

Dying for Devotions



Week Six

inTro



Read This Week's Passage:
Daniel 6

Note:

Read again chapter three
so you can have it fresh
in your memory as you
read this parallel chapter

HIGHEST PRIORITY

Devotional time can often be missed and rushed through in the busyness of life. In the rush of day-to-day crammed schedules and classes, devotional life can seem less important. The pull of getting things done, the pressure of deadlines, and the heaviness of life's demands can make Bible study, prayer life, and spiritual disciplines wane. The commitment to devotions can even disappear in times of crisis or stress. If we are not aware, devotions can easily go to the backburner of our priority list.

Daniel chapter 6 presents a radical commitment to devotions exemplified by Daniel well into his career as a senior citizen. Not only was the elder statesman known for his wisdom, prophetic understanding, faithfulness, and integrity, but he had a devoutness that characterized him throughout his years. Daniel so valued his devotional life that he thought it was worth dying for. Are you dying to get busy or too busy to die? Discover Daniel's liberation in this week's study of chapter 6.



inScribe

Write out Daniel 5 from the translation of your choice. If you're pressed for time, write out Daniel 6:6–10. You may also rewrite the passage in your own words, outline, or mind map the chapter.



Go back to your scribed text and study the passage.

Circle repeated words/phrases/ideas

Underline words/phrases that are important and have meaning to you



Draw **Arrows** to connect words/phrases to other associated or related words/phrases

What special insights do your marks seem overall to point to?



Memorize your favorite verse in Daniel 6. Write it out multiple times to help with memorization.

How do you balance devotional life, personal worship, and Sabbath School study all together?

What have you seen to be the tangible benefits of having a consistent and profound devotional life?

END-TIME ANCHOR

Daniel was now an old man well into his eighties, yet he faced one of the greatest challenges of his life. Similar to the theme in Daniel chapter 3, worship again becomes a central issue. While Daniel was not present at the test on the plain of Dura in chapter 3, chapter 6 removes any questions of his fidelity to God.

A decree was made that anyone worshipping anyone other than the king for thirty days would be thrown to the lions. That morning, Daniel knew that opening his windows and praying to God would mean his death. But Daniel would rather die than miss his devotions.

Daniel's example leaves a legacy of practical principles for a devotional life. First, Daniel's level of commitment was resolute. Devotions were the highest priority of his day. Everything else was secondary. He had a lifetime to develop this crucial habit that made him successful in his secular as well as spiritual life. Second, Daniel had a regular time and place for personal devotions. This regularity became a central ritual for his daily life, one that provided him strength, motivation, direction, and passion.

Daniel's devotional life became the bedrock of his legacy of faithfulness. The same is true for God's people living in the last days—the devotional life of God's last day people will be the anchor for their faithfulness and fidelity to God.

Practical Pointers for the Devotional Life:

1. Ask the Lord to create in you a deeper desire for Him.
2. Set a regular time and place to have devotions.
3. Pray before you begin and ask the Holy Spirit to guide you.
4. Choose a passage of Scripture. You can start off with practical books like 1 Thessalonians or James.
5. Paraphrase the passage in your own words in your journal or a sheet of paper.
6. Ask God, "Lord what are you trying to tell me through this passage?"
7. Write your prayer response to God.
8. Think about the Bible passage throughout the day.

Take baby steps. Begin with just a few minutes a day and increase over time. If you miss a day or days, don't be discouraged. Just start up again. Your goal is not to achieve a great track record—it's about trajectory. Pray that God will create in you a deeper desire for Him.

A DEEPER LOOK INTO CHAPTER 6

Parallels Between Daniel 3, Daniel 6, And The Mark Of The Beast

- They involve persecution for obeying God's law (Dan. 3:6; 6:5; Rev. 12:17).
- They involve false worship (Dan. 3:5; 6:6–9; Rev. 13:15).
- They involve the death decree for failure to comply (Dan. 3:6; 6:7; Rev. 3:15).
- They involve the saving of the righteous by the intervention of God (Dan. 3:25–28; 6:19–23; Rev. 19:11).

The story of Daniel in the lions' den has the same theme as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fiery furnace. These two chapters parallel the end time issue of worshiping the beast in the book of Revelation.

Am I Saved By My Devotions?

The Bible is clear that we are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone. Becoming a Christian is one thing; growing in Christ, which requires maintaining our connection to Him, is another. As Jesus said, it is a vine-to-branches relationship. Devotions maintain our connection to God as our source of strength. Accepting Jesus as our personal Savior makes us alive in Christ. Our devotional life keeps us alive in Christ by connecting us to the source of strength.

What If I Miss Devotions?

Like with any habit, it may be challenging at first to establish the new habit of daily devotions. But if you miss, don't give up! The Bible says that a righteous person keeps on getting back up (Prov. 24:15). Ask the Lord to give you strength. He will help you for He desires nothing more than to spend time with you daily!



inTerpret

After looking at your scribed and annotated text, what special insights do your marks overall seem to point to?



What questions emerge after studying this passage? What parts are difficult?

What other principles and conclusions do you find?

Which area of prayer is needed more in your relationship with God?



What relationship do the following verses have with the primary passage?

2 Chronicles 6:36–40

Psalms 55:17

Mark 1:35

Psalms 5:3

Psalms 88:13

Psalms 119:147

Isaiah 50:4



What other verses/promises come to mind in connection with Daniel 6?

Review your memorized verse from Daniel 6.

QUALITY TIME

Relationships are built on quality time. Think of people who are dating; time together is the entity most sought after—it is made the highest priority. In fact, a couple that does not spend time together will grow apart. The difference between a friend and an acquaintance is closely related to the amount of voluntary time they spend together. If we are serious about our relationships, we will be intentional about spending time together. Time together provides an opportunity for shared experiences, conversation, and the building of memories.

Our relationship with God is also built on time. God considers time such an important factor in our relationship with Him that He established the Sabbath immediately after creating man. The Sabbath is a cyclical reoccurrence that makes our relationship with God the priority of our week. Our daily devotions are a cyclical reoccurrence that makes our relationship with God the priority of our day.

Our relationship with God can be difficult to define—it can be thought of in an ethereal, nebulous way. However, the notion of time and relationship puts our relationship with God into tangible terms. In other words, no time with God = no relationship with God. It's a startling reality to reflect upon, but God is always eagerly waiting to spend time with us and will receive us regardless of our track record.



inVite

Where do you see Jesus in Daniel 6?



What is He saying to you through these texts?

How do you see Jesus differently or see Him again?

Prayer: How do you respond to seeing Jesus in this way?



Review the memory verse.
How does it apply to your
life this week?

After this week's study
of the chapter, what are
personal applications you are
convicted of in your life?

What are practical applications
you must make in your time
management?

COMMUNION WITH GOD

Jesus did not contend for His rights. Often His work was made unnecessarily severe because He was willing and uncomplaining. Yet He did not fail nor become discouraged. He lived above these difficulties, as if in the light of God's countenance. He did not retaliate when roughly used, but bore insult patiently.

Again and again He was asked, Why do You submit to such spiteful usage, even from Your brothers? It is written, He said, "My son, forget not My law; but let thine heart keep My commandments: for length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee. Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart: so shalt thou find favor and good understanding in the sight of God and man." Proverbs 3:1-4.

From the time when the parents of Jesus found Him in the temple, His course of action was a mystery to them. He would not enter into controversy, yet His example was a constant lesson. He seemed as one who was set apart. His hours of happiness were found when alone with nature and with God. Whenever it was His privilege, He turned aside from the scene of His labor, to go into the fields, to meditate in the green valleys, to hold communion with God on the mountainside or amid the trees of the forest. The early morning often found Him in some secluded place, meditating, searching the Scriptures, or in prayer. From these quiet hours He would return to His home to take up His duties again, and to give an example of patient toil. (*Desire of Ages* by E. G. White, pp. 89)



Share insights from this week's memory verse and Bible study as well as any discoveries, observations, and questions with your Sabbath School class (or Bible study group). Consider these discussion questions with the rest of the group.



How is your personal devotional life - really?

When have you had times that your devotions have been consistent? Inconsistent? In a rut?

When have you had times when you've had amazing devotions? What made the difference?

Why do you think it is hard to have a consistent devotional life?

What are some of the greatest hindrances to personal devotions?

Given that we are not saved by works, why is it a temptation to think doing devotions is a part of our salvific work?

What role do devotions play in the Christian life?

What are some practical things you can share that have helped you in your devotional life?