

A Successful Life

Daniel 6: 1-28

01/01/06

Intro

As we begin this new year, it is good for us to step back and consider the year behind us and the year before us. It is important that we thank God for all that He has given to us, and also that we consider what adjustments we should make in our lives for the year before us.

We live in a society that worships success; and the definition of success is often defined by the world's media. You can't be considered successful, the world tells us, unless you have either lots of money, fame, or power. But there is no mention of the fact that these will leave you empty, lonely, and spiritually bankrupt. God provides examples of men who are successful because of who they are in sight of God. Daniel is one if these, Joseph is certainly another.

It's important for us to start this year by considering success God's way and so we observe the life of Daniel.

At this point in the story of Daniel's life, he is serving in Babylon under Darius, king of the Medes and the Persians who have conquered Babylon and taken it away from Belshazzar, son of Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel is most likely about 80 years old.

As the story found in chapter six unfolds, **Daniel has risen in stature above others because he "possessed an extraordinary spirit."** He is one of three commissioners over 120 satraps, who are managing the affairs of the kingdom. These satraps believed they must stop Daniel before he gained even greater stature.

Not finding any "skeletons in his closet" they devised a plan to trap him by taking advantage of his strength; his relationship with God. It is here that we learn important lessons for our own lives.

In Daniel we see the importance of seeking strength of character. *He sought God first, and then God added unto him as he desired.* We would all like to have the strength of character of Daniel, what, then, set him apart?

These, then, are the decisions that Daniel made that we also should choose.

I. He Chose Integrity

A. Definition: the construction within

- The dictionary definition of integrity is simply, **"Adherence to a moral code or law."**
- But this definition falls woefully inadequate.
- **It is the consistency of it that makes it integrity. It is the *construction within* that no one sees that defines a man's integrity.**

Psalm 26:1-2 "Vindicate me, O Lord, for I have walked in my integrity, and I have trusted in the Lord without wavering. Examine me, O Lord, and try me; test my mind and my heart."

B. And God lifted him up

- Daniel chose to walk in his integrity and so they could find no cause to accuse him.
- **It was because of his character and integrity that he rose in the eyes of God and man.**
- Daniel's acclaim was known throughout the world.

1 Peter 5:6, "Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time."

C. He chose the highest good

- Verse 10 -- Daniel found himself in a place where he must decide between two principles that were colliding;
- **Should he submit to the law of the land, (which is an important principle); or should he continue in his commitment to pray?**
- What should we do when principle collide?
- **“Choose the highest good,” is the guiding principle in these matters.**

Illus – When a godly principle collides with a worldly one, “choose the highest good.”

When one godly principles collides with another godly principle, “choose the highest good.”

Illus – Jesus taught us the principle to guide our lives.

Matthew 6:33-34, “But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”

II. He Chose to Walk With God

A. In the way he lived

- Daniel decided to bring God into every area of his life.
- He chose to operate his life by godly principles.

II Corinthians 4:2, “but we have renounced the things hidden because of shame, not walking in craftiness or adulterating the word of God, but by the manifestation of truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.”

B. In the way he prayed

- Daniel is a great example in his life of prayer.
- He prayed consistently and he prayed openly.

Illus – many people don’t like to be seen praying, especially by unbelievers.

Romans 1:16, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes...”

- Yet some try to show off, and Daniel was not doing that either.

Illus – I used to have lunch occasionally with someone who liked to pray extra loudly in restaurants.

Matthew 6:5, “When you pray, you are not to be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.”

C. By staying faithful

- There was a consistency to Daniel’s walk with the Lord which is a great example to us.

- **He established spiritual practices and disciplines in his life and committed to them.**

Psalm 57:7, “My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast; I will sing, yes, I will sing praises!”

Illus – Eleazar, son of Dodo, one of David’s mighty men, clung to his sword in a great battle and they had to pray his hand from it.

III. He Chose to Trust in God

Vs 23

A. During the good times

- Many people let their relationship to God slip during the good times.

Illus – God warned Israel that this could happen just as they were coming into the promised land.

Deuteronomy 6:6-13 – do not forget your Lord.

Philippians 4:12-13, “I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.”

B. During the difficult times

- It would have been easy for Daniel to compromise his faith; he could have continued to pray, but in secret.

- But he decided to trust God even in difficult times.
- In fact, God often uses times like these to strengthen our character. It’s the troubles that enlarge our spiritual capacity.

Illus – Joseph could have given up on God because it seemed that what he was promised was not going to happen, but he stayed faithful. It seemed that with the troubles, his character only increased.

Illus - Researchers have discovered that our bodies are actually stronger when we are around pets and other sources of assaults to our immune system.

C. During the critical times

- These are the times when many people don’t know what to do.
- Many wonder if God has abandoned them.
- **But it is during these times when we need to trust in Him most of all.**
- **Daniel trusted in God and kept his faith through it all.**

Psalm 119:114, “You are my hiding place and my shield; I wait for Your word.”

Proverbs 18:10, “The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous run into it and are saved.”

Conclusion

If we truly desire greater character in God, then we must also make these choices now before the times of trouble come.