



IN THE FIRE

A DANIEL STUDY

Daily Devotionals: The Pressure to Conform | June 6, 2021

This summer, we're studying the book of Daniel together! During this six-week series, we'll learn how God uses the difficult and high-pressure situations of life to refine us and shape us into the people he wants us to be. Together, we'll see that no matter the challenges we face or the fires we walk through, God is with us!

Be sure to prayerfully consider each day's Scripture, questions, and reflections. If you're a part of a life group, let these devotions stir your thinking and be the foundation for your group conversation.

As you come to each day's reflection, find time with God away from TV, your phone, or any other distractions. Find a quiet space – somewhere where you can quiet your soul and attend to your thoughts and feelings. You might want to get a journal to use throughout this series for sermon notes and as a landing place for your various ruminations.

Our prayer is that over the course of this series, these Bible verses and reflections will help you love God, love people, and make disciples!



Day 1—Listen

Check out our new podcast released each Monday to recap each message of the Daniel series. This podcast is intended to flesh out the sermon and the text of Daniel in a new and fresh way. It'll have a bit of teaching, a reading of Scripture, and it'll end with some reflection questions. You can find it by visiting thecreek.org/sermons and selecting this week's sermon.



Day 2—Imaginative Prayer

One of the ways that Jesus followers have been engaging with the Scriptures is through a practice called Imaginative Prayer. In this discipline, readers of the text actually imagine themselves in its story, encountering what is being written through their senses and creativity. Here's how to engage with this week's text in this way:

- Read **Daniel 1:1-20**.

- Visualize what's happening in the story. Take some time to imagine what the scene was like. Listen to the words spoken in the text again as if you were one of the first hearers of them.

- Now begin to imagine the scene as if you were right in the middle of it.
 - Who are you in the story?
 - What do you see?
 - What do you hear?
 - What do you smell?
 - What's your position?
 - Who else is there with you?
 - What are you feeling?
 - What's the mood of the crowd?
 - What is your response to all you experience?
 - What questions do you have?
 - What fears do you have?



- Prayerfully allow God to bring the story to life for you. The people we read about in Scripture were real people who walked the earth and had feelings and thoughts much like ours.
- Read **Daniel 1:1-20** once more, imagining yourself in the text. What are you noticing from your responses?
- As you listen again, notice how you sense God inviting you to respond. What are His invitations from this story for you today?



Day 3—Identity

- Read **Daniel 1:3-7** and note how the Babylonian culture attempted to lead Daniel and his friends away from God. Where do you see these same forces at play in your own life with our current culture?
- In what ways or in what times do you tend to doubt your identity in Christ?
- Read **John 1:11-12; 1 John 3:1; 1 Corinthians 6:9-20; Isaiah 43:1, 3-4; Ephesians 1:4-6; Colossians 1:13-14; and Romans 8:38-39**. Which of these most stands out to you about your identity right now? Why?
- Write a prayer to God expressing your thoughts, feelings, and gratitude about your identity in Christ.



IN THE FIRE

A DANIEL STUDY

Day 4—Community

- Read **Daniel 1:3-7** again. It's subtle...but notice in **verse 3** how Daniel and his friends were *taken away* by the Babylonian king out of their land, into a foreign one. They were isolated. As you prayerfully reflect, what role do you think isolation (be it physical, mental, or emotional) has on the person who follows God to conform to the world? When have you seen isolation hinder your walk with God?
- Robert Mulholland wrote once that, "We can no more be conformed to the image of Christ outside corporate spirituality than a coal can continue to burn outside of the fire." How have you seen Christian community to impact your walk with God in a positive way?
- Read and reflect on **2 Corinthians 3:18**; **1 Corinthians 12**; and **Romans 12**. When you read these, notice how all of this is said in the context of people who are in community with one another. How are you helping (or perhaps hindering) your community from accomplishing Paul's words in these passages?



Day 5– Practices

- For a final time, read **Daniel 1:3-7** and note how the Babylonian king wants Daniel and his friends to be assimilated in the Babylonian culture by eating certain kinds of foods. Our practices, be they small or big, have the ability to shape and mold us into certain kinds of individuals. Therefore, it's always good to take an index of our practices to see whether they're conducive to our transformation into Christlikeness or not. Take a few moments and write out the things you do in your typical day – from the moment you wake up to the moment you go to bed at night. Note the big things and the small things (remember, Daniel and company were being formed by something as small as eating certain kinds of food!). After you note your daily routine, ask yourself, “What kind of person are these practices shaping me into?”
- **Read Luke 6:46-49.** What practices do you need to institute (or just actually do) to become like Jesus?
- Once finished, write a prayer to God expressing any reflections, praises, or struggles from today's (or this week's) reflections.