

DANIEL'S HABIT OF PRAYER
Daniel 6:10

Intro: The story of Daniel is one of the most amazing in all of the Word of God. It perhaps finds its closest parallel with the life of Joseph.

What is most unusual about both of these men is the fact that they prospered both in the nations in which they lived, as well as in their relationships with the Lord. Worldly success often causes spiritual ruin, but that was not the case with these men--both of them comparatively young at the time.

It is wonderful to see that with both of them, when they were away from their homelands, they still continued to walk with the Lord. Many would have taken this as an excuse to, as the saying goes, "do as the Romans do." But that was not the way Joseph sought to go in Egypt, nor was it the way that Daniel sought to go in Babylon.

Thus, the first thing that we need to notice about Daniel is

I. HIS PLACE, i.e., where he was when the events recorded in this chapter took place.

He was in a heathen land. He had no external encouragement to walk with the Lord, unless it was the encouragement of other young men like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. For the most part his fellow Israelites were where they were because they were not walking with the Lord, but had displeased the Lord very grievously.

But Daniel's relationship with the Lord did not depend upon his external circumstances--and this is a great lesson for us to learn. We often use our circumstances to excuse a life that is lax where spiritual matters are concerned. The life of Daniel (and the life of Joseph) teach us that it is possible to live for the Lord anywhere! This means at school, at work--wherever we may be!

II. HIS PRACTICE.

It is very important for us to notice that Daniel did not start to pray when trouble came along, but that this was his habit before that time. Notice the words at the end of our text: "as he did aforetime."

It is good that people will pray when there is trouble, that they will look to the Lord then, but how much better to be acquainted with the habit of praying when there is no special crisis. But this is where we are inclined to fail. It is the easiest thing in the world for us to be lax in

prayer when there is not trouble on the horizon. But we need to be faithful, and to persevere in prayer, even when things appear to be going well.

Daniel learned what his associates had done, but that did not start him praying, nor did it stop his prayers. What a lesson for us! Daniel is a good example to follow. It seems that we so easily give up. May God make us faithful in this. Prayer is the very life-line of a healthy relationship with the Lord.

But now let us notice . . .

III. HIS PATTERN of praying.

First of all,

A. His place of prayer: at home.

But it is interesting to see that there was a particular place in his home that was the place where he prayed.

What is yours? This is important. It needs to be a quiet place where you can be undisturbed. Some places are conducive to prayer; others are not. If you do not pray at home, it is not very likely that you will do much real praying anyplace else. But it helps to have one special, particular place where you always go.

With Daniel it was not only at home,
in his chamber (which I take
to mean, his bedroom), but
before open windows, and the windows opened up in the
direction of Jerusalem! Why?

Perhaps the best reason is to be found in Solomon's prayer, recorded in 1 Kings 8:46-53. (Read.) You can see that Daniel was acquainted with Israel's history, with the Word of God. Cf. Dan. 9;1 ff. Notice the timing of these two chapters: 6 and 9.

So this teaches us that Daniel was praying for his people. He knew it was the will of God for them eventually to go back. But for that time he knew that this was what the Lord had promised to bless. See 1 Kings 9:1 ff.

We will get our best instructions and our best encouragements for prayer from the Word of God.

Daniel knew that he did not need to be seen of men. He prayed to God in secret.

Now, having gone to his home, retiring to his chamber, opening his windows, what then, according to our text, was . . .

B. His procedure.

Note five very important things which are mentioned in this verse.

1. He kneeled.

Have you ever notice that it was prayer that got Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego into trouble, just like it was prayer that got Daniel into trouble? Cf. Dan. 3.

Notice what the Law of Moses said in Ex. 20:5, 6.

Now we can pray in any position--standing, sitting, lying down, or kneeling. But when you are in a place where you can do any of these, KNEEL! It speaks of humbling yourself before the Lord. It speaks of submission to His will. It is the proper position for worship and adoration of God. Cf. Psa. 95:6,

O come, let us worship and bow down:
let us kneel before the Lord our maker.

2. He prayed.

It is possible to go to your home, to your room which is set aside for prayer, to get on your knees, but not to pray! We need to be sure to pray when that is what we went there to do. Do not allow anything to distract you. If there are distractions around, get rid of them.

The Lord touched on this in Matt. 6:6 when He said,
But thou, when thou prayest,
enter into thy closet, and when thou has shut thy door, pray . . .

Let the Lord hear your worship, your intercession, your petitions. That is why you are there.

3. He gave thanks.

Imagine doing this in Babylon! But he did. And, if Daniel did it there, what excuse do we have?

What do you think he gave thanks for? Worship and thanksgiving are the highest forms of prayer. Note

how much is said about thanksgiving and praise and worship in the Scriptures--both the OT and the NT.

Then notice the next thing that is said:

4. "Before his God."

Daniel was away from Jerusalem. He was the object of an evil scheme which his enemies had planned. There is no evidence that many of the Israelites were doing what he was doing. And yet he knew that he was not alone. God was there. God was listening, and God would answer. The heathen might have their gods, but Daniel was concerned about "his God"!

How important that little word "his" becomes at such a time as this.

One more thing: How often was he there?

5. The frequency of his prayers: "three times a day."

Here again Daniel knocks our excuses out from under us. Was he a busy man? Very busy! But he was not so busy that he did not have time to pray.

We are not told how long he prayed. That is not for us to know. It is very likely that the more he prayed, the longer he prayed. But he felt that it was important to begin the day with God, to turn to him in the midst of his daily routine, and then to end the day with God.

Note what the Psalmist said,
As for me, I will call upon God;
and the Lord shall save me.
Evening, morning, and at noon, will I pray,
and cry aloud:
and he shall hear my voice (Psa. 55:16, 17).

One reason for our trials is to teach us to pray. Daniel had learned that lesson well.

Concl: Do you suppose that it will make any difference in our lives that we have seen this about the life of Daniel? Why is it here--for historical purposes only? No, it is for admonition and learning, for us to follow in the footsteps of a man long ago who would face a den of lions rather than stop, even for 30 days, from meeting with "his God." You know the rest of the story.