

Counterculture



EVERY NATION
ABUDHABI

Counterculture

BIBLE STUDY LESSONS
FOR C.O.R.E. GROUP
DISCIPLESHIP



- Think of a time when you lost an argument. How did it go?
- How would you describe a humble person? Who in your life demonstrates humility?

READ THIS

¹ In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. ² And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with some of the vessels of the house of God. And he brought them to the land of Shinar, to the house of his god, and placed the vessels in the treasury of his god. ³ Then the king commanded Ashpenaz, his chief eunuch, to bring some of the people of Israel, both of the royal family and of the nobility, ⁴ youths without blemish, of good appearance and skillful in all wisdom, endowed with knowledge, understanding learning, and competent to stand in the king's palace, and to teach them the literature and language of the Chaldeans. ⁵ The king assigned them a daily portion of the food that the king ate, and of the wine that he drank. They were to be educated for three years, and at the end of that time they were to stand before the king. ⁶ Among these were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah of the tribe of Judah. ⁷ And the chief of the eunuchs gave them names: Daniel he called Belteshazzar, Hananiah he called Shadrach, Mishael he called Meshach, and Azariah he called Abednego. ⁸ But Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself with the king's food, or with the wine that he drank. Therefore, he asked the chief of the eunuchs to allow him not to defile himself.

DANIEL 1:1-8 ESV

Daniel and his friends continued to preserve the teachings of God in their lives despite being captured by the pagan Babylonians. Culture shapes us, and the world tries to influence how believers think and behave.

Daniel and his friends are examples of how we as God's children can remain faithful and distinct in a foreign, ungodly culture. Like them, we can live in the world by our godly actions that would gradually influence culture and society.

LEARN LIVE

How can we as believers live differently in the world today?

1. Remain faithful to God.

¹ In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. ² And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with some of the vessels of the house of God. And he brought them to the land of Shinar, to the house of his god, and placed the vessels in the treasury of his god.

Daniel 1:1,2

The world pressures believers to think, act and speak like them. God's children are called to be transformed in their minds and not conform to the world (see also Romans 12:2). Even when surrounded by a culture that opposes our values, we are called to remain faithful to God.

How important do you think faith and obedience are when faced with social pressure?

What practical steps can you take to strengthen your faith?

2. Hold fast to godly convictions.

³ Then the king commanded Ashpenaz, his chief eunuch, to bring some of the people of Israel, both of the royal family and of the nobility, ⁴ youths without blemish, of good appearance and skillful in all wisdom, endowed with knowledge, understanding learning, and competent to stand in the king's palace, and to teach them the literature and language of the Chaldeans. ⁵ The king assigned them a daily portion of the food that the king ate, and of the wine that he drank. They were to be educated for three years, and at the end of that time they were to stand before the king.

Daniel 1:3-5

It takes courage to stand against peer pressure, social trends or practices that contradict God's Word. Even if it meant being different, Daniel stood firm. As God's children, we ought to be willing to say no to what is popular if it compromises our faith. Likewise, we should be gracious and wise in our interactions with others with respect and humility.

Why is it important to stand strong in obeying God without being rude or disrespectful?

3. Stand firm no matter what.

⁶ Among these were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah of the tribe of Judah. ⁷ And the chief of the eunuchs gave them names: Daniel he called Belteshazzar, Hananiah he called Shadrach, Mishael he called Meshach, and Azariah he called Abednego. ⁸ But Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself with the king's food, or with the wine that he drank. Therefore, he asked the chief of the eunuchs to allow him not to defile himself.

Daniel 1:6-8

Daniel was educated in the Babylonian ways but did not adopt their gods or values. In the same manner, believers can live, work and engage in secular society without compromising their identity in Christ. The world may try to fill human void through its culture, trends and values, but as God's children we should remain true to our faith even if it means rejection of society.

What is one thing (i.e., habit, action, behavior) you do differently from your non-believing peers because you choose to follow God?

LET'S PRAY

- *Pray that God would give you the strength to stand firm in today's world and to commit in living differently for His glory.*
- *Pray for someone who may be wrestling with choices that could lead them away from God.*

LET'S APPLY

- This week, choose one habit, action, or behavior to change that will help you live more like Christ.
- Ask God to show you someone you can encourage this week to live in a Christ-centered way.

- Share a time when you felt pressured to do something you did not want to do.
- When was the last time you felt out of place and how did you react?

READ THIS

¹ In the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; his spirit was troubled, and his sleep left him. ² Then the king commanded that the magicians, the enchanters, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans be summoned to tell the king his dreams. So they came in and stood before the king. ³ And the king said to them, "I had a dream, and my spirit is troubled to know the dream." ⁴ Then the Chaldeans said to the king in Aramaic, "O king, live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation." ⁵ The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, "The word from me is firm: if you do not make known to me the dream and its interpretation, you shall be torn limb from limb, and your houses shall be laid in ruins. ⁶ But if you show the dream and its interpretation, you shall receive from me gifts and rewards and great honor. Therefore show me the dream and its interpretation." ⁷ They answered a second time and said, "Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will show its interpretation." ⁸ The king answered and said, "I know with certainty that you are trying to gain time, because you see that the word from me is firm—⁹ if you do not make the dream known to me, there is but one sentence for you. You have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me till the times change. Therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that you can show me its interpretation." ¹⁰ The Chaldeans answered the king and said, "There is not a man on earth who can meet the king's demand, for no great and powerful king has asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or Chaldean. ¹¹ The thing that the king asks is difficult, and no one can show it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh."

DANIEL 2:1-11 ESV

Daniel and the other wise men were pressured to respond to the king's request. Daniel's actions remind us that God's people must stand firm and respond according to His will with discernment, integrity, humility and dependence on God's wisdom and not with panic or compromise.

LEARN THINK

How should we as God's children respond to worldly pressure?

1. Be discerning

¹ In the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; his spirit was troubled, and his sleep left him. ² Then the king commanded that the magicians, the enchanters, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans be summoned to tell the king his dreams. So they came in and stood before the king. ³ And the king said to them, "I had a dream, and my spirit is troubled to know the dream." ⁴ Then the Chaldeans said to the king in Aramaic, "O king, live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation." ⁵ The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, "The word from me is firm: if you do not make known to me the dream and its interpretation, you shall be torn limb from limb, and your houses shall be laid in ruins. ⁶ But if you show the dream and its interpretation, you shall receive from me gifts and rewards and great honor. Therefore show me the dream and its interpretation."

Daniel 2:1-6

The fear of rejection is so prevalent in today's culture that it pushes people to compromise their beliefs. As children of God, we ought to discern what the situations are that pressure us to conform to worldly actions so that we can refuse to allow them to dictate our choices. Daniel chose discernment and upheld his integrity rather than to conform even though it may put him in danger. He opted to do the right thing, believing that God is greater and the ultimate authority.

How can you stay calm and faithful when people around you expect you to act against your beliefs especially if everybody else is doing it?

2. Be dependent on God

⁷ They answered a second time and said, "Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will show its interpretation." ⁸ The king answered and said, "I know with certainty that you are trying to gain time, because you see that the word from me is firm—⁹ if you do not make the dream known to me, there is but one sentence for you. You have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me till the times change. Therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that you can show me its interpretation." ¹⁰ The Chaldeans answered the king and said, "There is not a man on earth who can meet the king's demand, for no great and powerful king has asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or Chaldean. ¹¹ The thing that the king asks is difficult, and no one can show it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh."

Daniel 2:7-11

God is bigger than any pressure or challenge. Daniel spoke the truth, stayed humble and trusted God for wisdom. He recognised his limitations and did not take credit for himself. He prayed before acting in faith. We reflect God in our lives as we honor Him, living in trust and obedience.

Why is it
uncomfortable to
admit our limitations,
and how can trusting
God help us live
more humbly?

LET'S PRAY

- Pray for boldness to stand firm in your faith despite the world's pressures.
- Ask God for wisdom and humility to trust in Him when you are tempted to compromise.

LET'S APPLY

- Share a situation in your life that you chose to rely on yourself more than God. How did that go?
- Recall a time when you were tempted to compromise your values but you chose to obey God instead. What have you learned from it?

- Who is someone you look up to for being brave?
Why?
- Have you ever felt scared but did the right thing anyway? How did it go?

LET'S READ

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 3:14-18 ESV

Babylon was a city of grandeur and idols. King Nebuchadnezzar commanded everyone to bow down to the golden image he had set up, and anyone who refused would face death in a blazing furnace. But Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego stood firm in their faith and love for their God, choosing obedience to Him over the king's command.

LEARN TEST

How should we respond to a faith-threatening situation?

1. Stand firm in our faith.

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 3:17,18

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were confident that God would rescue them. But even if He didn't, they would still choose to worship Him instead of the king's golden image. Their courage reminds us that having faith is not about personal gain or comfort but unwavering dependence on God.

What helps you remain firm in your faith?

2. Rely on God's presence.

And the satraps, the prefects, the governors, and the king's counselors gathered together and saw that the fire had not had any power over the bodies of those men. The hair of their heads was not singed, their cloaks were not harmed, and no smell of fire had come upon them.

Daniel 3:27

God's presence remained with them even in the midst of the fiery furnace. The fact that not even their hair was singed showed His divine protection over them. His presence does not always take us out of the fire but it protects us through it.

When was the last time you felt God's presence in a dangerous situation?

3. Make God known through our faith.

Nebuchadnezzar answered and said, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent his angel and delivered his servants, who trusted in him, and set aside the king's command, and yielded up their bodies rather than serve and worship any god except their own God."

Daniel 3:28

Their faithfulness in the furnace did not only protect them; it made God's power and glory known to others, including King Nebuchadnezzar. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego became a living testimony that showed God is real, faithful and worthy of worship.

How can others see God through your faith?

LET'S PRAY

■ Thank God for His constant presence and protection in your life.

LET'S APPLY

- *What is one area in your life where you need to trust God more instead of worrying?*
- *How does obedience to God look like for you daily?*

- Share a time when you have worked really hard on something and felt proud of the results.
- What helps you stay grounded when things are going well?

LESS READ

²⁸ All this came upon King Nebuchadnezzar. ²⁹ At the end of twelve months he was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon, ³⁰ and the king answered and said, "Is not this great Babylon, which I have built by my mighty power as a royal residence and for the glory of my majesty?" ³¹ While the words were still in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, "O King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: The kingdom has departed from you, ³² and you shall be driven from among men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. And you shall be made to eat grass like an ox, and seven periods of time shall pass over you, until you know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will." ³³ Immediately the word was fulfilled against Nebuchadnezzar. He was driven from among men and ate grass like an ox, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair grew as long as eagles' feathers, and his nails were like birds' claws.

DANIEL 4:28-33 ESV

King Nebuchadnezzar had it all-power, wealth and influence. One day, he looked at his kingdom and thought he was the reason behind his success. But God humbled him and took away his throne. For a time, the king lived like an animal, eating grass and wandering the fields. When he finally acknowledged God's rule, his mind and kingdom were restored.

How does God show His sovereign power?

1. He humbles the proud

“While the words were still in the king’s mouth, there fell a voice from heaven...”

Daniel 4:31

God’s sovereignty is seen when He humbles those who exalt themselves. Even the most powerful rulers are under His authority. Pride blinds us to who is truly in control, but God’s power shows that He is the sovereign ruler.

When have you experienced God reminding you that He is in control, not you?

2. He restores those who turn to Him.

“At the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High, and praised and honoured him who lives forever.”

Daniel 4:34

When Nebuchadnezzar lifted his eyes to heaven, he began to gain an understanding of who God is. God's sovereign power not only humbles but also restores those who turn their hearts toward him by His grace.

*When life
humbles you,
how do you see
God work in
your life?*

3. He reveals His glory.

"Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, for all his works are right and his ways are just; and those who walk in pride he is able to humble."

Daniel 4:37

God's sovereignty can also be displayed when His glory is acknowledged by those who were once far from Him. Every circumstance, even discipline, leads to the revelation of His righteousness and greatness.

*How can your
personal testimony
reflect God's
power and glory
to others?*

LET'S PRAY

Ask God to open your eyes to see His sovereign power in your daily life.

LET'S APPLY

- *In what ways can you show humility in your daily life– at work, at home or with friends?*
- *Have you ever gone through a “humbling moment”? What have you learned from it?*

Against all odds

- How have you learned from your or others' mistakes?
- What do you consider the biggest failure that you experienced in the past? How does it still affect your life today?

READ THIS

¹⁷ Then Daniel answered and said before the king, "Let your gifts be for yourself, and give your rewards to another. Nevertheless, I will read the writing to the king and make known to him the interpretation. ¹⁸ O king, the Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar your father kingship and greatness and glory and majesty. ¹⁹ And because of the greatness that he gave him, all peoples, nations, and languages trembled and feared before him. Whom he would, he killed, and whom he would, he kept alive; whom he would, he raised up, and whom he would, he humbled. ²⁰ But when his heart was lifted up and his spirit was hardened so that he dealt proudly, he was brought down from his kingly throne, and his glory was taken from him. ²¹ He was driven from among the children of mankind, and his mind was made like that of a beast, and his dwelling was with the wild donkeys. He was fed grass like an ox, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, until he knew that the Most High God rules the kingdom of mankind and sets over it whom he will. ²² And you his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, though you knew all this, ²³ but you have lifted up yourself against the Lord of heaven. And the vessels of his house have been brought in before you, and you and your lords, your wives, and your concubines have drunk wine from them. And you have praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood, and stone, which do not see or hear or know, but the God in whose hand is your breath, and whose are all your ways, you have not honored."

DANIEL 5:17-23 ESV (SEE ALSO DANIEL 5:1-4)

King Belshazzar, the grandson of King Nebuchadnezzar, surrounded by his wives, concubines and officials, hosted a lavish feast featuring all the finest delicacies and the most precious sacred vessels taken from the holy temple. Suddenly, a mysterious hand appeared and began writing on the wall of the banquet hall, spelling out his impending doom and the end of his reign. King Belshazzar, in fear, summoned the court magicians and wise men to translate the message, but they all failed. The queen reminded Belshazzar of Daniel.

LEARN THINK

What can we learn
from the mistakes
of the past to
change the course
of the present?

How do we correct our past mistakes?

1. Be responsible for our actions.

²⁰ But when his heart was lifted up and his spirit was hardened so that he dealt proudly, he was brought down from his kingly throne, and his glory was taken from him. ²¹ He was driven from among the children of mankind, and his mind was made like that of a beast, and his dwelling was with the wild donkeys. He was fed grass like an ox, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, until he knew that the Most High God rules the kingdom of mankind and sets over it whom he will.

Daniel 5:20,21

Daniel reminded Belshazzar that all of the greatness and power during Nebuchadnezzar's reign were given by God. As a consequence of his pride, God took away his glory and power. This story encourages us to remain humble regardless of our achievements and possessions.

2. Be humble before God.

²² "And you his son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, though you knew all this,²³ but you have lifted up yourself against the Lord of heaven."

Daniel 5:22,23

Belshazzar's behavior during his reign, driven by his desire to emulate Nebuchadnezzar, led to his downfall. This story serves as a reminder for us to remain humble, honor God and learn from the past to avoid repeating the same mistakes.

If you believe that all your achievements and possessions are from God, how should you behave before Him?

3. Be loyal to God.

"But you have lifted up yourself against the Lord of heaven. And the vessels of his house have been brought in before you, and you and your lords, your wives, and your concubines have drunk wine from them. And you have praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood, and stone, which do not see or hear or know, but the God in whose hand is your breath, and whose are all your ways, you have not honored."

Daniel 5:23

The king's lack of reverence for God led to pride and self-sufficiency. He demonstrates his disrespect for God by desecrating the holy vessels from the temple of Jerusalem for his pleasure. Belshazzar's example reminds us of the importance of honoring and respecting God. And failure to do so brings terrible consequences.

How can you show your gratitude and reverence to God for what He has blessed you with?

LET'S PRAY

- Ask God to help you learn from your past mistakes.
- Pray to God to give you a humble heart and acknowledge that He is the source of everything you have.

LET'S APPLY

- *What failures have you committed in the past that you could have avoided? How can you do better today?*
- *How will you encourage someone who has had a similar experience?*

- Have you ever accomplished something significant?
How did people around you react?
- Share an instance when you kept from telling the truth
to save yourself or someone else from trouble.

READ THIS

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.

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

¹⁶ Then the king commanded, and Daniel was brought and cast into the den of lions. The king declared to Daniel, "May your God, whom you serve continually, deliver you!" ¹⁷ And a stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet and with the signet of his lords, that nothing might be changed concerning Daniel. ¹⁸ Then the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; no diversions were brought to him, and sleep fled from him. ¹⁹ Then, at break of day, the king arose and went in haste to the den of lions. ²⁰ As he came near to the den where Daniel was, he cried out in a tone of anguish. The king declared to Daniel, "O Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?" ²¹ Then Daniel said to the king, "O king, live forever! ²² My God sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths, and they have not harmed me, because I was found blameless before him; and also before you, O king, I have done no harm."

²³ Then the king was exceedingly glad, and commanded that Daniel be taken up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no kind of harm was found on him, because he had trusted in his God.

DANIEL 6:10,11; 16-23 ESV

Daniel was appointed by king Darius as one of his three governors. He has been faithfully serving one king after another for more than 65 years, and has served Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, and now king Darius. He was known for his faithfulness and integrity. Daniel was distinguished above all the other high officials because of his excellence (v3), and that made the other governors and satraps jealous of him. They plotted to accuse Daniel and sought to find fault in him but found nothing except his faithful worship to God. So the jealous high officials suggested to king Darius to make a decree that whoever prays to any god other than the king's statue for thirty days shall be cast into the lions' den.

LEARN LIFE

How do we respond when our faith is under severe trial?

1. Submit to God and trust that He is in control.

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.

Daniel 6:10

Despite the threat of death in the lions' den, Daniel went up to his room and still prayed. He remained faithful to God, who had been faithful to His people. He could have asked God to allow him obey the king's ordinance for 30 days to spare him from trouble. But Daniel chose to trust God instead.

If you were Daniel, would you have compromised your faith? Why or why not?

2. Believe that God has the power to deliver you.

"My God sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths, and they have not harmed me, because I was found blameless before him; and also before you, O king, I have done no harm."

Daniel 6:22

Although Daniel broke the decree that King Darius had signed, he committed no crime before God. Darius was tricked into signing the decree by the jealous high officials, not knowing it would implicate Daniel. However, Daniel was saved because he believed and trusted that God would take care of him, even in the lions' den.

What is your lions' den (trials) today that you believe God would deliver you from?

3. Wait upon the Lord to work in your favor.

²³ Then the king was exceedingly glad, and commanded that Daniel be taken up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no kind of harm was found on him, because he had trusted in his God. 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..."

Daniel 6:23, 25-26

God protected Daniel and he was unharmed in the lions' den because he trusted God. This caused Darius to make another proclamation about the power and sovereignty of God after He miraculously delivered Daniel.

Where and how has God miraculously delivered you from?

LET'S PRAY

- Ask God to help you or someone you know who is going through a difficult situation.
- Pray and encourage one another by claiming God's promise of deliverance.

LET'S APPLY

- *How can you live righteously and with integrity amidst difficult trials?*
- *Encourage someone who may be going through a tough trial in their life.*

Against Sin and the Forces of Darkness

- What is your favorite war movie? What gave the main characters victory?
- What do you do when you face a very difficult challenge?

READ THIS

³ Then I turned my face to the Lord God, seeking him by prayer and pleas for mercy with fasting and sackcloth and ashes. ⁴ I prayed to the Lord my God and made confession, saying, "O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, ⁵ we have sinned and done wrong and acted wickedly and rebelled, turning aside from your commandments and rules. ⁶ We have not listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. ⁷ To you, O Lord, belongs righteousness, but to us open shame, as at this day, to the men of Judah, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to all Israel, those who are near and those who are far away, in all the lands to which you have driven them, because of the treachery that they have committed against you. ⁸ To us, O Lord, belongs open shame, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against you. ⁹ To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, for we have rebelled against him ¹⁰ and have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God by walking in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets. ¹¹ All Israel has transgressed your law and turned aside, refusing to obey your voice. And the curse and oath that are written in the Law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out upon us, because we have sinned against him.

DANIEL 9:3-11 ESV

After reading Jeremiah's prophecy, and realizing that the time of exile will end soon, Daniel responded in prayer and fasting to God for forgiveness. He acknowledged the sins of his people and appealed to God's faithfulness and mercy. Daniel also praised God for His steadfast love and faithfulness in keeping His promises.

What makes our prayer powerful?

1. When we humble ourselves before God.

⁵ "... we have sinned and done wrong and acted wickedly and rebelled, turning aside from your commandments and rules. ⁶ We have not listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. ⁸ To us, O Lord, belongs open shame, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against you. ⁹ To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, for we have rebelled against him ¹¹ All Israel has transgressed your law and turned aside, refusing to obey your voice. And the curse and oath that are written in the Law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out upon us, because we have sinned against him."

Daniel 9:5,6,8,9,11

Daniel devoted a lot of his prayers to emphasizing man's failure and God's goodness. Israel had sinned against God, including Daniel, even if he was known to be a righteous person.

How do we approach God when we pray?

2. We plead for God's mercy.

"O my God, incline your ear and hear. Open your eyes and see our desolations, and the city that is called by your name. For we do not present our pleas before you because of our righteousness, but because of your great mercy."

Daniel 9:18

Daniel asked the Lord to hear his prayer, admitted the sin of the people and hoped that God would spare the Israelites from further punishment and bring them back to Jerusalem as He had promised.

When we pray, do we proceed immediately with supplication or confess our sins to God first?

3. We pray according to God's will.

²⁶ "And after the sixty-two weeks, an anointed one shall be cut off and shall have nothing. And the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. Its end shall come with a flood, and to the end there shall be war. Desolations are decreed. ²⁷ And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week, and for half of the week he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator."

Daniel 9:26,27

The Prophet Jeremiah prophesied 70 years of Babylonian captivity and it was coming to pass, as God had said. When Daniel read that prophesy, he prayed for the restoration of Jerusalem as God had intended.

What are God's promises that you are claiming in prayer?

LET'S PRAY

- Pray for your host nation, leaders and the people.
- Pray for healing, wisdom and guidance.

- Ask God to lead you to specific people who need prayer.

LET'S APPLY

- Declare 2 Chronicles 7:14 over our host and home nations and believe God's answer for it.
- Commit to intercede on other people's behalf. Prayer is a great weapon to carry with you daily.

