

What To Do When People Are Sabotaging You

Daniel 6:1-28

Have you ever had someone not like you for something stupid?

I know I had someone not like me because I was from the north.

Someone told me they did not like me because I once wore a long trench coat. Which I did look very cool in cool in.

I know I once had a gal not like me because she once dated a guy named Tim who mistreated her, and she put that on me, and I didn't even know that, Tim.

Sadly, there have been times when people have had good reasons not to like me. I have plenty of weaknesses and I wish they were harder to find.

However, with Daniel, his weakness were much harder to find.

What Does The Bible Say?

Darius the Mede decided to divide the kingdom into 120 provinces, and he appointed a high officer to rule over each province. 2 The king also chose Daniel and two others as administrators to supervise the high officers and protect the king's interests. 3 Daniel soon proved himself more capable than all the other administrators and high officers. Because of Daniel's great ability, the king made plans to place him over the entire empire. (Daniel 6:1–3 NLT)

At the time, Daniel was probably about eighty-five years old.

King Darius planned to place Daniel as number two over the kingdom.

4 Then the other administrators and high officers began searching for some fault in the way Daniel was handling government affairs, but they couldn't find anything to criticize or condemn. He was faithful, always responsible, and completely trustworthy. 5 So they concluded, "Our only chance of finding grounds for accusing Daniel will be in connection with the rules of his religion." (Daniel 6:4–5 NLT)

People who can't get you on your character come after your faith.

What Does The Bible Say?

6 So the administrators and high officers went to the king and said, “Long live King Darius! 7 We are all in agreement—we administrators, officials, high officers, advisers, and governors—that the king should make a law that will be strictly enforced.

Give orders that for the next thirty days any person who prays to anyone, divine or human—except to you, Your Majesty—will be thrown into the den of lions. 8 And now, Your Majesty, issue and sign this law so it cannot be changed, an official law of the Medes and Persians that cannot be revoked.” 9 So King Darius signed the law.

10 But when Daniel learned that the law had been signed, he went home and knelt down as usual in his upstairs room, with its windows open toward Jerusalem. He prayed three times a day,

just as he had always done, giving thanks to his God. (Daniel 6:6–10 NLT)

This order was for thirty days.

Daniel knew about it and did not change his routine.

16 “Look, I am sending you out as sheep among wolves. So be as shrewd as snakes and harmless as doves. (Matthew 10:16 NLT)

Please don't make it easy for the enemy to attack you.

What Does The Bible Say?

13 Then they told the king, “That man Daniel, one of the captives from Judah, is ignoring you and your law. He still prays to his God three times a day.”

14 Hearing this, the king was deeply troubled, and he tried to think of a way to save Daniel. He spent the rest of the day

looking for a way to get Daniel out of this predicament. (Daniel 6:13–14 NLT)

Daniel was such a man that the king did not want to fulfill his orders.

19 Very early the next morning, the king got up and hurried out to the lions' den. 20 When he got there, he called out in anguish, "Daniel, servant of the living God! Was your God, whom you serve so faithfully, able to rescue you from the lions?"

21 Daniel answered, "Long live the king! 22 My God sent his angel to shut the lions' mouths so that they would not hurt me, for I have been found innocent in his sight. And I have not wronged you, Your Majesty." (Daniel 6:19–22)

The king is happy that Daniel is alive.

Daniel shows honor to the king and no ill will.

How Can You Obey?

23 The king was overjoyed and ordered that Daniel be lifted from the den. Not a scratch was found on him, for he had trusted in his God. 24 Then the king gave orders to arrest the men who had maliciously accused Daniel. He had them thrown into the lions' den, along with their wives and children. The lions leaped on them and tore them apart before they even hit the floor of the den. (Daniel 6:23–24 NLT)

The accusers, their wives, and their children are thrown into the lion's den and are devoured.

Daniel was not spared because the lions were not hungry; he was spared because of God's protection.

We need to trust God completely and leave the consequences to Him.

Be people of moral character.

Be people of prayer.

Daniel did nothing different to the people trying to hurt him.

25 Then King Darius sent this message to the people of every race and nation and language throughout the world:

“Peace and prosperity to you! 26 “I decree that everyone throughout my kingdom should tremble with fear before the God of Daniel. For he is the living God, and he will endure forever.

(Daniel 6:25–26 NLT)

Additional Notes:

If you would like to use your home to disciple others, check out our training at www.crosswaveschurch.com/host. Cross Waves has produced short videos to train you how to use your home to reach others for Christ. So please check it out.

Additional Notes:

In the Insights to the Biblical World segment, it is inspired by Michael S. Heiser, Brief Insights on Mastering the Bible: 80 Expert Insights on the Bible, Explained in a Single Minute, The 60 Second Scholar (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 87 - 88.

Explore:

KEY TRUTHS:

- 1. Believers May Face Opposition Because of Their Faith and Obedience to God (Daniel 6:1-15)**
- 2. Believers Bring Glory to God When They Remain Faithful to Him (Daniel 6:16-28)**

HOW IT FITS: Where This Lesson Fits in the Story of the Bible: The events in the book of Daniel took place during the time when God's people had been taken into captivity by the

Babylonians and later the Medo-Persian Empire from 605 BC to 536 BC.

Explore:

Regime change came suddenly to Babylon when the Medes and the Persians came to power (chapter 5). It was important to the new authorities to establish the new order quickly and efficiently. In the middle of all the political intrigue and jockeying for position that we normally see in such situations, Daniel's competence and integrity drew special attention. Jealous officials tried to use Daniel's faith against him.

Believers May Face Opposition Because of Their Faith and Obedience to God (Daniel 6:1-15)

Daniel was one of three officials (all probably retained from the previous bureaucracy) overseeing the 120 important administrators (satraps) who oversaw Persia's kingdom. The new

ruler Darius so admired Daniel's performance that he decided to promote Daniel to oversee the whole realm (verses 1-3).

The other administrators were displeased that Daniel found favor with the king and was given a position above theirs. Simple jealousy probably motivated them to seek to bring Daniel down.

Another possibility is that they could not accept the prospect of a Jewish exile in authority over them. They might also have been afraid that Daniel might expose their shortcomings. Officials were notorious for general incompetence, bribery, and corruption. Daniel had worked alongside them and knew their secrets. They may have feared he would put an end to many of the "perks" to which they had become accustomed. Finding nothing in his work records or character to criticize, they realized they had to try to destroy him through his religion (verses 4-5).

Doing excellent work with an excellent spirit may not make us popular with our coworkers, but it brings glory to God and should be our goal as followers of Christ. Let us demonstrate a good work ethic and pass it to the generations that come behind us.

The opposition presented a proposal to Darius. They described it as coming from all the administration, which of course was simply a lie. It appealed to the king's ego, and it served a political purpose. A new power had come in, with different gods. In the interest of civic unity and goodwill, it was important, they could say, to mark a smooth transition to the new regime. The decree that no one petition any other gods for the next 30 days would serve to unify the newly conquered province (verses 6-9).

Daniel continued with the routine of prayer he had followed for years (verse 10), apparently in response to Solomon's Temple dedication prayer (1 Kings 8:46-53). Indeed, his opponents were

counting on him to do so! Daniel saw the trap and knew his enemies wanted him humiliated and killed. Yet, for 70 years he had served God faithfully and openly. It was no time to go soft. What he needed could only come from God, not from Darius.

The conspirators found Daniel breaking the decree, as they had hoped. They wasted no time reporting to the king. First, they got the king to verify that the decree still stood. Then they informed Darius that Daniel, that Jewish exile, paid no attention to the king or his decree. Although they had apparently only witnessed one infraction, they hoped to add to the severity of the accusation by pointing out that Daniel prayed three times a day (verses 11-13).

Darius the Mede did not react with the personal indignation that came to Nebuchadnezzar the Babylonian in Daniel 3. Daniel had proven himself to be a valuable official. Darius spent much of the day trying to find a way to deliver Daniel from the sentence.

In vain, he searched for a workable solution or loophole. At the end of the day, the conspirators reminded him of the law he was obligated to carry out (verses 14-15).

With that, the king gave the orders, and Daniel found himself thrown into the den of lions. Darius nevertheless invoked the protection of Daniel's God upon His servant. To make sure that no one tried to rescue Daniel, the officials placed their own seals on the stone that covered the entrance, as did the king. The conspirators no doubt went home to celebrate. The king fasted—no food, no entertainment, and no sleep. He realized too late how they had manipulated him (verses 16-18).

Following Christ may sometimes make us targets of those who are lost. While we want coming generations of believers to be friendly and open toward others, we also need to prepare them to deal with jealousy and opposition. Wise as serpents, harmless as doves is a good way to describe it (Matthew 10:16).

Explore:

Darius in Daniel 5 and 6 is not Darius I who is mentioned in the book of Ezra who reigned from 521 to 486 BC after Cyrus and upheld the decree to rebuild the Temple. He may have been a ruler appointed by Cyrus, the king of Persia at that time. Note that Daniel 5:31 in the original says that Darius received the kingdom. The text of Daniel never mentions Darius as a ruler of either the Persians or the Medes, but always as a ruler of the province of Babylon. Scholars remain divided on who this person may have been, but lack of secular historical corroboration is no reason to doubt the reliability of God's Word. As with many other questions, the discovery of one simple clay tablet could resolve all questions and affirm Daniel's record.

Explore:

Believers Bring Glory to God When They Remain Faithful to Him (Daniel 6:16-28)

Daniel's evening was undoubtedly more restful than that of Darius. The king came back to the lion's den at daybreak. He did not have to get up early, as he had not really slept. His approach, his anguish, and his cry indicate at least a glimmer of hope that Daniel's God would have come through. He surely rejoiced when Daniel gave him the good news of God's protection. In this trial by ordeal, God had clearly vindicated Daniel, who pointed out that he had done no harm to the king (verses 19-22).

Just as officials had examined Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego when they exited the furnace (chapter 3), they examined Daniel and found not a scratch on him. It was time to deal with the conspirators, who were guilty of treason. First, they had lied to the king, misrepresenting the decree they brought him to sign. Worse, they had conspired to deprive Darius of his most trusted and valued advisor. We can imagine

some who so easily had participated in the group that went to Darius trying to distance themselves from the others any way they could, perhaps minimizing their involvement. It was too late. The order came, and they all went into the den, along with their families, a common practice of that time and place (verses 23-24). The Bible does not necessarily condone punishing the families of false accusers, such as in Daniel 6. It accurately describes what was a common practice of the time. The accusers had been aware of those stakes but had never imagined Daniel would survive.

The accusers' families suffered with them. We cannot avoid the principle that our families gain or suffer from our own conduct, too. Children, parents, other relatives—our choices have an impact on what happens to our families. We do not live unto ourselves.

Darius rejoiced at what God had done and wished to make it known. He recognized that opposition to the Jews and their God had been instrumental in this latest incident, and he wished to nullify any future attempts. He acknowledged what generations of Babylonians had denied: God is the living God. He rules a kingdom that does not end. He works mighty deeds in our world of flesh and blood, as seen with Daniel (verses 25-27).

Do the results of this event mean that God will always deliver His people without any harm coming to them? No, it does not. God's people must trust Him to do what He wills, whether that means complete deliverance from harm, partial deliverance from harm, or even deliverance through death. Chapter 11 of Hebrews gives us both sides of this reality. We see examples of faithful believers who obeyed and followed God and were blessed and delivered because of their faith. However, we also see examples of faithful followers who were flogged, imprisoned, afflicted, and mistreated. Others were stoned, sawn in two, and put to

death by the sword. We must simply trust God with the outcome, knowing He is in control.

The old song tells us to trust and obey, and those are wise words. But trust and obedience in big things comes from trust and obedience in little things. Would Daniel have been able as an old man to risk his life in prayer had he not started out rejecting the king's food as a young man? We cannot say for sure, but it seems doubtful. God has more at stake in our lives than we do, if we think about it correctly. We are His, and His reputation is at stake in what becomes of us. Trusting Him with our fate is the safest thing in the world.

Daniel's time of public service soon came to a close. His time of prayer and Scripture study did not. He had lived the majority of his life in exile, cast to the lions of pagan enticements and jealous intrigue. Yet God protected him all along the way (verse

28).

Explore:

Daniel went into exile as a young man, probably a teenager. He remained separated from his homeland the rest of his life. He served the following kings or rulers:

- Nebuchadnezzar 605-562 BC
- Amel-Marduk (Evil-Merodach in Scripture) 562-560 BC
- Neriglissar 560-556 BC
- Labashi-Marduk 556 BC
- Nabonidus 556-539 BC
- Belshazzar - 539 BC
- Darius the Mede c. 539 BC (governor or co-regent)

- Cyrus the Persian from 539 BC to the end of his life

Explore:

If we could travel back to Daniel in a time machine, some of us might be tempted to tell him, “Hey, Daniel, just pray silently, in your heart. No one will see anything, but God will know your heart.” In Daniel’s culture, however, prayer was a visible and audible practice. If one prayed, one could be seen and heard doing so. We may do well in our day to revalue praying “out loud.” This is not to say that all prayer must be out loud. It is to say that we should give audible prayer its appropriate importance in our spiritual habits. We should not pull back from the word habit. Bad habits are detrimental, of course, and meaningless habits accomplish little of value. But we should cultivate good habits, whether in work, nutrition, physical activity, or spiritual disciplines.

Explore:

The officials' efforts to use Daniel's faith to have him killed demonstrate that we are involved in spiritual warfare.

Explore:

Christianity is about more than going to church and living a good moral life. Being a Christian is about having a vibrant personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Every Sunday School teacher or Bible study leader should want to see each of his or her learners enter into this relationship—their eternal destiny depends on it. As you work toward this goal, keep the following in mind:

Following Christ is about more than a mere decision; it is about a lifelong relationship. Jesus called us to make disciples, not mere decision-makers. Aim for long-term faith, not momentary

emotion.

Salvation is a matter of grace, not works. Our works do not save us (Ephesians 2:8-9), nor do they keep us (Galatians 3:2-6).

Good works are a product of salvation, not a prerequisite to it.

Don't confuse sanctification with salvation. Holiness follows salvation; it doesn't precede it. Don't try to impose "Christian" expectations on men and women who don't know Christ.

- Keep it simple. Being born again is not complicated. Here's a simple way to explain it:

- Acknowledge your sinfulness and your need for a Savior (Romans 3:10, 23).

- Trust in Christ's sacrifice for your sins and in His resurrection (Romans 10:9-10).

Surrender your life to God's transforming power (Romans 12:1-2).

Most of all, remember that your job is to tell the truth in a way others can understand, answer their questions, and give them an opportunity to respond. If you do that faithfully, some will respond and join the band of Christ-followers. When they do, Heaven will rejoice!

Question 1 of 5

In Numbers 21:4–9, the Israelites grumbled about their situation on their way to the promised land. God sent poisonous snakes

into the camp to punish their lack of faith and patience. The people urged Moses to pray to God on their behalf after many fatalities. God permitted Moses to craft a bronze serpent and mount it on a pole. By looking at the bronze serpent, everyone who was bitten would recover. Why would God use a serpent on a pole for people to look at for healing in Numbers 21:4-9?

Question 2 of 5

In what ways do believers face opposition or persecution in our culture? When have they seen a believer face opposition or persecution because of their faith?

Question 3 of 5

How would you define character?

Question 4 of 5

In what situations should we do what is right and leave the consequences to God?

Question 5 of 5

How was God glorified by Daniel's faithfulness?