

Title: Be Unyielding in Prayer (Prayer of Daniel)

Text: Daniel 6:1-11

I really try to be consistent in my prayer life. I have a pretty robust prayer process that I have built up and followed for years.

However, the last couple months of 2022, I got off track. I didn't neglect prayer, but my regular schedule and my process went to the wayside. I'm not sure of the reason. Perhaps stress and business from ministry and the building project? Maybe because of some health struggles? I really don't know. But I do know I let it get the best of me, and my prayer life suffered.

I confessed this to the elders and deacons last Tuesday and committed to them that I was renewed in my schedule and process. I even asked one of them to be my prayer accountability partner.

Why? Because prayer is that important.

God asks us to pray. God expects us to pray! God commands us to pray!!

We must be unyielding in our prayer.

What is prayer?

For Christians, prayer should be like breathing.

“To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without breathing.”
Martin Luther

Why should we pray? Many reasons, and for the next five Sundays, I'm working through a series on prayer that will discuss the what, why, and how of prayer by looking at the prayer lives of people like Daniel, David, Hezekiah, and Jesus.

In fact, the theme for 2023 is all about prayer. It is critical that you be a prayerful person, and we must be a prayerful church. If we want to accomplish anything of eternal value, we must pray.

“A Praying Church is a Powerful Church!”

How well do Christians pray? From a Pew Research survey of around 22,000 professing Christians in 2014...

Vision 2023 – “A Praying Church is a Powerful Church”

Frequency of prayer	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+	Sample size
At least daily	15%	33%	30%	22%	16,691
Weekly	22%	33%	28%	17%	4,129
Monthly	22%	36%	26%	15%	1,233
Seldom/never	24%	32%	25%	19%	2,239
Don't know	5%	26%	28%	42%	228

<https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/religious-landscape-study/christians/christian/frequency-of-prayer/>

We must be unyielding in our prayer to God. And there is a wonderful example of unyielding prayer found in the book of Daniel, chapter 6. The emphasis of the story is usually about Daniel and the lion’s den.

But the real point of the story is Daniel’s unyielding faithfulness in the discipline of prayer.

Main Idea: Prayer Must Be an Unyielding Discipline in Your Life!

Why? Because when we are unyielding in our prayer, we will be able to face the inevitable challenges following Christ brings.

Daniel’s life is marked by this. He was, from a very young age, determined to follow God, no matter the cost.

This vignette we are walking through this morning demonstrates this very point. Daniel lived an unyielding life for God, and that was true of his prayer life as well.

No matter what, Daniel was a man of Prayer. And there is much we can learn from this man from antiquity. And the first thing we can learn is...

1. Pray When Life is Good (vs. 1-5)

Babylon was defeated. Nebuchadnezzar nor his sons were in charge of the land. The Medes and Persians were the new regime. And interestingly, Daniel is still functioning in the government.

He has managed to live through two traumatic wars, one where his country was taken over, and he was deported as a teenager to a foreign land (Babylon), and two when the Babylonians were defeated by the Medes and the Persians.

And Daniel is still standing! I don’t think this is because he is amazing. I know it is because he was relentless and unyielding in prayer to his amazing God!

Take a look in the text with me and see what the latest king is up to...

Daniel 6:1–2 ESV

¹ It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom 120 satraps, to be throughout the whole kingdom; ² and over them three high officials, of whom Daniel was one, to whom these satraps should give account, so that the king might suffer no loss.

So, the king is setting up his court to manage the enormous job of running this world superpower.

And Daniel, yet again, rose to the top of the heap.

Daniel 6:3 ESV

³ Then this Daniel became distinguished above all the other high officials and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him. And the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom.

Why did Daniel rise to the top again under this new kingdom?

The text answers this, *“because an excellent spirit was in him.”*

Look back at [Dan 5 12-14](#)

Daniel 5:12–14 ESV

¹² because an excellent spirit, knowledge, and understanding to interpret dreams, explain riddles, and solve problems were found in this Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar. Now let Daniel be called, and he will show the interpretation.”

*¹³ Then Daniel was brought in before the king. The king answered and said to Daniel, “You are that Daniel, one of the exiles of Judah, whom the king my father brought from Judah. ¹⁴ I have heard of you that **the spirit of the gods is in you**, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom are found in you.*

I believe this excellent spirit was the impact of the Holy Spirit on his life. Daniel had a robust relationship with God that He purposed to cultivate.

And the result of the robust relationship with God is that Daniel had a Godly character that other people noticed. For good or for bad, they noticed.

The king noticed and planned to use Daniel powerfully in his cabinet. But another group noticed as well...

Daniel 6:4 ESV

⁴ Then the high officials and the satraps sought to find a ground for complaint against Daniel with regard to the kingdom, but they could find no ground for complaint or any fault, because he was faithful, and no error or fault was found in him.

Do you see what is going on here in the text? The king plans to elevate Daniel to a top position in his government, and his peers and even those under him are very much opposed.

Do you notice in the text what those opposed to Daniel’s promotion do?

They go on a fishing expedition to find something that they can, in today’s vernacular, use to “CANCEL” Daniel!

And guess what? Daniel had such a godly character that they couldn’t make anything stick.

How did he achieve such a character? We will see in verse 10 that Daniel unyieldingly pursued a relationship with God through prayer.

Just a question for you - If people began to scrutinize your life, what would they find? Would they find Christlikeness?

What is that?

Galatians 5:22–25 ESV

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. ²⁴ And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

²⁵ If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.

Daniel kept in step with the Spirit, do you?

Well, notice what his enemies (those jealous of him) go after next.

Take a look at verse 5...

Daniel 6:5 ESV

⁵ Then these men said, “We shall not find any ground for complaint against this Daniel unless we find it in connection with the law of his God.”

Daniel 6:5 NLT

⁵ So they concluded, “Our only chance of finding grounds for accusing Daniel will be in connection with the rules of his religion.”

They go after his faith.

Two things to consider here.

1. Daniel was a man who lived out his faith - they knew.
2. Daniel did not live in a way that compromised his faith. He lived out his Jewishness consistently, boldly, and without shame.

Do you? Do the people you work with, your neighbors, your friends, know that you follow the Jesus of the Bible?

Can you honestly say along with Paul the Apostle...

Romans 1:16 ESV

¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

Folks, our friends, co-workers, and family need to know that we follow Jesus unashamedly.

Luke 9:26 ESV

²⁶ For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.

Daniel was not ashamed to live out his faith boldly in front of everyone, regardless of the cost.

Daniel was able to be bold in his faith **publicly** because he cultivated his faith **privately**.

You can't and won't stand up for someone you don't know.

Do you know Jesus?

Daniel did, and it showed up in how he lived his life.

Daniel prayed all the time - even when life was good.

My temptation is, when life is good, I can veer away from praying.

Then things get tough, and the first place I go is back to God begging for help.

I wonder if that is irritating to God?

I think it would be irritating to me if my kids only talked to me when they were in trouble and needed something. I wouldn't care for that too much. I'd be there for them, and I most definitely would help them, but I would be pretty bummed if my kids never talked with me unless they needed me.

Do you pray? Do you pray consistently? Do you pray when life is good so that you can cultivate a robust relationship with the Lord? He desires this so much that one of the benefits of his death on the cross was that he tore the veil that separated the Holy of Holies (explain significance).

God did this so you could boldly approach him. You don't need someone to pray for you, to reach God for you, Jesus did that and now, if you are in Him, you can develop a strong, wonderful, and satisfying relationship with the Lord every day of your life on this planet!

Pray every day, not when things go bad, but even when everything is good!

Review - Prayer Must Be an Unyielding Discipline in Your Life

1. Pray When Life is Good

2. Pray, You Never Know What's Coming Next! (vs. 6-9)

Well, we learned that Daniel's enemies were going to go after him through the avenue of his faith. If they could find something that he does because of his faith that would be contrary to the laws of the Medes and the Persians, they would use that against Daniel to have him permanently CANCELED.

And these high officials and satraps made a devious plan to ensure Daniel's demise...

Check out these suck-ups!

Daniel 6:6-7 ESV

⁶ Then these high officials and satraps came by agreement to the king and said to him, “O King Darius, live forever! ⁷ All the high officials of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the counselors and the governors are agreed that the king should establish an ordinance and enforce an injunction, that whoever makes petition to any god or man for thirty days, except to you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions.

By the way, if you are in leadership, be careful of the “suck-ups” who appeal to your position. Chances are they want to use you to get something they want.

Proverbs 29:5–6 ESV

⁵ A man who flatters his neighbor spreads a net for his feet. ⁶ An evil man is ensnared in his transgression, but a righteous man sings and rejoices.

These high officials and satraps were a bunch of flatterers appealing to the ego of the king.

“King, live forever! You are such an amazing king that you are god-like. Your subjects should pray to you alone. And anyone caught doing otherwise should be killed in such a drastic way that they would be thrown into a den of lions!”

What can we assume they knew about Daniel as they approached king Darius with this devious and deadly proposal?

I suspect they knew of Daniel's prayer habit, and so wanted to exploit it to rid themselves of him.

And their proposal worked! They set the trap, and Darius, the king, went for the bait.

Look at verses 8-9...

Daniel 6:8–9 ESV

⁸ Now, O king, establish the injunction and sign the document, so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and the Persians, which cannot be revoked.” ⁹ Therefore King Darius signed the document and injunction.

The wheels of their devious, insidious plan are set in motion. Now all they needed to do is wait for the faithfulness of Daniel. They knew this was a sure bet!

But did Daniel know this was coming? I don't think so. The text doesn't indicate that he did. But he, as we will see, kept praying. Day in and day out, three times per day, he prayed to his God! Good times or bad, he unyieldingly prayed to the God he trusted and loved with his whole heart.

A very difficult trial was coming Daniel's way, and he had no idea. He would have to choose between his regular, robust prayer habit with his God or follow the made-up mandate written by Daniel's enemies and signed into law by a dimwitted egomaniac king.

By the way, did you notice what the text says? Once this law was in place, it could not be revoked. Later in this chapter, you can see the king's deep regret. He didn't think this through, and it would potentially cost his top adviser's life.

The point I want you to get is this. Daniel could not have prepared for this bizarre act of jealousy.

Yet, strangely enough, he was **prepared** because he daily **prepared** his heart with the Lord.

Listen, I get it. Prayer / personal worship time is difficult.

You work 50-60 hours a week. You have family obligations on top of that. Plus, church and all the expectations that come along with that!

Time is a premium, and to try and cram in a special appointment with God? How in the world can I make that happen?

There are 168 hours in a week.

You find time for what’s important to you.

I’m challenging you to take 7 of the 168 hours and make a daily appointment with God.

If you do this, you will become more and more like Daniel so that when the inevitable challenges come your way, you will be ready because you have cultivated a relationship with the one who is the God of your circumstances. And because of that, you will live with amazing peace through your circumstances.

7 hours a week.

Before you get on Facebook or Instagram or your social media platform of choice.

Before you get on social media, get on your knees!

If you do, you will be prepared for anything that might come your way. God will grant you peace that passes all understanding that will guard your heart and mind in Christ Jesus.

Don’t know how to have an effective personal worship time? Come to my equipping class at 9:30 am next Sunday morning and I will show you how.

Review - Prayer Must Be an Unyielding Discipline in Your Life

1. Pray When Life is Good
2. Pray, You Never Know What’s Coming Next!

3. Pray, Your Eternal Relationship with God is More Important Than Your Temporary Circumstances! (vs. 10-11)

Eventually Daniel found out about the document. I’m not sure what he thought or even what he felt, but I do know what he did. Look at verses 10...

Daniel 6:10 ESV

¹⁰ *When Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open toward Jerusalem. He got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously.*

Nothing changed. He kept doing what he had always done - *“he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open toward Jerusalem. He got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God.”*

Now I’ve got to be honest with you as I read this, I think, Wow! This is one brave dude! I would be strongly tempted if I were in a similar situation to at least close the window!

But not Daniel.

Daniel 6:11 ESV

¹¹ *Then these men came by agreement and found Daniel making petition and plea before his God.*

Daniel would not be intimidated. He would not stop cultivating the most important relationship in his life - his relationship with God.

Daniel understood that this life is a vapor.

James 4:14 ESV

¹⁴ *yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes.*

He understood, just like his friends that were cast into the fiery furnace because they refused to acquiesce to the ridiculous demands from Nebuchadnezzar.

They would never bow down to his grotesque golden statue of himself.

Notice their response to king Nebuchadnezzar...

Daniel 3:13–18 ESV

¹³ *Then Nebuchadnezzar in furious rage commanded that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego be brought. So they brought these men before the king. ¹⁴ Nebuchadnezzar answered and said to them, “Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image that I have set up? ¹⁵ Now if you are ready when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, to fall down and worship the image that I have made, well and good. But if you do not worship, you shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace. And who is the god who will deliver you out of my hands?” ¹⁶ Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. ¹⁷ **If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. ¹⁸ But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.”***

Daniel had the same attitude as his friends.

The same attitude that the Apostle Paul had as he sat in prison awaiting potential death because he would not stop preaching the gospel.

Philippians 1:18–24 ESV

¹⁸ What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice. Yes, and I will rejoice, ¹⁹ for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance, ²⁰ as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death. ²¹ For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. ²² If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. ²³ I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. ²⁴ But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account.

This life is temporary, and I’m afraid we Christians act like it is permanent. We act like this is heaven when it is clearly not.

Allow me to say it this way.

If you have no desire to spend time with God in this life, what makes you think you’ll want to spend time with Him in the next?

Prayer should not be looked at as a laborious obligation, but rather a glorious, life-sustaining privilege.

God wants you to talk with Him!

If you are born-again, you have an eternal relationship with the God of the universe.

There is no greater relationship that you can enjoy.

There is no greater honor in your life.

There is no greater privilege you can have.

Does your prayer life reflect this sentiment?

With this in mind it would seem we should be not struggling to pray, rather we should be struggling to limit our prayer!

Martin Luther famously said, "If I fail to spend two hours in prayer each morning, the devil gets the victory through the day. I have so much business, I cannot go without spending three hours daily in prayer."

I think all of us who know anything about church history can confidently say, Luther, accomplished a tremendous amount for the Lord in his life. I suspect it had something to do with his unyielding prayer life.

Perhaps it's because Luther knew his relationship with his Savior was more important than the superfluous, fickle, and temporary circumstances of this life.

I do.

Daniel didn't care what would happen to him. He cared about constantly cultivating his relationship with the one who created him.

Do you? What would you do in Daniel's circumstance?

Right now, put yourself in his shoes. He knew he would be found guilty. He knew he would face the lion's den. He knew that, from a human perspective, this would not end well.

BUT GOD!

He refused to compromise his relationship with God by being bullied into discontinuing his prayer time with God. God was way more important to him than his own life!

I think the church of Jesus Christ needs to regain a Daniel-sized passion and priority for God and communing with Him in prayer!

I can only imagine what kind of impact the church, **this church**, could have in our community if we were unyielding in our prayer to God.

“The prayer power has never been tried to its full capacity. If we want to see mighty wonders of divine power and grace wrought in the place of weakness, failure and disappointment, let us answer God's standing challenge, ‘Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things which thou knowest not!’”—Hudson Taylor

Daniel had the privilege of seeing God's power even in this situation.

The rest of the chapter gives the rest of the story.

Allow me to summarize verses 12-28

- King Darius learned he was duped by the official leaders and satraps.
- He had to go through with the punishment of Daniel because the law could not be changed, even by the king who made it.
- Darius was sick about this and didn't sleep at all the night before Daniel's sentence.
- Darius prayed that God would protect Daniel, and God did!
- Daniel hung out with the big cats all night unscathed.
- Daniel was released, and then the king ordered that the malicious men who cooked up the scheme against Daniel be thrown into the lion's den along with their wives and children.
- They didn't even make it to the bottom of the den before the lions had them for breakfast.
- Then Darius made this proclamation...

Daniel 6:25–27 ESV

²⁵ Then King Darius wrote to all the peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: “Peace be multiplied to you. ²⁶ I make a decree, that in all my royal dominion people are to tremble and fear before the God of Daniel, for he is the living God, enduring forever; his kingdom shall never be destroyed, and his dominion shall be to the end. ²⁷ He delivers and rescues; he works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth, he who has saved Daniel from the power of the lions.”

God delivered Daniel.

Will God deliver you? Will he always make your circumstances turn out like that of Daniel’s? Not necessarily in this life, but if you are his child, most definitely in the next life.

You will ultimately be delivered because Christ stood in our place in the “lion’s den” and took the punishment you so richly deserved so you could have a right relationship with the judge.

Your judge becomes your Father because of Christ’s sacrifice.

Wouldn’t you want to spend time with a God who would do that for you?

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Conclusion

In your mind, can you imagine talking openly to the God who so graciously saved you? I mean, He is your creator and your re-creator.

He sought you and bought you with His redeeming blood.

Wouldn’t it make sense to desire to grow your relationship with him? Not as a duty but rather as a delight? Isn’t it compelling to get to know at a deeper level the one who created and saved you?

Imagine all you are missing out on when you are missing out on spending time with God!!

Is prayer an unyielding discipline in your life?

Action - Survey on the app.

“I’d rather be able to pray than be a great preacher; Jesus Christ never taught His disciples how to preach, but only how to pray.”—D. L. Moody

Connection Group Reflection Questions

1. How do you define prayer?
2. What is inspiring to you about Daniel’s prayer life?
3. What is challenging to you about Daniel’s prayer?
4. Should we pray three times a day like Daniel?
5. Discuss ways you can become unyielding in your prayer life?