

## Another Look at the Lions' Den

Written by Bob Stone

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### Another Look at the Lions' Den

In part one of our study of Daniel, we saw that when every detail of his professional and personal life was scrutinized, he was found to be "neither corrupt nor negligent in his duties. He was distinguished among his coworkers because of his exceptional qualities," i.e., he had an extraordinary spirit (Daniel 6:3b-4b). As a result, Daniel was favored by Darius the King, but this angered his fellow leaders and they plotted against Daniel. He was framed by his enemies, his fellow administrators.

v. 4]--"At this, the administrators and the satraps tried to find grounds for charges against Daniel in his conduct of government affairs, but they were unable to do so. They could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent." They determined that no charge could be concocted unless it pertained to his religious life. "Finally these men said, 'We will never find any basis for charges against this man Daniel unless it has something to do with the law of his God.'"

They tried to use his spiritual life against him. Remember Daniel, because it may happen to you. If people can't find something wrong with your behavior, they may begin to demean your Christianity, beliefs, or practices, or other so-called Christians who do stupid or awful things. Possible criticisms could include:

- "You're not pro-life, are you"?
- "You don't believe in the literal meaning of the Bible, do you?"
- "If there's a God, how come there is so much suffering in the world"?
- "If so and so represents what it means to be a Christian, then I don't want anything to do with Christianity."
- "All you right wing Christians are responsible for much of the troubles we have in this country, etc." ( *See Appendix*)

On the other hand, if people never get to our beliefs or Who we serve, but constantly criticize our inconsistent behavior, then we have no one to blame but ourselves. Here's what Scripture says about giving our enemies all the ammunition they need to shoot us down. "In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness 8] and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us"

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(Titus 2:8).

I like the thought of ashamed enemies. This is one way to keep the lions from biting when you're in the pits. First Peter 4:15, 19 repeats the concept. "If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. 16] However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name. 17] For it is time for judgment to begin with the family of God; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God?"... 19] "So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good." Don't let opposition stop you. Commit yourself to your faithful Creator and continue to do good.

Being intensely jealous of Daniel, his enemies sought to bring charges against him, but Daniel had no skeletons in his closet. "When someone has served in office as long as Daniel has and his peers are unable to find fault, then the individual must have great integrity and obedience to God and His Word" (Daniel: Decoder of Dreams, Victor Books, Wheaton, Ill., 1979, p. 71).

Whenever a person is elevated to a place of prominence, people are inevitably envious of his position. We find it of Paul in Phil. 1:28-30. He was a prisoner, and some were adding to his troubles by saying evil things about his ministry. It's the same reason people despised Christ. Apparently Daniel's fellow administrators and satraps hated him so much, they would use even his private devotional activities to eliminate him from the competition. They proposed a new law to Darius, a new law they were sure Daniel would break, and thought this would eliminate him. The law proposed that no prayer or religious request be allowed for 30 days, unless it was addressed to the king. If anyone broke this law, they would be thrown into a lion's den—a hungry lion's den.

*What might be similar today? There might be a law that no Christian could pray in public at meals, or with their children or friends for one month.*

Well, the king was urged to sign this law in such a way that it was irrevocable, no matter what. (According to Medo-Persian law, any kingly edict could not be overturned.) The king didn't suspect the motives of his appointed leaders, so he signed the law.

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What would you do in a similar circumstance? What excuses might some of us come up with if we knew the stakes were that high? I want you to know, only those who have constantly yielded control to God over his/her life will be able to stand in such circumstances. Those who...

- use their Christianity to make themselves happy and to give them a sense of respectability, or religion...
- only have a Sunday relationship with the Lord and his Body
- are basically secret Christians because they don't want to be belittled or shamed

...will collapse in the test and do whatever they need to avoid the lion's den—the judgment that might come for being righteous. "God doesn't expect me to sacrifice my life, my finances, my health, does He?" To answer that, watch Daniel's response. He doesn't whimper, run, or make excuses.

### Daniel is Faithful to Jehovah

"Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before. 11] Then these men went as a group [120 +2=122 men] and found Daniel praying and asking God for help. 12] So they went to the king and spoke to him about his royal decree. 'Did you not publish a decree that during the next thirty days anyone who prays to any god or man except to you, O king, would be thrown into the lions' den?' The king answered, 12b] 'The decree stands--in accordance with the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed.' 13] Then they said to the king, 'Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or to the decree you put in writing. He still prays three times a day.' 14] When the king heard this, he was greatly distressed; he was determined to rescue Daniel and made every effort until sundown to save him. 15] Then the men went as a group to the king and said to him, 'Remember, O king, that according to the law of the Medes and Persians no decree or edict that the king issues can be changed.'" Daniel 6:10-15

In the face of a potential compromise, Daniel made the decision to continue his pattern of prayer, and he was caught! He didn't debate all the options. He didn't say, "Well I just won't pray for 30 days," or "I could go to another place and pray secretly; no sense flaunting my beliefs," or "I could just pray silently in my bed, or as I am going about my duties. There's no reason to rock the boat, or throw away my opportunity to influence a nation. Surely God wouldn't want that."

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In addition to his strong resolve, Daniel also understood the principle, the truth that **bad things happen to good people**

. People who follow the Lord understand this very well. A good woman may take care of a dying mother and then get sick herself. A good person may give his money to the poor, and then become poor himself. A good child, obedient to his parents and good in school, may get sick with an incurable disease. A good man may die in a car accident, leaving his children without a father. A good worker may be promoted at work, but then be the subject of a rumor campaign by his/her coworkers because they are jealous of her good standing.

When things like that happen, we could say, "What good does it do to be good if we have no guarantee that things are going to be good for us? Why would we want to serve God if He doesn't reward the good in a person?" God promises no special favor or protection that insures good people will not have bad things happen to them. Paul, in fact, says in 2 Timothy 3:12, "...everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted."

If we substitute the word "godly" for "good," however, we can talk about bad things happening to us in an entirely different light. We may state our principle this way: **Bad things will happen to godly people, but ultimately they will all turn out for good.**

Rom. 8:28 says,

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."

Yes, bad things will happen to you if you follow God, but on the other side of those bad things are some good ones for those

"who love (God and) who have been called according to his purpose."

Daniel was not blown away by the test. Remember, he was captured in Babylon and had been away from his homeland, his promised land of the Jews, for almost 70 years now. Daniel's spirit reminds me of Polycarp, one of the early church fathers who was threatened with martyrdom in Smyrna if he did not deny his allegiance to Christ. Polycarp's response was: "Eighty and six years have I served Him and He never did me any injury. How then can I blaspheme my King and my Savior?"

Daniel remained faithful to God no matter the cost, or how the conspirators tried to take advantage of his commitment—vv. 10-11. As I said earlier: if your life is exemplary, your enemies or those who are jealous of you, may use a similar tactic—e.g., Matt. 5:10-11;13:21; Heb. 10:33. What you consider sacred, holy, or right may be laughed at, mocked and challenged.

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Good evening. Leading our news tonight is a report on the candidate Daniel. Inside sources have told the *Evening News* that Daniel is a member of an ultra-fundamentalist religious sect. He adheres to a literal interpretation of the Bible, holds intolerant views on the diversity of other religions, and apparently converses daily with an unseen Deity. We now have videotape of the candidate kneeling down three times each day before his open window. According to Dr. Herbert Blumfield, a prominent clinical psychologist, this narrow thinking and habitual behavior is unbalanced and potentially dangerous... ("Daniel, A Life Beyond Reproach," *Discipleship Journal*, Issue 84, Nov/Dec 1994, p. 45.)

On it goes, in Daniel's day and in our day as well.

Next, Daniel's enemies ran to Darius the king to report the news. v. 12—"So they went to the king and spoke to him about his royal decree. 'Did you not publish a decree that during the next thirty days anyone who prays to any god or man except to you, O king, would be thrown into the lions' den?' The king answered, 'The decree stands--in accordance with the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed.'"

First the conspirators asked if the decree they had proposed had been signed into law, and Darius assured them that it had. Then the accusers sprang the trap on Daniel, charging that he had disregarded both the king and his decree. "Then they said to the king, 'Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or to the decree you put in writing. He still prays three times a day (v. 13).'"

They did not refer to Daniel as one of the presidents, but with disdain as "...one of the exiles from Judah," (a stranger and foreigner in their midst, and a member of a conquered people).

The king's reaction was not what these men had expected. Darius was highly displeased, seeing immediately that he had been duped by these officials, and that the life of his favorite minister (v. 3) was now in extreme danger. Darius thus faced a great dilemma. 14] "When the king heard this, he was greatly distressed; he was determined to rescue Daniel and made every effort until sundown to save him."

He moved quickly, for time was limited, to try and deliver Daniel. No doubt he called in the finest legal experts to find—if possible—a loophole in the law, but the more he tried to extricate himself from the situation, the more binding it became.

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His law decreed that Daniel be executed, but his love would have released him. It's important to note that we can live such a godly life before a nonbeliever, that they can love and respect us. (This story gives a positive and negative reaction to a godly life.) It's possible that our good deeds and righteous actions will attract others to the Lord or, at a minimum, to us. Matt. 5:16--"In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."

The officials pressed their case, and the king realized he had no choice but to turn Daniel over to the executioners. 15] "Then the men went as a group to the king and said to him, 'Remember, O king, that according to the law of the Medes and Persians no decree or edict that the king issues can be changed.'" For Darius there was no way out. He had to carry out the sentence.

### **Daniel is Thrown to the Lions—6:16-22**

Darius failed to deliver Daniel, but he expressed a fervent hope as they stood at the mouth of the den that perhaps Daniel's God would preserve his life. "So the king gave the order, and they brought Daniel and threw him into the lions' den. The king said to Daniel, 'May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you!'" (v. 16).

Daniel was then cast into the pit, and the entrance was sealed.

17] "A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the rings of his nobles, so that Daniel's situation might not be changed."

Note, the officials enforced a measure to ensure that no attempt would be made to release the victim.

What about Daniel? How did he react in the face of his severe trial? While the account is silent, it seems apparent that he did not complain to the Lord as many of us might have done ("Lord, this is not fair. After all, I have faithfully served you for nearly 70 years and surely deserve better treatment than this"). Rather, he committed himself and his fate to God, and courageously faced what seemed to be certain death.

One writer imaginatively recreates what may have been Daniel's experience.

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"As the guards closed the aperture and went their way, Daniel slid gradually to the floor of the den. The big lions that had come bounding from their caverns at the inflow of light, all stopped suddenly short as a steed reined up by a powerful hand on the bridle. The initial roars died away as they formed a solid phalanx and looked toward this man who stood in their den in easy reach. There was some snorting and a little whining, and some of them turned around and went back to their caverns. Others of the great beasts yawned and lay down on the floor, but not one made a move to advance toward their visitor. "Thanks be unto Jehovah," breathed the prophet. "He hath stopped the mouths of these fierce beasts that they will do me no harm." He sat down on the floor of the den and leaned his back against the wall to make himself comfortable for the night. Soon two cub lions moved in his direction, not stealthily or crouching, as though to make an attack, but in obvious friendliness, and one lay on each side of Daniel as though to give him warmth and protection in the chilly dungeon. Presently their mother, an old lioness, crept over and lay in front of the prophet. He gently stroked their backs as they each turned their heads and licked his hand....Enclosed by the lioness and her cubs, the head of the patriarch was gradually pillowed on the back of one of the cubs as the four slept soundly in perfect peace and tranquility--The Prophet-Statesman, p. 206.

Interestingly, the narrative now follows neither the main character, Daniel, nor the nobles who were convinced they had seen the last of the pious prophet. It follows the king, who had a bad night—one with no food, no entertainment, and worse, no sleep. v. 18--"Then the king returned to his palace and spent the night without eating and without any entertainment being brought to him. And he could not sleep."

Darius probably rolled and tossed on his bed, reviewing all the events and circumstances that had led to Daniel's present plight, wondering whether he had left undone anything that might have overturned the plot. At dawn he arose and, forgetting his kingly dignity, ran quickly to the den of lions/ Hoping for the best but fearing the worst, "When he came near the den, he called to Daniel in an anguished voice, 'Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to rescue you from the lions?'" (v. 20).

Regardless of whether Daniel survived or perished in the lions' den, God was able to deliver. The believer acknowledges God's ability and power, but submits to His will in every situation. Regardless of what happens, we have the confidence that "all things work together for good." In Daniel's case, it was God's will to deliver him. Daniel answered, "O king, live forever! 22] My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his sight. Nor have I ever done any wrong before you, O king." (vv 21-22).

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It seems probable that the deliverer of the three Hebrew youths from the fiery furnace (3:25,28) and of Daniel (6:22) is the same person, the Angel of Jehovah. Daniel not only spent the night in the company of the lions, but infinitely better, in the company of what some believe was the preincarnate Son of God! It is difficult not to be curious about the conversation or how the lions reacted through the night hours.

### **Daniel is Freed by the King—6:23-28**

The chapter moves to its end with the reporting of three significant events.

#### **Daniel was removed from the den, and the explanation for his miraculous deliverance was given**

"The king was overjoyed and gave orders to lift Daniel out of the den. And when Daniel was lifted from the den, no wound was found on him, because he had trusted in his God" (v. 23). The writer of Hebrews was probably referring to this great event when he said that some "through faith. . . shut the mouths of lions" (Heb. 11:33).

#### **In a blood sequel, Daniel's direct accusers were punished.**

"At the king's command, the men who had falsely accused Daniel were brought in and thrown into the lions' den, along with their wives and children. And before they reached the floor of the den, the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones" (v. 24). Persian law, in contrast to the Mosaic Law (Deut. 24:16), required the punishment of the criminals' families as well as the guilty men. One by one they were pushed into the den, caught in midair, and devoured before they reached the floor. How great a miracle was Daniel's deliverance, that he could spend an entire night with these ferocious creatures and not be scratched! We don't rejoice in this kind of judgment on others, because without the grace of God we would be in a place where we deserved to die for our sins. What we see here is a very important truth:

"the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Darius issued a sweeping proclamation that all men "tremble and fear" before Daniel's God. 27] "Then King Darius wrote to all the peoples, nations and men of every language throughout the land: 'May you prosper greatly! 26] I issue a decree that in every part of my kingdom people must fear and reverence the God of Daniel. For he is the living God and he endures forever; his kingdom will not be destroyed, his dominion will never end. 27] He rescues and he saves; he performs signs and wonders in the heavens and on the earth. He has rescued Daniel from the power of the lions.'"

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Some have pointed out that Darius did not repudiate his Babylonian gods, or worship Daniel's God. Nonetheless, the proclamation is remarkable for what it contains about the person, kingdom, and words of the God of Daniel (vv. 26-27). As if to emphasize once more the magnitude of the miracle, the chapter concludes with the words, "So Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian" (v. 28).

The same Daniel who was unjustly accused, unfairly convicted, and cast into a den of hungry, voracious beasts was still alive and prospering. Only the living God could accomplish that!

### Conclusion

What does Daniel's experience say to us? It is possible that our familiarity with the story might cause us to overlook the lessons God intends for us to learn. Daniel's escape from the lions is certainly not here to entertain us, or just to give us another reason to rejoice at the victory of God over our enemies. Let's take a closer look.

#### **Our trials are often for others.**

First, I want you to notice again the story's focus while Daniel was in the Lion's den. When I was growing up, I heard this story many times, and I don't believe I ever understood that the lions' den wasn't for Daniel, but for the king. We can know that by looking at who the writer concentrates on during the night. The king's response was most critical. I think the observation could be safely made from this and other incidents from Scripture, that our trials and troubles have much to do with those who might be observing them—even those enemies who are the reason for the trial.

In many cases, we can only speculate about who these people might be. We don't have perfect understanding of God's ways, but Daniel's story helps us to see a purpose in our troubles beyond what we might learn, or how we might grow. It's quite possible that some will make a declaration as to who Jesus is as a result of what happens in *our* lives—e.g., Daniel 6:25-28. What does that do for you? How does that help you through trials?

#### **Our rescue is enabled by faith in God.**

I want us to look at this incident in Daniel's life and observe that he was rescued because of

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his trust in God. The people of God today are not exempt from the "lions' den," so they need to be reminded again that God is able to deliver from "lions of adversity," with faith/trust as the key. The Book of Hebrews tells us, "But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (11:6). Faith is essential, and the faith must be in God. One writer reminds us that "the 'lions' we confront may be illness, business reverses, slander, domestic friction, or any of a great number of things... When he faces the 'lions,' a Christian businessman who has encountered reverses, or a farmer who has lost a crop, does not yield to despair, but praises God for reminding him to lay up treasures in heaven. A young believer whose love is not returned is not embittered, but quietly trusts that God acts in the best interests of His people"--Bible Knowledge: Daniel, Wheaton, Ill.: Scripture Press, 1968, p. 73

What "lions" are you facing? Do you believe God is able to deliver you from every kind of test? Are you willing also to surrender to God's will regardless of what happens, knowing and believing that "all things work together for good?" Can you make this statement? "God, I don't know how this is going to work out nor do I have any understanding as to why it is happening, but I trust in you."

A mother and father in New England felt the call of God to the mission field. When they told their three children, two responded excitedly but the middle child, a boy in his early teens said, "I won't go! You'll have to go without me because I want to live in this town. This is the best place in all the world to live!" Then he ran upstairs to his room and sobbed for an hour.

Finally, the mother went up to comfort him and opened the door of his room just as the boy began to play on his trumpet, with tears streaming down his face, "I Surrender All." Whatever it involves, God's will is best.

**Third, I want you to observe the progression of the test that took place in Daniel's life.**

The test started with the promotion (Daniel 6:1). Promotion/recognition is a test. How a believer responds to it will influence how effective he is. Pride will blind you to your possibilities and bring you down, and humility will bring you up.

The second step in the test had to do with Daniel's character (6:3). He distinguished himself because of his exceptional spirit. When compared to the spirit and qualities of others, he had interior development that balanced his administrative qualities.

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The third step had to do with his actions, exemplary in relationship to his work (v. 4). He passed the scrutiny of his enemies.

The fourth step related to personal spiritual disciplines (6:5-14). What was the spiritual discipline that they focused on? His prayer. Why do you think it was prayer? It was the thing they observed him doing three times a day, and that most responsible for Daniel's success. Says Leon Wood,

"To have maintained such a demanding [prayer] schedule as this, even apart from continuing it now in the face of penalty, required great discipline of life. In his position as president, Daniel carried heavy responsibility, with much work to do. Under such demands the temptation to neglect this sort of prayer-program was no doubt strong, especially since he had to return home each noon for the purpose, while keeping on also with the morning and evening occasions. But Daniel had maintained it, apparently recognizing the priority of this faithful contact with God. He continued the same in the face of the unfair decree" (A Commentary on Daniel, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1973, p. 163).

How significant is prayer to you? How has the enemy tried to stop that discipline? Name your excuses.

- Too busy?
- Too distracted?
- Too tired?

What's the principle? The enemy of your soul is observing your life. If he can't find an error or weakness in your success, character and action, he'll try to keep you from spiritual disciplines so you'll be weak and vulnerable. The resolve to pray should happen before the lions' den. If we wait to pray until the time of crisis, it may be we won't be able to pray, or our inconsistency will have been responsible for the trial. Daniel's priority list had fellowship with God at the top. This explains in large measure the godly life and character of this man. What is at the top of your priority list?

**Daniel's life provides an opportunity to take a closer look at our own lives.**

Let's take a simple test. Answer these questions in your mind.

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1. If you had been faced with the decree that Daniel was, would you have altered your praying pattern for 30 days to prevent "rocking the boat?" Why or why not?
2. If someone were to check out your work, your personal life and even your Christian disciplines of prayer, etc., would there be enough evidence to convict you of godliness?
3. Have you distinguished yourselves because of your exceptional qualities? If not, what will you seek to do?
4. How about the growth of your life? What are you building for? Are you stronger than one year ago, and ready to face bigger tests of your faith?
5. How about your conduct in the home, in school, in the workplace, in the world. Can it be said of you that there is no corruption in you?
6. Will your friends and family say you are trustworthy?
7. Have you been negligent in your duties, or your responsibilities?

If your life isn't remotely close to what you believe, and you are not progressing but falling back, I've got good news for you; you won't have to suffer for being a Christian; you're not godly enough. If you are inconsistent in your quiet time and your spiritual disciplines, you will avoid the pit of persecution or trial. However, if you want to be ready for whatever God brings, but aren't there now, then I suggest you do the following:

- Repent and turn.
- Begin by eliminating even small compromises in your life (Dan. 1).
- Begin to apply the truth of God in your life; obey His commands (Dan. 1).
- Concentrate on interior character development as a priority (Dan. 6:3-4).
- Be faithful in the small tests and you'll be ready for the big one (6:10-21).

Have you evaluated your attitudes lately? Do you find yourself complaining about the way things are and how they should have been?

1. Do you dwell on the obstacle rather than its solution? Would you like to cultivate that "excellent spirit" for which Daniel was noted in 6:3? Read the following verses: Prov. 12:25; 15:15; Rom. 12:9-12; Phil. 2:1-4,13-15.
2. Do you think your attitude depends on circumstances, or do you decide to have "an excellent spirit" no matter what happens? It might seem that with the persecution and imprisonment Paul was experiencing (see Phil. 1), he had the right to have a negative attitude. However, what truth did he record in Phil. 2:13 that allows us to accept circumstances without allowing them to destroy our positive outlook?
3. What is the purpose of maintaining such an attitude (vv. 14-15)? Make a commitment to speak some encouraging words to those you will be seeing today, regardless of what

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pressures or problems you may be facing. Remember, if you are a Christian... "It is God who is at work in you...for his good pleasure" —Phil. 2:13 (NASB).

Have you, like Darius, made hasty decisions that you later regretted? Read Heb. 12:16-17 (cf. Gen. 25:27-34) and Prov. 21:5. Actions that are not well thought out can have damaging consequences. When you are faced with a major decision, do you "commit your way to the LORD" (Ps. 37:5) in prayer, seeking the counsel of wise and godly people (Prov. 24:6)? Carefully evaluate what impact your decisions will have on your testimony before the watching world, and the glory of God.

Daniel's example remains a challenge to us today. Would you like this said of you some day? "You are a person who has distinguished yourself because of your exceptional qualities, your extraordinary spirit, wisdom and gifting! No one can find any corruption in you, because you are trustworthy and never corrupt or negligent." How did Daniel develop such exceptional qualities? Obviously it was not age and experience alone. We all know older people who have never distinguished themselves.

What specifically developed Daniel? Integrity! Certainly Daniel had gifts from God, and God's sovereign call on his life. Beyond that, I agree with Robert Clinton, who states that there are three major "inner-life" tests for an emerging leader. He calls them the *integrity check*, the *obedience check*, and the *word check*.

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and the  
*word check*.

### **The integrity check**

At the heart of biblical qualification for leadership lies the concept of integrity:

The uncompromising adherence to a code of moral, artistic, or other values that reveals itself in sincerity, honesty and candor, and avoided deception or artificiality (Webster, Merriam Co.)

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Clinton says, "The God-given capacity to lead has two parts: giftedness and character. Integrity is the heart of character." A person isn't born with integrity; it is developed. A perfect example of its development is seen here in Daniel 6:6-10. Daniel faced an integrity check that could have cost him his life. A teenager away from home and parental influence, he was forced to decide if the convictions he grew up with were his own. In this case, the inner conviction was a religious one involving food. He was under pressure to compromise his convictions, but he stuck to them.

Because character has many facets, there are a variety of integrity checks. Here are a few:

- the test of values
- the test of temptation
- the test of persecution
- the test of loyalty
- the test of honesty

Daniel faced all of these and continued to face them, even into this chapter. The Scripture says a lot about integrity:

- It was said about men God used—"As for you, if you walk before me in integrity of heart and uprightness, as David your father did, and do all I command and observe my decrees and laws, 5] I will establish your royal throne over Israel forever, as I promised David your father when I said, 'You shall never fail to have a man on the throne of Israel'" (1 Kings 9:4-5).

- "Teacher," they said, "we know you are a man of integrity and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. You aren't swayed by men, because you pay no attention to who they are" (Matt. 22:16b).

- "I know, my God, that you test the heart and are pleased with integrity..." (I Chron. 29:17a).

- "In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness 8] and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us" (Titus 2:7).

Psalm 78:22 say integrity has value in everything we do. Proverbs 10:9 says "The man of

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integrity walks securely, but he who takes crooked paths will be found out" and 11:3 says,

"The integrity of the upright guides them, but the unfaithful are destroyed by their duplicity."

Integrity also causes some people to seek to harm a person of integrity, e.g., Daniel 6.

"Bloodthirsty men hate a man of integrity and seek to kill the upright."

(Prov. 29:10).

Integrity is foundational to an effective life, to effective leadership. Best instilled early in a person's life, it can be developed later in life, but it will be more difficult, and require much prayer and accountability. Whether our opportunities as Christians are highly visible and far-reaching, or less visible, we must learn to be faithful as Daniel was. We never know what the long-term effects of our integrity might be.

### The obedience check

Clinton continues, "A leader must learn obedience in order to influence others toward obedience... An obedience check is a process through which a person learns to recognize, understand and obey God's voice"—Ibid, p. 63. Obedience checks are mentioned throughout the Bible, and frequently in historical and contemporary biographies. They include:

- Obedience tests with possessions and in giving
- Obedience tests in learning to put God first in the choice of a mate
- Obedience tests in our willingness to be used of God in any form of service/ministry

He might ask of us

- Obedience tests when confronted with the need to forgive, or confess, or to right a wrong

Scriptural references to obedience and obey are numerous.

- "If you love me, you will obey what I command." John 14:15
- "Jesus replied, 'If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. 24] He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.' John 14:23-24
- "If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love" John 15:10
- "This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome..." 1 John 5:3

## Another Look at the Lions' Den

Written by Bob Stone

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What rounds out these two checks really overlaps obedience.

### The word check

This, according to Clinton, is "a process that tests...(our) ability to understand and receive a word from God personally, and then allow God to work it out in our life." Daniel, for example, was obviously following a pattern given him from Scripture when he prayed three times a day.

- "Evening, morning and noon I cry out in distress, and he hears my voice." Psalm 55:17
- "For surely your enemies, O LORD, surely your enemies will perish; all evildoers will be scattered." Psalm 92:9 (morning/evening)
- "May my prayer be set before you like incense; may the lifting up of my hands be like the evening sacrifice." Psalm 141:2 (evening)
- Psalms 30:5; 5:3; 88:13 (morning)

The **word** test, the **integrity** test, and the **obedience** test frequently combine as they do in the rest of Daniel 6:5-28.

### Appendix

There are many Dens for Lions today. We as believers can be thrown to scorn and ridicule if we say we are pro-life. The media has slowly, but surely painted anyone who cares for the unborn as violent, but we don't have to be idle or ashamed. I believe it's more important than ever that by our actions and words we show we are pro-life/pro-love and don't hate—especially those who disagree with us! We must be loving in our concern and action for all life born and unborn, especially for those who can't care for themselves (James 1:27). We must be active in our concern for orphaned children all over the world. We must provide the emotional, and financial support for that mother who needs our help because she has decided to keep her baby rather than have it aborted. We must provide loving solutions for addicted babies. We must search for loving solutions and homes for foster care children. We must love our own children and model to them and others the value and great potential of children.