### **Daniel**

Characters of the Old Testament | Week 1 | Daniel 1-6

INTRODUCTION	NOTES
As we begin this new series on characters of the Old Testament, we are going to start with Daniel. Daniel's name literally meant, "God is my judge." But his name was much more than a nameit was a way of life. He lived for God. Specifically, he lived courageously for God. Everyone who acts courageously does so for a very good reason. They aren't just displaying an incredible amount of courage for kicks and giggles. They have a purpose for the act. As children of God, and as followers of Christ, that is how we all should view not only our courageous actions but all of our actions. We should choose to live like Daniel, remembering that God is our judge. The way Daniel lived his life demonstrated that God was the only person he needed to worry about. When you focus on obedience to God, rather than the opinions of others, God will do amazing things in your life. But it starts with remembering who the ultimate judge is. Let's take a look now at how, specifically, Daniel lived a courageous life.	
KEY POINTS	
1. Overcoming The Fear Of Missing Out In our key passage, Daniel and his three friends chose to miss out on temporary pleasures in order to be faithful to God. They could have stuffed their faces and completely compromised their convictions. But instead, they displayed courage and remained faithful to God.	
Do you have FOMO? Does what you would be "missing out" on align with God's will? If not, it may be time to display courage AGAINST the FOMO. What Daniel "missed out" on, He was ultimately blessed for. God will always honor you for obeying Him. So let's not be afraid to follow Daniel's example if it would be wise to miss out.	
2. Overcoming The Fear Of People If you want to be courageous, you must first get over the fear of missing out. But then you must also get over the fear of people. Daniel chapters 2 and 5 describe two different situations where Daniel was called upon to interpret the dream of a king.	

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In chapter 2, none of the king's astrologers and wise men could interpret the dream, and as a result, they were put to death. So now it was Daniel's turn. In chapter 5, King Belshazzar was throwing a party for a thousand of his nobles, when all of a sudden, a hand appeared and wrote several words on a wall. Again, no one could interpret the meaning, and Daniel was summoned to interpret. The king offered Daniel a greater status, wealth, and promotion if he could correctly interpret the words. But Daniel declined the gifts, which would have been insulting to the king.	NOTES
Here is what I want you to see: Daniel didn't fear the king, He feared God. And that is pretty clear because, despite the fact that the king had a history of killing people that gave bad interpretations, Daniel went on to interpret the words on the wall—and he delivered some really bad news to the king in doing so. Daniel was honest with the king because he didn't fear him. He only feared God.	
<b>3. Overcoming The Fear Of Radical Obedience</b> There is one more thing that Daniel specifically overcame, and that is the fear of radical obedience. In Daniel 6, we come to the final story of Daniel serving in the king's court. This time, the king was Darius. Usually, when a new king would take the throne, he would get rid of those who served in the previous administration and replace them with new people who were faithful to him.	
But Daniel had already served under three different kings, which implies Daniel was highly thought of by the entire kingdom. Darius really trusted Daniel. Daniel was being elevated and promoted because God had blessed him, and yet, it seems like those blessings put a target on his back with the other people serving in the king's court.	
Daniel's opponents tried to use his faithfulness to God against him. And so they convinced King Darius to make a decree saying no one could pray to any god except to Darius himself. Obviously, Daniel was not going to do this, because we know Daniel was only going to obey God. This does not mean Daniel went without consequences. There are always consequences for radical obedience, but Daniel believed the safest thing he could do, was to radically obey God. And in the same way, when you live your life with the understanding that God is in control, it changes the way you walk. When you understand that God is 100% in control, it should lead you to walk by faith without any hesitation.	

#### **Daniel**

Characters of the Old Testament | Week 1 | Daniel 1-6

#### **QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER**

- 1. Do you struggle with FOMO? If so, is your FOMO keeping you from aligning yourself with God's will?
- 2. When was a time you chose fear of people over the fear of God? What did you learn from that experience?

3.	Has there been a time in your life when you chose radical obedience, even when it was a tough choice to make? What did you learn from that situation?

### Jonah

Characters of the Old Testament | Week 2 | Jonah 1-4

INTRODUCTION	NOTES
Jonah is someone that we can learn a lot from because not only did God call him out of his comfort zone, but because his life was lived on a timeline just like your life and mine. I'm talking about a spiritual timeline. When you look at his story, you can see how his faithfulness to God and his obedience were really like a rollercoaster. They were UP in some seasons, and they were DOWN in some seasons. No matter where you are, whether you are in a season of struggle or a season of harvest, it can all change in the blink of an eye. No matter the circumstances, no matter the season, let your faith ride high, and don't fall into the rollercoaster of faith so many struggle with. Let's look at how to do that from the life of Jonah.	
KEY POINTS	
<ul><li>1. Who was Jonah?</li><li>He was a Prophet of God.</li><li>He was disobedient to God.</li></ul>	
<ul> <li>2. What did Jonah do?</li> <li>He chose to run from God.</li> <li>He experienced the wrath of God.</li> <li>He prayed a prayer of repentance.</li> <li>He obeyed God.</li> <li>He experienced a movement of God.</li> </ul>	
<ul><li>3. How did Jonah feel?</li><li>He was angry with God.</li><li>He was depressed and wanted to die.</li></ul>	
<ul><li>4. What did Jonah learn?</li><li>Your decisions will determine your destination.</li></ul>	

#### Jonah

Characters of the Old Testament | Week 2 | Jonah 1-4

#### **QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER**

- 1. How are you going to respond, when God tells you to get outside the bubble and do something you really don't want to do?
- 2. Have you ever been in a place where you trusted your gut, your feelings, and your plans more than God's sovereignty? How did that situation work out?

3.	3. How can a person experience God's grace and still be bitter and angry?				

### Ruth

Characters of the Old Testament | Week 3 | Ruth 1-3

INTRODUCTION	NOTES		
There are no coincidences with God. There is purpose in everything He does and every move He makes. Time and time again in Scripture, God proves that He is in the details of our story. Your life isn't built on a foundation of happenstance. God is working in your story. And He was working in Ruth's story as well. In this message, we are going to take a deep dive into the life of Ruth and learn five important lessons from her that we can apply to our lives as we follow Christ.			
KEY POINTS			
1. There is always hope – even in the darkest days.  It's one thing to say, "I've got hope and joy and peace" when everything is going great. But when you find yourself walking through dark days – seasons that are saturated with doubt, fear, and grief – we tend to lose sight of the hope we once had.			
I think about all the things that Naomi walked through in this story. In the first 5 verses she walked through a famine, she lost her husband, both of her sons died, and she was left alone with no one to provide for her or protect her.			
And yet, after all the tragedy and misfortune, after all the heartache and agony, grief and despair, Naomi admittingly felt like "the Lord's hand had turned against her." And yet, we see her remain hopeful as she moved forward by faith. If you are a child of God, you always have hope, and you can always move forward, even in your darkest days.			
2. The past isn't our final destination if God is our navigator.  Way too often, we get stuck in the past, and we let things that are behind us define us. But if you're walking with God today, if you're following God today, your past doesn't define your future. God does!			
Think about Ruth's story for a second. At the beginning of this book, she's living in Moab—her home nation. Her husband died, so now she's a widow, she's childless, and she's living with her mother-in-law.			

#### Ruth

Characters of the Old Testament | Week 3 | Ruth 1-3

Now, at that point in her story, Ruth's home country had deemed her an outcast. Everything in her past defined her as useless and hopelessand yet God had other plans. God's plans for your life are far greater than your plans. And He is capable of raising you up and blessing you and using you however He sees fit. Nothing about your past can change that.	NOTES
3. Doing what's right often requires great sacrifice. Everything worthwhile will require work and sacrifice. It's just like Jim Elliott once said, "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."	
That quote perfectly summarizes Ruth's story. She was willing to sacrifice everything she knew, everything that was normal, to do what she knew in her heart was right.	
Do you remember when Naomi essentially freed Ruth to leave and go back to her family, her friends, her false gods, and her old way of life? That was her opportunity to move backwardto move away from the Lord. Her sister-in-law took the bait, and who knows what the rest of her life looked like.	
But Ruth made a different decision. She walked by faith and did the right thing, even though it cost her greatly. Refusing to go back to her family was a great sacrifice for Ruth, but she knew it was right to journey with Naomi and we see how God blessed this beautiful, selfless act in a supernatural way.	
4. Private character precedes public blessing. Character is who you really are when no one else is watching. God doesn't see what everybody else sees. He doesn't see our persona or the person we pretend to be. He's not following our highlight reel on Instagram. God sees our hearts. He sees us when no one else is watching.	
I believe that's one of the reasons God blessed Ruth the way He did. Ruth would have never imagined that billions of people would one day read her story, and yet, she lived her private life with incredible character.	
She showed honor and respect to her mother-in-law. She journeyed with her and worked hard to provide for her, and in doing so, she became known across the entire city as a "virtuous woman." We can learn so much from Ruth in this way by remembering that private character precedes public blessing.	

### Ruth

Characters of the Old Testament | Week 3 | Ruth 1-3

5. God lives using unlikely people for eternal purposes. God loves using unqualified people to accomplish supernatural things. He's been doing it since the very beginning. The disciples weren't the most qualified or gifted or talented people on the planetbut they were available. They were teachable and usable. They were willing to walk by faith and trust Jesus along the way, and He used those men to change the world.	NOTES
Ruth would have never been chosen first at recess. She wasn't the belle of the ball. But God used her in ways that we're still seeing today. And He can do the same in your life if you're willing to humbly submit to His plan and purpose for you.	

#### Ruth

Characters of the Old Testament | Week 3 | Ruth 1-3

#### **QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER**

- 1. Has there been a time in your life when you had to make a big sacrifice in order to do the right thing? What did you end up gaining or learning from that experience?
- 2. When was a time God honored or blessed you publicly for something you did in private?

3. Are you usable today? If God wanted to use you for something great, something eternal, would you say you're usable?

### Joshua

Characters of the Old Testament | Week 4 | Joshua 1-3

INTRODUCTION	NOTES
As we wrap up this series on characters of the Old Testament, we are going to look at a man named Joshua. He was a man that lived by faith and walked by faith, and because he did, we are still talking about him today. Joshua wasn't thinking about his legacy when he was living it—but he WAS committed to fulfilling his destiny. And what we are going to see is that he accomplished that by walking by faith and obeying the Lord. For Joshua, it wasn't about thinking of what legacy he would leave behind him. He wasn't thinking about how the Bible would record his story and it would be told all over the world for generations and generations to hear. He was simply obeying God and fulfilling the destiny God created him for. Let's look at three ways he obeyed God so that we can apply the same principles to our own lives and leave a godly legacy for those behind us.	
KEY POINTS	
Think about the timeline of Joshua's life. He was born into bondage. He was most likely 20 years old when Israel left Egypt. He was 59 years old when Moses died. He was 85 years old when Israel began to conquer Canaan, and he died at 110. Every single step of the way, and in every single season of life, Joshua took steps of faith, and he trusted God.  He didn't live his life with all the answers. He never saw himself as the expert in the room. He walked humbly with his God. He understood the importance of learning from those who came before him. For 40 years, he humbly and attentively followed and learned from the leadership of Moses. As a student, he developed character and he learned skills that he would one day help lead to his own success as a leader.  Not one single time do you see Joshua puffed up, looking in the mirror, saying, "Wow! I'm a great leader!" No, instead he recognized the value of Moses's leadership, and he did his best to fill his sandals and stand on his shoulders.	

### Joshua

Characters of the Old Testament | Week 4 | Joshua 1-3

2. Stay Battle-Ready	NOTES
I love the part of Joshua's story in [chapter 3], where he's preparing the people to cross the Jordan river He's preparing them to walk by faith (after 40 years of wandering through a desert) and he's preparing them to trust God for what must have seemed to be completely impossible.	
He said consecrate yourselves today because the Lord's going to blow your socks off tomorrow. Now, there's a contingency clause here. I believe this tells us that we've got to do our part first if we're going to expect God to do His part next. We've got to consecrate ourselves today if the Lord is going to do wonders among us tomorrow.	
Therefore, we have to stay battle-ready. We can do this by 1) Renewing our vows to Jesus every single day. 2) Constantly chipping away at the things in our life that don't look like Jesus. And 3) Separating ourselves from the evils in the world.	
3. Follow Jesus With A Greater Focus  Maybe you're following Jesus, but He's a long way away. You haven't felt close to Him in a long time, and you're ready to follow Him with a greater focus. Thankfully, Joshua sets a great example of how we can do that. He does so by doing four specific things:  - Stay faithful to God  - Live courageously for God  - Be dependent on God.  - Leave the results to God.	

#### Joshua

Characters of the Old Testament | Week 4 | Joshua 1-3

#### **QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER**

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2. Are you living your life faithful to God, even when it seems like or feels like He is not being faithful to you?

<ol><li>What kind of legacy do you want to leave</li></ol>
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