



A 5-Week Study Guide on the Life of Daniel

Daily Personal Devotions + Weekly Group Discussion

The cultural landscape of the 21st century has presented many unique challenges for Jesus followers. Traditional biblical values are not only rejected by many but attacked and mocked from all directions. This is not the first time the people of God have faced such a cultural moment. Daniel was part of a small group of Yahweh worshippers who were forced to live in a fast-changing and godless society. Instead of retreating into a cultural ghetto, panicking, or starting a political rebellion, Daniel maintained his integrity. With the power of hope, humility, and wisdom, Daniel not only survived, but thrived.

How to use this guide: Each week offers five short daily devotions (10–15 minutes each) for personal study, Monday through Friday. Then, when your group meets, use the Weekly Group Discussion to process what God has been showing everyone individually. If you're only using this for personal devotion, feel free to slow down and spread the five days out however fits your week.

WEEK 1 — Sovereignty

Key Scripture: Daniel 1:1–21

Big Idea: God does not call us to adopt ungodly culture or attack it — He calls us to redeem it. God is in control of who is in control.

Day 1 — Read Daniel 1:1–2

Verse 2 says the Lord *gave* Jehoiakim into Nebuchadnezzar’s hand. The defeat of Judah didn’t happen outside God’s control — it happened under it. *Reflect*: Where in your life right now does it feel like the “wrong side” is winning? Write a short prayer acknowledging that even this is not outside God’s sovereignty.

Day 2 — Read Daniel 1:3–7

Daniel and his friends were renamed, re-educated, and reassigned into a system built to erase their identity. *Reflect*: What pressures in your world are quietly trying to reshape your identity to fit in? Name one.

Day 3 — Read Daniel 1:8–14

Daniel “resolved” not to defile himself, but he pursued that conviction through a respectful request and a fair test — not a demand or a protest. *Reflect*: What was negotiable to Daniel, and what wasn’t? How do you usually decide that difference for yourself?

Day 4 — Read Daniel 1:15–21

God gave Daniel and his friends knowledge and understanding beyond their peers — favor came *through* faithfulness, not around it. *Reflect*: Where have you seen God bless steady faithfulness rather than a shortcut?

Day 5 — Read Jeremiah 29:4–9

God tells the exiles to build houses, plant gardens, and seek the peace of the very city that conquered them — not to merely survive it. *Reflect*: What would it look like this week to seek the good of a place or institution you’d rather just escape?

Week 1 Group Discussion

Open in prayer. Give everyone a chance to share briefly from their week of daily readings before moving into discussion.

1. This week's readings centered on God's sovereignty even in exile. What's one moment from your daily devotions that stuck with you?
2. Daniel didn't demand a different assignment — he asked respectfully for a test (vv. 12–14). What's the difference between pursuing conviction with contempt and pursuing it with respect? Where have you seen either play out?
3. Read Jeremiah 29:4–9 together. What would it look like for your group, collectively, to seek the good of your city or community rather than retreat from it?
4. Share the area you named in Day 1 or Day 2 — where you feel out of step with the culture around you, or where you feel pressure to be reshaped by it. How can the group pray for you specifically?
5. Close by naming one concrete way your group could “seek the peace” of a place this month.

Pray as a group, asking God for Daniel's settled confidence that He is still in control of who is in control.

WEEK 2 — Power

Key Scripture: Daniel 2:24–49

Big Idea: Earthly kingdoms come and go, but God’s kingdom will last forever. Human strategies will fail; God’s never will. We live in an earthly kingdom while building a heavenly one.

Day 1 — Read Daniel 2:24–30

Before interpreting the dream, Daniel makes sure the king knows the answer comes from God, not from his own wisdom (vv. 27–28, 30). *Reflect:* When you succeed at something, is your first instinct to take credit or to point to God? Why?

Day 2 — Read Daniel 2:31–35

The dream pictures a succession of impressive empires, each eventually crumbling, followed by a stone “not cut by human hands” that fills the whole earth. *Reflect:* What’s one thing in your life you’ve quietly been treating as permanent that is actually more like the statue — impressive, but temporary?

Day 3 — Read Daniel 2:36–45

Every earthly kingdom in the dream is eventually replaced. Only God’s kingdom is described as one that “will never be destroyed” (v. 44). *Reflect:* Where have you been tempted to put your hope in a political outcome, a career milestone, or a cultural “win” as if it were permanent?

Day 4 — Read Daniel 2:46–49

Daniel is promoted into the very government structure of the empire that conquered his people — and he accepts the role rather than refusing to engage. *Reflect:* What’s the difference between compromising your convictions and simply working faithfully within a broken system?

Day 5 — Read Daniel 2:46–49 again, alongside Romans 12:2

Daniel served inside Babylon without being absorbed by it — neither blending in until he lost his distinctiveness, nor withdrawing to avoid all contact. *Reflect:* Are you currently leaning more toward assimilation (blending in) or separation (checking out) in a specific area of your life? What would transformation look like instead?

Week 2 Group Discussion

Open in prayer.

1. What's one earthly "kingdom" — a title, a platform, a plan — that this week's readings exposed that you were trusting more than you realized?
2. Daniel served faithfully inside a pagan government rather than refusing to participate in it. Where do you see this tension in your own life — a system or institution you're part of that doesn't share your values? How do you navigate staying faithful within it?
3. Discuss the three postures: assimilation, separation, and transformation. Which one does your group tend toward as a whole? Which one does your surrounding culture push you toward?
4. What's one human strategy you or someone you know has leaned on instead of trusting God's kingdom to prevail?
5. Close by praying specifically for one another's "earthly kingdoms" — the things each person named in question 1.

WEEK 3 — Courage

Key Scripture: Daniel 3:13–18, 24–28

Big Idea: God is better than anything life can offer and bigger than anything death can take. Courage is confession plus conviction — even when the outcome is uncertain.

Day 1 — Read Daniel 3:13–15

Nebuchadnezzar gives Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego one more chance to comply before facing the furnace. *Reflect*: Recall a moment you backed down from something you believed because you were afraid of the cost. What were you actually afraid of losing?

Day 2 — Read Daniel 3:16–18

Their answer combines a clear confession of who God is with an unshakable conviction about what they will and won't do — “But even if he does not...” (v. 18). *Reflect*: Their obedience wasn't conditional on being rescued. Where is your obedience currently conditional on a specific outcome?

Day 3 — Read Daniel 3:19–23

The furnace is heated seven times hotter, and the three men are thrown in fully bound. *Reflect*: What does it cost you, specifically, to hold a conviction in a moment like this — professionally, socially, relationally?

Day 4 — Read Daniel 3:24–27

God meets them *in* the fire, not by preventing it. They walk out without even the smell of smoke on them. *Reflect*: How does God meeting them in the furnace, rather than before it, change the way you think about His presence in your own hard circumstances?

Day 5 — Read Daniel 3:28

Nebuchadnezzar himself acknowledges that God rescued His servants because “they trusted in him.” *Reflect*: Write your own “even if He does not” statement about a current fear — a diagnosis, a job, a relationship, a decision.

Week 3 Group Discussion

Open in prayer.

1. Share the “even if He does not” statement you wrote this week, if you’re comfortable.
What made it hard to write?
2. Courage here is described as confession plus conviction. Where is your confession about God clear, but your conviction wavers under real pressure?
3. What’s the difference between courage that expects rescue and courage that doesn’t?
Which is harder to sustain, and why?
4. Talk about a time God met you *in* a difficult circumstance rather than removing it. What did that experience teach you?
5. Close in prayer, asking God for courage that isn’t dependent on guaranteed outcomes.

WEEK 4 — Humility

Key Scripture: Daniel 4:19–27

Big Idea: Daniel speaks hard truth with deep personal respect, not self-righteous anger or gloating superiority.

Day 1 — Read Daniel 4:19

Daniel is visibly troubled and alarmed before he delivers Nebuchadnezzar's difficult message.

Reflect: Think of the last time you had to tell someone something they didn't want to hear. Were you troubled for them, or just eager to be right?

Day 2 — Read Daniel 4:20–22

Daniel explains the dream plainly, without softening the truth of what it means for the king personally. *Reflect:* Where do you tend to avoid a hard conversation rather than have it? What usually holds you back?

Day 3 — Read Daniel 4:23–26

Daniel delivers the coming judgment clearly, but without gloating or distancing himself from the king. *Reflect:* What does it look like, practically, to hold truth and kindness together in a specific relationship you have right now?

Day 4 — Read Daniel 4:27

Daniel appeals directly to the king: “renounce your sins... it may be that your prosperity will continue.” Truth is wrapped in a genuine hope for the other person's good. *Reflect:* Is there someone in your life you need to speak honestly to, but wrapped in real care rather than judgment? What's one sentence you could say that is both honest and kind?

Day 5 — Read Daniel 4:28–37

The chapter ends with Nebuchadnezzar humbled and restored, praising the God Daniel served. *Reflect:* How does this ending shape the way you think about the long-term fruit of speaking truth in love, even when it's not received well at first?

Week 4 Group Discussion

Open in prayer.

1. What's one relationship or situation where you need to deliver truth wrapped in respect rather than truth wrapped in triumph?
2. Daniel doesn't gloat, moralize, or distance himself from Nebuchadnezzar. What would it look like to drop a self-righteous or defensive posture the next time you need to speak a hard truth?
3. Discuss the phrase "the disarming posture" — dropping a defensive attitude when interacting with people who don't share your convictions. What does that look like in your daily interactions?
4. Share how it felt to write the sentence from Day 4. What made it difficult? 5.

Close by praying for each other's specific relationships named in question 1.

WEEK 5 — Obedience

Key Scripture: Daniel 6:1–13

Big Idea: When a corrupt law targets his devotion to God, Daniel doesn't protest, complain about his rights, or rage against those in power. He simply keeps doing what he's always done.

Day 1 — Read Daniel 6:1–3

Daniel's excellence and integrity distinguish him so clearly that the king plans to set him over the whole kingdom. *Reflect:* What does long-term, quiet consistency look like in your own work or daily life right now?

Day 2 — Read Daniel 6:4–5

The officials can't find any corruption or negligence in Daniel — only that he is consistently faithful to God. *Reflect:* What does it say about character that the only thing anyone could use against Daniel was his devotion?

Day 3 — Read Daniel 6:6–9

The officials manipulate the king into signing a decree specifically designed to trap Daniel for praying. *Reflect:* Where have you recently felt targeted or set up unfairly? Did you respond as a victim, or with steady resolve?

Day 4 — Read Daniel 6:10

Once the decree is signed, Daniel goes home and prays "just as he had done before" — no protest, no rights-based argument, no rage. *Reflect:* What is one ordinary, quiet practice of devotion you can commit to keeping steady, regardless of the pressure against it?

Day 5 — Read Daniel 6:11–13

The officials find Daniel exactly where they expected — praying, consistent, unsurprising. *Reflect:* Expecting a corrupt system to act corruptly isn't cynicism, it's realism. How does refusing to be surprised by opposition help you respond to it without bitterness?

Week 5 Group Discussion

Open in prayer.

1. Share the daily practice of devotion you named on Day 4. What would it take to keep it steady under real pressure?
2. Daniel didn't organize resistance or demand his rights be honored. What's the difference between standing firm and playing the victim? Where have you seen (or struggled with) that distinction?
3. Discuss "thick skin, tender heart" — resilience without becoming hardened. Which of the two do you personally need more of right now?
4. Looking back across all five weeks — sovereignty, power, courage, humility, obedience — which one feels most like your current growing edge? Why?
5. Close the series in prayer, asking God to make each person's obedience so consistent that it becomes their only necessary defense.

Closing Thought

Daniel didn't thrive in Babylon because Babylon changed. He thrived because he brought the sovereignty, wisdom, courage, humility, and obedience of God's kingdom into the middle of a kingdom that didn't share his values — and never stopped believing that God, not Babylon, has the final word.