

# Man of Prayer

By Mary Kane

One day I walked in to my teenage son's room with a load of laundry.



As I came around the doorway I saw my son Scott, sitting on his bed as still as a statue, staring off into space. It was very unusual to catch my son sitting still for any length of time so of course my mother radar went off, assuming that something was amiss. I asked Scottie if there was anything wrong. He answered my question with something like "Ma, shhh- I'm praying." The tears came to my eyes as I quietly left his room and thanked God silently for the work He was accomplishing in my son. It's good to know that in this day and age that there are still men who pray.

Before we read our text for today we will need a little background information concerning the book of Daniel. In 605 BC, in the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim the king of Judah, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon invaded and conquered the city of Jerusalem, the city of peace. Along with the many treasures of the Temple, Nebuchadnezzar carried off some of the king's descendants and some of the nobles. Daniel was one of the bright young men who were exiled to Babylon to serve in King Nebuchadnezzar's court.

Now please read Daniel chapter 6.

**Why was Daniel distinguished above all of his contemporaries?**

The NKJV states that he was distinguished because there was "an excellent spirit" in him.

**Who was this "excellent Spirit"?**

**How did Daniel's coworkers feel about Daniel (verse 4)?**

### **What was the only way they could find fault with Daniel?**

Daniel's enemies were unable to dredge up any unsavory anecdotes or convenient scandals concerning Daniel. In fact, the only way to attack Daniel was to attack his faith in God. Imagine knowing a politician in whom it would be impossible to dig up any breach of character.

### **How many people were in league against Daniel (verse 6)?**

The NKJV states that the king's advisors *thronged* together before the king. Your version may say *assembles* or *came by agreement*. The original Aramaic word used in this verse is [\*r@gash\*](#) (*transliterated from Aramaic to English*) which means "to be in tumult, to throng together" (*BLB*). It also means commotion, to conspire, to plot.

### **Who was on Daniel's side?**

The bad news was there was only one. The good news was it was the only One!

Please read verses 7-9 again.

### **What can you deduce about the character of Nebuchadnezzar from these verses?**

He must have been a very prideful man! Who would make a law stating that no one could pray to anyone except himself but an egomaniac? Foolishly, without considering the outcome, the king signed the proposition into law.

### **Please check the box by the sentence that shows what Daniel did when he heard that the decree had been signed:**

- He quickly packed his bags and fled from Babylon.**
- He promptly pled his case before the king.**
- He stood up to his coworkers.**
- He changed his religion.**
- He went home and prayed.**

**Please write down every detail you notice concerning Daniel's prayer session.**

Did you note that instead of hiding in his basement Daniel knelt and prayed before his open window? He went to the highest room of his house, opened his windows as usual and prayed. The actions of sinful men had no effect on the godly habits of Daniel's life. As a matter of fact the actions of a whole nation full of sinful men had zero impact on the habits of Daniel's life. Why would that be? Let's see if we can gain a little insight from an earlier portion of scripture. Please read Daniel 1:8.

**Why had Daniel remained morally unaffected by the culture of Babylon?**

Because he had drawn some definite lines in the sand about how he would live. He *purposed* in his heart to live for the Lord. No one would have blamed Daniel if he dumped his Jewish heritage. Probably his parents would have never known. No one was watching. No one would have known...except God! Our character is defined by who we are when no one is looking.

**Why did Daniel pray facing towards Jerusalem?**

At that point in history, Jerusalem was the only place on earth where the Presence of God had manifested itself. In essence, during this

intense time of trouble, Daniel was getting as close to God as he knew how. I love it that Daniel purposely chose this room of his house as his prayer room. Even if he was only a few feet closer to the Presence of God than in his bedroom, at least this decision shows the priority of his heart.

**How about you? In times of trouble do you draw near to God?**

**How do you draw near to Him?**

**Are you going through a hard time right now?**

**Whether you are experiencing a season of hardship or ease, please list an immediate step you can take to get closer to God.**

**Do we have any evidence that Daniel was close to God when times were easy?**

Verse 10 states that it was Daniel's habit to pray to God three times a day since he first arrived in Babylon. Although Daniel was probably taken from his family by harsh circumstances during the exile, he most likely experienced a few good days in Babylon.

A question arose in my mind as I was studying this portion of scripture: How did Daniel's enemies know to *whom* Daniel was praying? Why wouldn't they think it possible that Daniel was praying to Nebuchadnezzar? Most likely they assumed he was praying to Jehovah due to his character and reputation. However, the original word used for *prayer* in this verse may give us a little clue. The Aramaic word for *prayer* in verse six is *ts@la'* which means to pray or bow, "*not of prayer to gods*" (BDB emphasis mine). It may have been

obvious to all who cared to observe that because of some detail of posture or prayer routine, that Daniel was not offering a prayer to Nebuchadnezzar.

**What else did Daniel do in his upper room besides pray?**

My version says that *he gave thanks*. Keeping this detail in mind, please read verse 7 again.

**According to verse 7, what would happen to those who broke this decree and prayed?**

**So why was Daniel thanking God? List as many things as you can.**

The Aramaic word used in this text for *gave thanks* was *y@da'* which means "to praise, to give thanks." This Aramaic word was derived from another Aramaic word *yadah*. Most interestingly, *yadah* translates "give thanks, laud, praise, to confess sin, to shoot, to cast down, to shoot arrows. So we see within the Aramaic word for *praise*, hints of warfare; as if our genuine praise of our Holy God during hard times brings defeat to our Enemy. As in the book of Job, the goal of the Enemy is to tempt us to curse God and die. Imagine his anger when we choose instead to praise God and trust.

**Recall the hard situation you recorded a few questions ago. What is there about this situation that can cause you to praise God?**

## **Why did Daniel pray and give thanks during this extreme trial (end of verse 10)?**

Because it was his custom since his early days. Why was it his custom? Because his parents or his guardians trained him to pray and praise! Parents, teachers and guardians please be encouraged! The time you invest training your children to follow God may one day effect the destiny of a nation. God's Word never come backs empty. The Biblical training your children receive will produce fruit long after they have forgotten their history and chemistry lessons.

## **Is it your habit to praise God and pray during harsh times?**

If it is not, now is the time to establish a new habit! I truly struggle with this issue. Some days I have great victory over my flesh and am able to keep my eyes on Jesus and pray through the hard times. Other days I easily slip and fall right back into my complaining ways. I am thankful that I have a God whose mercies are new every morning! Another day brings another portion of grace sufficient for my needs; I need only gather it up as the Hebrews gathered their daily manna in the desert.

Please read verse 11 again.

According to verse 11, the whole *throng* from verses 6 and 7 went en masse to witness Daniel's illegal prayer, reported it to the king, and then demanded a verdict. As even the king himself did not have the authority to revoke the law, Nebuchadnezzar of course answered that Daniel must be thrown into the lions den. While the king of Babylon did not have the power to overturn the Law of the Medes and the Persians, the King of Kings did! I can imagine King Nebuchadnezzar answered his advisors through clenched teeth as he realized that he had "been had." In verse 16 we read that Daniel was cast into the den of lions.

I tried to find data pertaining to what an ancient *den of lions* would have been like but was unable to uncover any information. So let's take a moment to consider what this den may have been like.

**In order to keep the dangerous, hungry lions contained within their den and still be able to cast in unfortunate victims, how do you think the Babylonians constructed their lions den?**

I think the den must have been very deep; as lions can jump several feet into the air, and have smooth walls; so the lions would not be able to get a purchase on the walls and climb out. I imagine the den would have had a bottle-like shape. With this information in mind I'd like to propose that Daniel was the recipient of two miracles that day: first, he survived the fall into the den and second, he survived the lions in the den.

**How did the king spend his evening?**

Daniel spent his day praying, the king spent his night fasting. First thing in the morning the king ran to the lions den.

**Do you think that he expected to find Daniel alive and well? Why or why not?**

When the king reached the den, he called out to Daniel and to his great joy Daniel answered! God had sent His angel to shut the mouths of the lions. The king ordered Daniel to be taken up from the pit and there was not a scratch upon him! Once again, death was cheated in a tomb!

**Why was Daniel delivered from the lions den (verse 23)?**

Because he believed in his God. The Lion of Judah is worthy of our trust.

And Daniel's enemies? What happened to them? The plot they devised to bring down Daniel was turned upon themselves. God always wins.

*"I make a decree that in every dominion of my kingdom  
Men must tremble and fear before the God of Daniel.  
For He is the living God,  
And steadfast forever,  
His kingdom is the one which shall not be destroyed  
And His dominion shall endure until the end.  
He delivers and rescues,  
And He works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth,  
Who has delivered Daniel from the power of the lions."*

*Daniel 6:26-27*

In closing, please recall the hardship that you recorded earlier in this study. Read Daniel 6:26-27 out loud again, but replace the word *Daniel* with your own name and the word *lions* with the hardship you've been experiencing. He will bring deliverance in your life.

By Mary Kane  
copyright 2010

all rights reserved