

DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE

A Life-Group guide for sermon discussion, personal reflection, and next steps



SWEET SURRENDER | DANIEL 6 (NRSV) | PASTOR EVAN HOEKSEMA | JULY 19, 2026

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

As disciples, we're called not just to be informed but to be transformed into people who look more like Jesus - in our homes, our workplaces, and our communities. This guide helps you apply what we're learning at New Life Church to your weekly rhythms. Use it to engage in daily Bible reading, have meaningful conversations with your group, and take clear next steps in following Jesus.

WEEKLY SUMMARY

Daniel lived faithfully through shifting kingdoms, hostility, and pressure because his life was already oriented toward God. Pastor Evan asked, **"What's required for a life to leave a mark?"** Daniel's answer was not platform or power, but character formed over time: **an excellent spirit** that brought his best to what God entrusted, **a clean slate** before God and people, **a steady swing** of daily prayer and faithfulness, and finally **a sweet surrender** that trusted God without conditions. We may not control the outcome of the lions' den, but we can choose who we will be in it: faithful, reconciled, consistent, and fully surrendered to the living God.

EXCELLENT SPIRIT

Bring your best to what God entrusted.

CLEAN SLATE

Right the wrongs that keep you divided.

STEADY SWING

Let daily habits shape a faithful life.

SWEET SURRENDER

Trust God. Period.

RESOURCES

♦ [SUNDAY'S SERMON](#)

♦ [TABLE TALK PODCAST](#)

♦ [NEW LIFE CHURCH APP](#)

KEY SCRIPTURES

Excellent Spirit: "Daniel distinguished himself... because an excellent spirit was in him."

Daniel 6:3

Clean Slate: "He was faithful, and no negligence or corruption could be found in him."

Daniel 6:4

Steady Swing: "He... got down on his knees three times a day to pray to his God and praise him, just as he had done previously."

Daniel 6:10

Sweet Surrender: "For he is the living God, enduring forever... He delivers and rescues."

Daniel 6:26-27

GROUP DISCUSSION



Start with Daniel 6. Let the text move the group from admiration of Daniel to honest examination of the life each person is building.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

AN EXCELLENT SPIRIT

- **Daniel 6:1-3** says an excellent spirit set Daniel apart. What would "bringing your best" look like in the sphere God has actually entrusted to you?
- Where are you spending energy criticizing what you cannot control instead of faithfully stewarding what you can?

A CLEAN SLATE

- Daniel's opponents found no negligence or corruption in him (**Daniel 6:4-5**). What gives integrity staying power when pressure rises?
- Is there an apology, explanation, repayment, confession, or conversation you need to initiate, where it is wise and safe?

A STEADY SWING

- **Daniel 6:10** says Daniel prayed "just as he had done previously." What do your schedule, budget, and habits reveal about the direction of your life?
- What simple, repeatable practice would help you stay faithful when circumstances change?

A SWEET SURRENDER

- Daniel did not know how the lions' den would end. Where are you waiting on God in the middle of an unfinished story?
- What would it mean to trust God "period" - without demanding a particular outcome or safety net?

WEEKLY CHALLENGE

KNOW GOD: Read Daniel 6 slowly on three different days. Notice what the chapter reveals about God's character, Daniel's habits, and faithful surrender.

DISCOVER PURPOSE: Audit your schedule, budget, and habits. Choose one daily practice that aligns your life with God's direction.

FIND FREEDOM: Right one wrong. Make one honest apology, confession, repayment, or conversation where it is wise and safe.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE: Bring your best to one responsibility and encourage one person living in an unfinished "lions' den" story.

PRAYER GUIDE

Father, form in us the spirit You formed in Daniel. Help us bring our best to what You have entrusted, make right what we have left unresolved, and build steady habits of prayer and obedience. In the places where our stories are unfinished, free us from fear, control, and contingency plans. Teach us to trust You - not only for rescue, but because You are the living God who endures forever. Use our lives to point others to You. In Jesus' name, amen.

CLOSING THOUGHT

"Although Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he... got down on his knees three times a day to pray to his God and praise him, just as he had done previously." - Daniel 6:10

The lions' den did not create Daniel's faithfulness; it revealed it. A life that leaves a mark is built before the crisis - one entrusted responsibility, one repaired relationship, one faithful habit, and one surrendered yes at a time. **Trust God. Period.**