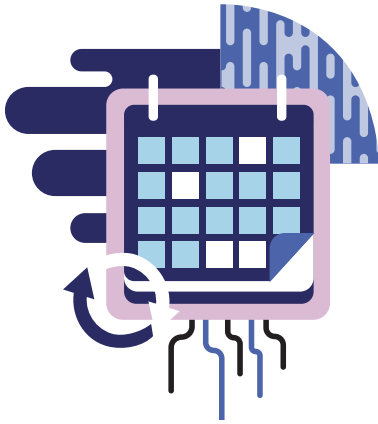


# Daily Devotions



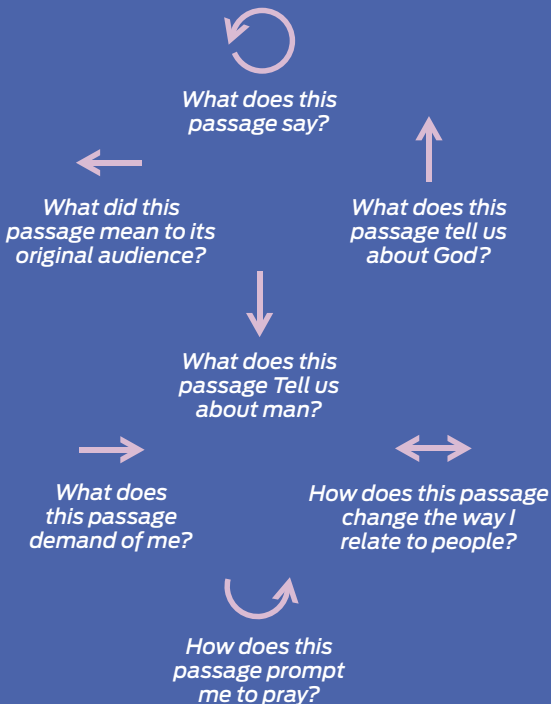
Day 1

## Daniel 6:1-5

Daniel's elevation during Israel's exile is inspiring. Under three unbelieving leaders, God's servant remained faithful and righteous, earning him the trust of all he served. Not everyone, however, celebrates when the people of God function as salt and light in the world. The resistance Daniel faced is not unlike the open hostility that living as a Christian in the twenty-first century invites. Though God will use us to be a blessing to many, some enemies will resent and lash out at genuine faith. The more God elevates us, the greater the resistance will likely be.

Responding correctly to attacks like these requires tremendous confidence in God's sovereignty over your life and an abiding contentment with His plans. The hatred of a few should not prevent us from blessing as many people as possible as we live by faith. Daniel's commitment was unshakable, much like the resolve of Jesus. We, too, must strive to live with complete integrity no matter the personal cost.

## The 7 Arrows of Bible Reading



**How has your service to the Lord been a blessing to others? How has it cost you?**

# Daniel 6:6-10

Faithfulness to God's Word is not only difficult in our modern era, but it also puts us in direct contradiction to the expectations and rules of our contemporary context, whether spoken or unspoken. Because the days of cultural religiosity are gone, the basic expressions of Christianity are becoming increasingly offensive. Daniel's example is a reminder that our obedience must not change even as the world around us does. With full knowledge of the potential cost, Daniel chose to live by a higher law. God calls us to do the same.

Doing so will require us to resist compromise. Often, keeping our faith quiet or hidden seems easier. While we should strive to be good citizens whose presence blesses society, we should be unashamed in our determination to please God more than those around us. Our enthusiasm to our true King ought to be a constant reminder that this world is not our final home.

**In what ways do you feel pressure to compromise your faith because of the standards in our world?**

# Daniel 6:11-24

The Lord always protects His people. Daniel's survival in the lion's den is a vivid example of the relentless care and security God offers to us. This does not mean, however, that our outcomes in adversity will always be as favorable as what we read here. Though we praise the Lord when He meets an earthly need or provides deliverance, our confidence in Him must rest beyond what we can see with our eyes. Because nothing can separate us from the love of God, we know our Savior's faithfulness is not based on circumstances (Rom. 8:31-39). We do not fear those who can kill our bodies because of our certainty that our heavenly Father protects our souls.

Trusting God may be a simple concept to grasp, but it is much more difficult to live. Knowing that our future is secure, however, helps us lift our gaze to eternity when the present is harsh and painful. Daniel was just as victorious before God saved him from the lions as he was afterward, and so can ours be.

**How do your circumstances today increase or diminish your confidence in God's protection over your life?**

# Daniel

## 6:25-28

The enduring impact of Daniel's faithfulness to the Lord is as inspiring to us as it is instructive. After watching his servant emerge from the lion's den unscathed, King Darius not only rejoiced but also worshiped Daniel's God. Consider, for a moment, how remarkable it is that two pagan rulers voiced the eternal glory and power of Yahweh because of the witness of one man. The consistency and perseverance of Daniel were powerful tools for advancing God's kingdom in a difficult place. His presence in Babylon was even instrumental in Israel's return to their homeland.

Today, our lives possess similar potential. Though our eternal impact is rarely the result of big accomplishments, the steady, constant witness of trusting God through all of life's hills and valleys has profound influence on those around us. Ultimately, only eternity will reveal the full ripple effect of our commitments to Christ.

**How do you want your life to make a difference for God's kingdom?**

# Acts

## 4:1-31

Boldly speaking the words of Christ and pointing others to Him can often be costly. Just as Daniel nearly died because of his faith, the early apostles faced threats and hardship because of their efforts to influence others. After Peter and John healed a lame man, religious leaders who could not deny the miracle attacked them anyway. These men are a reminder to us that just as prophets suffered persecution, circumstances will sometimes force us to choose between obedience or sinful compromise (Matt. 5:11-12).

Yet, we should not lose sight of the reality that the endurance of God's faithful servants often results in miraculous results. The early church continued to grow exponentially because of their witness. Likewise, our resolve to be salt and light no matter the personal cost will bear eternal fruit as well. Regardless of how well known you might be, your life can make a significant difference in God's kingdom. Insults and false accusations should never hinder our efforts to be Christ's witnesses (Acts 1:8).

**How are you intentionally bold for Christ? How has God used your efforts?**