

Risk And Reward - Daniel Study - Chapter 3

Risk and danger go hand-in-hand. Taking a risk usually implies a positive or negative reward depending upon the outcome. Coaches take risks all the time, although some coaches are more risky than others. Going for it on a fourth down, shooting a threepointer when down by only two and starting the freshman player instead of the senior are all risks. If the decision does not work, there are plenty of questions to answer, but if the decision does work, then you look like a genius.

Can you recall a time that you took a risk in coaching? How did it work out?

Trouble

Daniel 2:1-13. The second chapter of Daniel begins with a dream the King had that troubled him so much that he could not sleep. He summoned all the magicians, sorcerers, astrologers and enchanters and ordered them to interpret the dream. The King wanted to find out who, from among the group, was really connected to the gods. He commanded each man to tell him exactly what he dreamt of, not just the interpretation, and threatened wrong information with death. Their response to the King was that it was impossible to do. The King ordered all the wise men, including Daniel and his three friends, to be killed.

Have you been in a bad situation where you knew that you could not change circumstances? How did you handle it?

Risk and prayer

Daniel 2:14-23. When Daniel heard of the King's wish, he begged the King to give him time to interpret the dream. Daniel took the risk of trusting God to intervene. If God failed to intervene, he would be killed. Daniel left his meeting with the King and joined his three friends in prayer. Verse 17 says, *"He urged them to plead for mercy from the God of heaven concerning the interpretation of this mystery so that he and his friends might not be executed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon."* Daniel put his life into God's hands, and once again, God delivered on His promises. Verse 19 says, *"During the night the mystery was revealed to him."*

Have you or someone you know experienced desperate circumstances? Explain the circumstance. How did you include God in the problem? Do you have three friends to pray with?

Read Daniel's prayer of praise to God - Daniel 2:19-23.

How did the answered prayer strengthen Daniel?

For what did he praise God?

God Over All

The meaning of the dream is found in verses 20-21:

*"Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever,
wisdom and power are His.
He changes times and seasons;
He sets up Kings and deposes them.
He gives wisdom to the wise
And knowledge to the discerning."*

The dream revealed that only God is in control of the future, and all the kings and kingdoms of earth are in His hands. He raises rulers up and brings them down for His purposes. Powerful kings and people believed they had acquired their power, but God revealed to Nebuchadnezzar that his power was given to him by the God of heaven.

Join God in His Work

God was also at work in the heart of Nebuchadnezzar. Sometimes appearances can be deceiving. On the outside Nebuchadnezzar was seen as ruthless, but on the inside, God was doing His work. Never doubt that God can work in the lives of great leaders of our day. Our role is to seek God and join Him in His work. You will never know what God is doing in people's lives unless you are willing to stand for Christ.

You may want to pray this prayer: "Dear Lord, give me insight into what you are doing in the heart of _____, and give me wisdom to join you in your work." This can be prayed for your spouse, children, players, administrators or even world leaders.

Giving Glory to God

Daniel 2:24-45: Daniel begins his dream interpretation to the King with the acknowledgment in verses 27-29 that only the God in heaven can make this mystery known.

"No wise man, enchanter, magician, or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about, but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries,...As for me, this mystery has been revealed to me, not because I have greater wisdom than all other living men, but so that you, O king, may know the interpretation."

Read 2:31-45. Daniel was careful to give God all the glory. He took no credit for himself, and he then revealed the interpretation to the King. In his dream, the King saw a large statue. Each part of the statue represented a world power. God told Nebuchadnezzar the future of humanity. His dream told him who the world powers would be, how they would come to an end and that they would eventually be ruled by the kingdom of God.

The statue's head of gold represented Babylon, the world power from 609 to 539 B.C. The arms and breast of silver represented Medo-Persia, who defeated the Babylonians and ruled from 539-331 B.C. The belly and thighs of bronze represented Greece. Alexander the Great was its leader and Grecians ruled until the Romans took control in 146 B.C. Roman rule would dissolve in 476 A.D. The Romans were the fourth kingdom, which was made of clay and iron. The statue was struck by a rock, not made by human hands. It was the kingdom of heaven. The rock destroyed the statue figuratively, and all human kingdoms literally, by breaking it into pieces. The pieces were scattered by the wind. The rock then became a huge mountain and filled the entire earth. Praise God! The kingdom of God rules! History is His story. God rules over all, and His Word can be counted on.

The book of Daniel is about the power of God and how He rules over the affairs of this world. It is also about Daniel and his friends who were willing to trust God with their lives. They truly believed that God reigns over all human powers.

Do you believe that God is in control of the human powers in your life like the athletic director, principal, owner or general manager?

Without a whole-hearted trust in the sovereignty of God, we will be weak in faith!

How would you rate your faithfulness to Him?

God's Grace

Daniel 2:46-49: When the King received Daniel's interpretation, he fell to the ground. The most powerful man on the earth bowed to Daniel and acknowledged that Daniel's God was the Lord of kings. Nebuchadnezzar was not ready to follow God yet, but God was gaining his attention. Nebuchadnezzar promoted Daniel, and because of Daniel's request, his three friends were appointed to be administrators over the province of Babylon. They were promoted to high positions, but these promotions, as we will see, only brought about greater challenges to their faith.

Memory verse: Daniel 2:20-21. *"Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever, wisdom and power are His. He changes times and seasons; He sets up kings and deposes them. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning."*

TALKING POINTS: RISK AND REWARD

Main thought:

Stepping out in faith will always involve risk, but God is greater than any risk.

Key Scripture:

Daniel 2:14-30

Discussion questions:

1. Why do you think it pleases God when we trust Him? Also read Hebrews 11:6.
2. Who should get the credit for our success and why?

COACH'S : RISK AND REWARD

Dayton Moore. General Manager of the Kansas City Royals

Dayton Moore is an example of risk and faith, of leaving the comfort zone and trusting God.

There is a place where a person can go when life gets complicated, a place where he can feel completely at ease and safe from the world. It is a wonderful place where one feels at home not only physically, but also mentally and emotionally. Life is easy there. Life is good.

That place is called the Comfort Zone. Yet, in spite of its welcoming title, it's often located at the address of 1000 Missed Blessings and Opportunities Dr., in the city of Half-Lived, Life.

Dayton Moore remembers his comfort zone. As the Assistant General Manager/ Baseball Operations of the Atlanta Braves, he and his family were in a great situation: great town, great job, great family environment, great church. And his reputation as a savvy front office man was on the rise. Undoubtedly, that's why he got the call.

The struggling Kansas City Royals were experiencing one of the most difficult seasons in franchise history, both on and off the field. The team was losing, the players were restless, and the front office was being slaughtered by both the media and the fans. Drastic change was flat-out demanded.

He almost didn't take the job. At one point he even verbalized his decision to stay in Atlanta. But as a Christian man, he had to, instead, follow the leading of the Holy Spirit. And it was compelling him to Kansas City—miles and miles from the Comfort Zone.

But just like so many would-be success stories, Dayton Moore and his family took a risk. Which they, of course, recognize as a leap of faith.

Jill Ewert: You came to Kansas City from Atlanta, where you'd been part of a team that had won 14 straight division titles at that point. Did you feel any intimidation at the thought of coming to the Royals, who have struggled so much recently?

Dayton Moore: Yeah. It would have been very easy and very safe for us to stay in Atlanta. Our family was thriving, we had a great church home, [my wife] Marianne loved it, the weather was great, I knew all the players, I loved the people I worked with, we'd won 14 consecutive division titles, and the players there are in place to continue to win. In fact, toward the end of the process I told Marianne we were staying in Atlanta, that we were not going to Kansas City. But as the day unfolded, as we began to continue to give it to God and pray about the decision, it became, "You know what? Go try to do something special."

It was risky, and "risk" is a scary word for me and, I think, for a lot of Christians. In many cases, you have a great support group around you. For us, it would have been very easy to stay right there and continue to do well in an environment with all the pieces in place to continue to be successful. We had all the resources necessary and great players and a great group of guys who are strong believers in that clubhouse.

It is a great family.

It is still scary.

JE: What did you learn spiritually through that transition?

DM: Just to really depend on and sell out to Him, and know that He has a perfect plan for your life. As long as you are seeking His wisdom and His will, you are always going to be in His will no matter where He puts you, whether it is Kansas City, Atlanta, Boston, Arizona, Cincinnati, wherever.

Bible Reference:

Hebrews 11



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