Who got the glory for it? How?
- Read Daniel 5:22–31. Daniel interpreted the writing on the wall by God’s power. How did God glorify Himself in this incident?
- Read Daniel 6:19–27. Who rescued Daniel from the lions’ den? Who got the glory for it? How?

Application . . .

- In what ways, subtle or not, are we frequently tempted to depend on our own power? Think about these areas of life: education/career, singleness/marriage, parenting, Christianity/church/religion.
- How can a desire for our own praise influence our daily actions?
- How is dependence on God more than just thanking Him for helping or blessing us?
- How do trusting in His power and living for His praise affect the decisions we make in regard to education, career, marriage, parenting, church, etc?
- How is Daniel a God-centered model for handling success in education or career? How is he a model for handling persecution?
- What are some of the major lessons we learn about God’s sovereignty from the stories in the first six chapters of Daniel? Can God be trusted in all situations? Why?
- Explain the statement: “God gives His power for His praise.” How does this fact relate to our gifts, talents, skills, resources, etc? How can this humble us and at the same time motivate us?
- Whose glory are we living for?

God-Centered Praying...

- We pray _____ consistently _____.
 - Prayer is a God-ordained _____ means _____.
 - For the accomplishment of God-ordained _____ ends _____.
 - We are not passive _____ observers _____ of God’s sovereign purposes...
 - We are active _____ participants _____ in God’s sovereign plans.
- We pray with _____ courage _____.
- We pray _____ contritely _____.
- We pray with _____ confidence _____.
 - We are in a _____ battle _____.
 - God will win the _____ war _____.

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Discussion . . .

- Read Daniel 6:1–10. Was Daniel consistent in prayer before he was persecuted? Did he maintain his consistency in spite of the threats?
- Why did Daniel's public prayers not contradict Jesus' instructions in Matthew 6:5–6?
- Why do you think Daniel could pray with such courage?
- Read Daniel 9:3–5. What was Daniel's attitude in prayer?
- Read Daniel 9:18–19. Why does Daniel ask God to act (for what reasons)? On what attribute of God does Daniel base his appeal?
- Read 1 Thessalonians 2:18; 2 Corinthians 4:5; Matthew 13:4, 39; 2 Timothy 2:25; Revelation 12:9. What kind of battle are we engaged in? Where is this battle taking place? Is this a one-time battle or a continuous battle?
- Who has won the war? On what basis? How does this enable us to pray with confidence?

Application . . .

- If God is sovereign, why do we pray? How do our prayers matter?
- Has God ordained that He will act based on the prayers of His people? For what ends? How should these interconnected truths affect the content of our prayers?
- No matter the specifics, what does God want to accomplish in His response to our prayers? Can we trust God to answer in the best way?
- If we truly consider ourselves active participants in God's sovereign plans, how might this affect the frequency, consistency, and depth of our prayers?
- Are our prayers contrite, confident, and courageous? How can we begin to pray with those attitudes?
- Why is it important to pray for the unreached peoples of the world?

God-Centered Promises...

- God will _____ redeem _____ His people.
- God will _____ resurrect _____ His people.
- God will _____ reign _____ over all peoples.
 - The coming king...
 - He is _____ human _____.
 - He is _____ divine _____.
 - The coming kingdom...
 - _____ Universal _____ : Over all nations.
 - _____ Eternal _____ : For all time.

Discussion . . .

- Read Daniel 9:24. Would this news have been encouraging to the exiles? How do you think they might have understood this prophecy?
- Read Daniel 12:1–3, 13. In light of the disturbing prophecies preceding this chapter, how do these verses comfort and clarify?

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- Read Daniel 7:13–14. Read Mark 14:61–62. Why is it necessary that the Messiah be both human and divine?
- How is the scope of the Great Commission connected to the scope of God's coming kingdom?

Application . . .

- How do these three truths give us confidence and encouragement in the difficulties of life?
- How do these truths give us clarity, even though we may not perfectly understand all the prophecies of the Bible?
- How should these three truths give us a sense of urgency in proclaiming the gospel in Birmingham and around the world?

God-Centered Practices...

- Praise God!
 - He is sovereign over all things.
- Pray to God!
 - He is the source of all strength.
- Proclaim God!
 - He is the Savior of all nations.

Application . . .

- How can we make praise, prayer, and proclamation a regular focus of our daily lives?
- Spend time in prayer as a small group praising and thanking God. Ask God to do great things for His glory in our lives and around the world.