

*Daniel: Faith in the Fire*

Daniel 1.1-7

September 10, 2023

Hello friends! Welcome back to Life Group. I trust your summer break was rewarding, and that it didn't go by too quickly. We're in for an exciting first session of Life Groups as we begin to dig into the famous Book of Daniel. This week, we're only biting off a little of the story so we can get accustomed to the uniqueness of it and prepare ourselves for its big theme. Dig in and enjoy, which means, of course, you don't have to answer every question.

Enjoy your journey.

Pastor Eric

Group Sharing:

What did you know about world events when you were a kid? Did those events excite you or scare you?

I encourage you to read all of Daniel 1; in fact, go ahead and read all of Daniel, especially the narrative of chapters 1-6. But this week, our specific purpose is to delve into its opening few verses. As you read those verses, jot down any questions that arise. Make sure you go back and listen to the sermon if you missed it because many of those questions were probably answered.

Identify the major players. Who is Nebuchadnezzar? Jehoiakim? Ashpenaz? Belshazzar? Hananiah? Mishael? Azariah? Write down an overall summary of what's happening in these opening verses. This is important because it serves to make sense of the remainder of the book.

*"In spite of present appearances, God is in control."*

Tremper Longman III

*The NIV Application Commentary*

Daniel revolves around the idea of the sovereignty of God as it works itself out amidst human "sovereignty." As we will see, it also tackles the question of how people of faith are supposed to live in that matrix. How would you describe the sovereignty of God? (Yes, it's an enormous question, but give it a good college try). Summarize the two aspects of God's sovereignty we learned about from the message on Sunday morning. Be prepared to share with your group a time in your own life when you really questioned whether God is truly in control (maybe right now!).

God "works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will."

Ephesians 1.11

*New International Version*

Not knowing *how* God does what he does or exactly *why* he does what he does, *but* knowing that God works everything to his design, what does that mean to you, personally? Does that give you comfort? Why or why not?

One of the purposes of God that we do know is his intention to work all things for our good. Read Romans 8.28. To see what the good is that God works toward, read verse 29. The good that the all-powerful God works toward is our becoming like Jesus. Meditate on that thought. How have you seen that in your life? How does that give meaning to your life's circumstances? Ask God to help you better understand and appreciate his sovereignty.