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The Lion’s Den and Faithfulness - Daniel Study - Chapter 6

Ever feel like you are in a lion’s den where hungry lions are ready to tear you limb from limb? In your den, you may have people trying to get rid of you, make you look bad, make up false accusations about your character, question your every decision, or make a mockery of your faith. If there is a job best-suited for a lion’s den, it is coaching. If anyone in the Bible can feel your pain, it is Daniel. He was in the lion’s den because he was such a good leader and others were jealous of his success. His adversaries despised his success and his God, so they formed a plot to have him eliminated.

Setting
Daniel 6:1-5. Daniel was approximately 80 years old. He had been an advisor and administrator for the Babylonian kings, but when the Medo-Persians were in control, a new king was ruled Babylon. Gubaru was a sub- king over Babylon and Cyrus was the King over Medo-Persia. Darius (Gubaru) recognized Daniel’s ability to lead and made him one of the three heads who oversaw the other 120 officials. Daniel did his job so well that Darius wanted to appoint him leader over the entire kingdom. When the other officials got wind of the promotion, they looked for integrity flaws in Daniel in order to bring him down. As it turned out, Daniel did his job with such excellence and integrity, that they couldn’t find a point of contention.

“At this, the administrators and satraps tried to find grounds for charges against Daniel in his conduct of government affairs, but they were unable to do so. They could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent” 6:4-5

Would this be said of you? If yes, then continue to do the right things. If you have skeletons in your closet or are currently doing things that lack integrity, then stop immediately. Be a person of integrity, take responsibility and make it right.

The Plot
Daniel 6:6-9. When the officials could not find any integrity flaws in Daniel to exploit, they decided to attack his faith. The officials’ plan was to approach the King and appeal to his pride. They proposed an edict proclaiming that for 30 days, anyone who prayed to another god besides the king would be thrown into a lion’s den. The king thought this was a good idea and signed the edict into law. The officials waited to see if Daniel would take his normal posture of prayer to the God of heaven, and if he did, they would have him. Their plot counted on Daniel staying true to his God. And guess what? Daniel did as they expected.

When people think of you, do they think of your faith? Do they know where you stand?

Daniel’s Faithfulness, Pray Three Times a Day
Daniel 6:10-11. No earthly decrees were going to stop Daniel from worshipping God. He had

learned as a teenager that God was King of kings and Lord of lords. His life remained in God's hands, and he trusted God with the results.

"Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to God, just as he had done before. These men went as a group and found Daniel praying and asking God for help." 6:10,11

Nothing altered or changed Daniel's trust in God. He was consistent, steady and grounded in Christ.

Daniel was a very busy administrator of a large city. His responsibilities and time were as great, or even greater, than the busiest coach, yet he found time to pray three times a day. Daniel made it a priority to align himself with God throughout the day so that he could be sensitive to God's leading. I challenge you to take at least 10 minutes, three times a day to pray and meditate on God's Word. Also, Daniel did not hide the fact that he was praying. Your situation is no more demanding or challenging than Daniel's. Remember, Daniel was not a priest or pastor, he was a government official who was being used by God.

God's Rescue
Daniel 6:12-24. The officials reported to the king that Daniel had disobeyed the decree. The king realized that he had been manipulated by the officials, but could do nothing about it. The king had a profound respect for Daniel and tried to save him, but according to Persian law the decree could not be changed. So, the king prayed for Daniel's God to save him. Once Daniel was thrown into the lion's den, the king went back to his palace, canceled the normal entertainment and food, and lay sleepless all night.

At the first light of dawn, the king ran to the den and called out to Daniel to see if his God had rescued him. To his great joy, Daniel yelled out from the den,

"O King, live forever! My God sent His angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in His sight. Nor have I ever done any wrong before you, O King." 6:21,22

The king had Daniel lifted out of the pit without a scratch. He ordered that all of Daniel's accusers and their families be thrown into the Lion's den. Not only did God rescue Daniel, but He exposed his accusers and had them punished. God will right all wrongs, either here on earth or on judgment day.

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad." 2 Corinthians 5:10

In this story, justice is immediate. But, when God decides to punish injustice is up to Him.

Glory to God
Daniel 6:25-28. The King was so overjoyed by what happened and realized the magnitude of the power of Daniel's God, that he wrote a decree to all nations and people just as Nebuchadnezzar had many years ago. Do you see how God is working through different kings and nations? It does not matter who the administrators or administrations are, God wants to use you to make an impact on them.

"I issue a decree that in every part of my kingdom people must fear and reverence the God of Daniel. For He is the living God, and He endures forever; His kingdom will never be destroyed, His dominion will never end. He rescues and He saves; He performs signs and

wonders in the heavens and on the earth. He rescued Daniel from the power of the lions." Daniel 6: 26-27

God blessed Daniel under Nebuchadnezzar, Darius and Cyrus. May God bless you under the kings you serve.

Memory verse: Daniel 6: 10-11, *"Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to God, just as he had done before. These men went as a group and found Daniel praying and asking God for help."*

TALKING POINTS: SPEAK THE TRUTH - LIVE WITH THE END IN MIND

Main thought:
Because Daniel was a busy government official, he made it a priority to align himself with God throughout the day so he could be sensitive to God's leading.

Key Scripture:
Daniel 6:1-11

Discussion questions:
1. Why is it important to have a consistent time in prayer and study of God's Word?

2. What have you learned about the greatness and power of God through the first six chapters of Daniel?

COACH'S TESTIMONY: THE LIONS DEN AND FAITHFULNESS

Home Stretch – Avery Johnson

Even though I grew up with a church background and had an idea of what Christianity was, I'd never made a commitment. That was, until July 1989, one year after I started my NBA career. While attending a service at Greater St. Stephen's Baptist Church in New Orleans, I heard a sermon called "Being Fully Committed." That message was for me. That day, I gave my whole life to Christ.

That decision had a big impact on my playing career. Faith really helped me stay focused on what was important. I made sure to give my all on the court because I was representing the Lord. And in the end, I was pleased with my career.

After I finished playing, I felt it was only natural for me to become a coach, and being in that role has taught me many things. One of those lessons is a valuable spiritual truth that applies to everyone: You reap what you sow. It's that simple. If you sow the right things, treat people right and are consistent with your work ethic, it will pay off.

Spiritually, my passion is to help provide resources for ministries. I help raise money for different ground-floor ministries around the country that are making a difference in their communities. I like to see ministries that work. But more than anything, I want my spiritual legacy to be that I was a servant. I was not put here to be served, but to serve. Just like Jesus.

If you don't know the hope and peace that I enjoy through Christ, it's not too late. You, too,

can begin that life by accepting Jesus into your own. Try this simple prayer:

“Lord, forgive me of my sins. I want to receive You as Lord and Savior of my life. Come into my heart, live with me, walk with me and talk to me. I believe You died on the cross for my sins and, on the third day, You rose and later ascended into heaven with God. Because of Jesus’ sacrifice for me, I believe I’m saved.”

Written with help from Joshua Cooley.

Bible Reference:
2 Corinthians 5

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