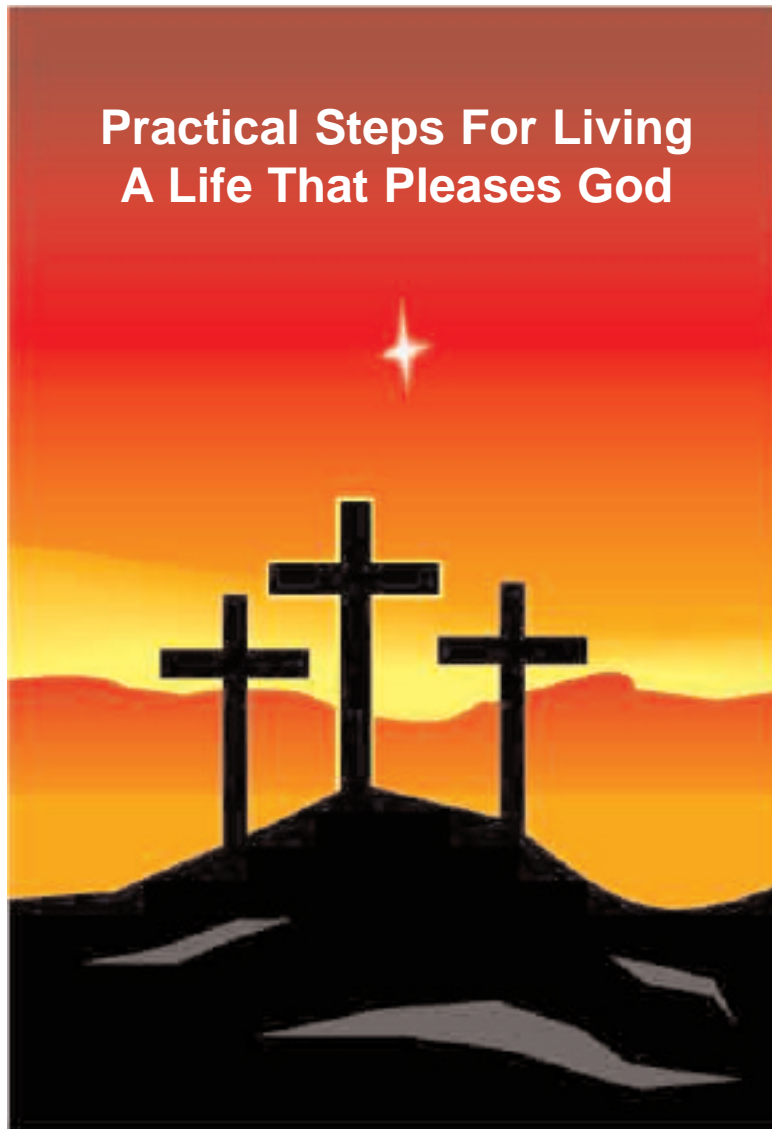


# Lifebytes:

## 10. The Book of Daniel (Chapters 4-6)

**Humility — Glorifying our Father**



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## Introduction/Backdrop

Are you aware that a heresy permeates much of Christian thought today? In a nutshell, this error states:

**After the Bible was canonized, God stopped revealing Himself *except* through the written Scriptures.**

But nothing could be further from the truth! Those who teach this falsehood represent the “Revisionists” who alter truth to fit their own preconceived notions. **Revisionism** restates historical truth and facts, manipulating them to fit the revisionist’s ideas and agenda.

Historically, revisionist writings and councils convinced the Church to adopt the autocratic system of the Roman government with which it became enmeshed. Revisionism within the church has had a profound effect down through the centuries, reflecting customs, practices, and organization far different from that which had been intended by our Lord.

In their audacity, revisionists *define God*, confining Him to a theological box of their own limited understanding of His vastness. By holding on to their restricted perception of Him, they can exercise control over what *others* believe about God.

**Revisionism produces religion *without relationship* with God.**

**Revisionists *define God*, confining Him to a theological box of their own limited understanding of His vastness. By holding on to their restricted perception of Him, they can exercise control over what *others* believe about God.**

As we’ve often encouraged you, **apperceive** God’s Word. To **apperceive** is to return to the original framework of understanding that God gave the scripture author as he wrote. Only by apperceiving can you fully grasp the *background and intent* of particular verses and passages.

Consider this example of apperception: “*Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true*” (Acts 17:11).

The Bereans were commended for studying the Scriptures by apperceiving Paul’s new teachings in light of Hebraic scriptural truths. So important were the Hebrew Scriptures as a basis for the gospel message that they were quoted apperceptively all throughout the gospels, the epistles, and the Revelation.

When we apperceive the Bible we come to understand God as He *continues* to reveal Himself as our mighty King and merciful Father. Apperception affirms the One True God of the Bible, and moves us to search out His requirements for our relationship of love-grounded obedient trust with Him.

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Apperception proves that our loving God *continues* to reveal Himself in a variety of ways. In our last Lifebyte, The Book of Daniel (Part 1), we wrote that God still uses dreams and visions to communicate with people as a means of warning or guidance. If these agree with the Word in regard to God’s character

and ways, then you shouldn't doubt He can use them. And, be sure you run them by mature family in Jesus for their prayerful consideration if they reveal something that calls you to take action!

That He might flesh out His rhema with dreams or visions shouldn't be so hard for us to grasp any more than recognizing that He still uses wars, famines, and plagues to chastise people. If people become so reprobate that they refuse to repent of their sin, or they hate and persecute His children, then He does whatever is necessary so that some might turn from their sin and come to Him in repentance.

Our God hasn't changed! The God of the Bible is still at work, often doing the same things He has in the past.

Our Father has an arsenal at His disposal to chastise the reprobate: *"For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: How much worse will it be when I send against Jerusalem my four dreadful judgments — sword and famine and wild beasts and plague — to kill its men and their animals!"* (Ezekiel 14:21). John the Revelator foresaw the same judgments in his vision of the fourth broken seal (see Rev. 6:7,8).

Recent history demonstrates our sovereign God's intervention in the establishment and dissolution of nations.

Consider what happened to England when it opposed Israel becoming a nation. It was once said, "The sun never set on the British Empire." No longer is this true.

Consider the USSR. That nation violently opposed the emigration of its Jewish people to Israel. Now the former Soviet Union is in chaotic disarray.

Consider Indonesia, where Christians by the thousands are being persecuted and martyred by the Muslims. Are the tsunamis God's "heads up", or merely an "act of nature"? Peruse Psalms especially, and you can't miss the reality

that the wind, the waves and the weather are totally under God's mighty control!

## Humility Enables Us To Glorify Our Father

In this Lifebyte we'll examine how important humility and glorifying our Father are as a *way of life* for us who follow Jesus. As we'll see, when we live in a relationship of determined loving obedience with Him, our lives bring Him glory. Settling for anything less than humble and devoted service on a daily basis is unworthy of any of His children.

The responses of King Nebuchadnezzar mirror many of us. In chapter 3 of Daniel, the monarch acknowledges the One True God after seeing the Lord in the fire with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He even promotes them to higher positions in his kingdom, honoring them because of their mighty God.

But *his heart is unchanged*. Nebuchadnezzar lacks humility. He fails to appreciate that he'd neither be in power nor enjoy success and wealth if it were not for the true God of all the universe.

The virtue of humility is intricately connected to deference, which we discussed in the last Lifebyte. If our pilgrimage to salvation could be described as baseball diamond, then humility is first base. You can never go any further without humility! If you're going to press onward, you need *God's grace*. That's why we're assured, *"But He gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble'"* (James 4:6). The choice is that simple...

*Grace* is both the desire and the empowerment to keep God's commands

and to do His will. When we humble ourselves, He pours out His grace. And, that grace-covered humility enables us to be long-suffering with others rather than judgmental. Humility and grace are foundational to true fellowship, as Paul emphasized to Jesus' followers in Ephesus: *"Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love"* (Ephesians 4:2).

Man's way is to seek success and fame, and to these ends he strives. God's way is quite the opposite: *"Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will lift you up"* (James 4:10). A humble man gives grateful credit to God and to anyone else who has helped him along the way. He realizes that a humble heart before our Lord casts down the worry and anxiety that accompany fleshly struggle. In the character of Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, we see the humility and personal responsibility that bring them success even in a heathen empire.

**Grace is the both the desire and the empowerment to keep God's commands and to do His will.**

Growing up in a culture today that is so bent on ego-gratification has made it all the more difficult to find godly men whose number one goal is to serve our Lord. No man can serve in our Lord's strength if he lacks humility. And one way in which true humility is learned is by the young putting aside self-will to honor the more mature:

*Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, 'God opposes the proud but gives grace to the*

*humble.'* **Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time** (1Peter 5:5,6).

Let's anchor an important truth here:

**Our God is well aware of our propensity toward pride. Pride causes us to take credit for our success even as we fail to give Him the glory due Him.**

An example of warning for us today: Time and again the Israelites would repeat the cycle of pride and downfall when they settled in the Promised Land. As you read the following passage, ask God how He wants you to apply its truth to *your own life*:

*When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the LORD your God for the good land he has given you. Be careful that you do not forget the LORD your God, failing to observe his commands, his laws and his decrees that I am giving you this day. [God's commands as deepened and expanded by Jesus still apply to us today!]*

*Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, then your heart will become proud and you will forget the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. He led you through the vast and dreadful desert, that thirsty and waterless land, with its venomous snakes and scorpions. [Does this describe your own slavery to sin prior to your reconciliation with our Father through Jesus?]*

Moses continues with his account of God's faithful provision and His warning against arrogant self-dependence:

***He brought you water out of hard rock. He gave you manna to eat in the desert, something your fathers had never known, to humble and to test you so that in the end it might go well with you. You may say to yourself, 'My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me.'***

***But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today (Deuteronomy 8:10-18).***

Our "manna" today is the revelations, the *rhema* He gives, to guide us in His ways. To receive and to then walk in His *rhema* requires humility. God's very guidance tests our humility to trust and obey! So many today take credit for God's revelations as though they were "special vessels" rather than acknowledge the Holy Spirit as the source.

The sin of pride always breeds presumption. This causes us to grasp control over our future. But the future is God's domain, not ours.

So many today unwittingly sin by getting into debt, thinking they will pay it back. Do you see the presumption and arrogance in this train of thought? The future will never happen the way you envision. The apostle warns us against relying on our own plans and ambitions:

***Now listen, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.' Why, you do not***

***even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, 'If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that.'*** As it is, you boast and brag. All such ***boasting is evil.*** Anyone, then, who ***knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins*** (James 4:13-17).

**Our "manna" is the revelations, the *rhema* He gives, to guide us in His ways. To receive and then walk in His *rhema* requires humility.**

While Sue and I were teaching and administrating at a retreat center in Connecticut, a certain episode occurred in which God dealt with my pride:

A men's group was coming on retreat. The Monday prior to the retreat I sat at my computer to work on a handout for it. That same week Sue and I were attending a three-day conference. It was being taught by church leaders who'd been forced out of their denomination for walking whole-heartedly in the Spirit of the Lord Jesus.

On Tuesday afternoon as I finished my handout I thought, "This is the best handout I've ever prepared!" Not a minute later I received a phone call from a friend gifted in prophecy. "As I was praying, the Lord told me to call and tell you that He doesn't want the retreat lessons you just prepared. You are to *pray more.*"

While she was still on the phone I deleted the handout so I wouldn't be tempted to rework it. My pride hadn't completely subsided, but I knew in my spirit that God had prompted her to call. So I prayed...

On Wednesday morning as we entered

## Daniel, Chapter 4 Dreams As Warnings

the conference, I stepped into the men's room. The Holy Spirit began to dictate to me the retreat our Lord wanted. When He finished speaking in my spirit, I responded, "That's only half a retreat." He replied, "I'll take over the second half of the retreat."

The conference ended that day with a time of worship. As we walked out of the building, a local church leader approached me. "Mike, I'm having a men's retreat this weekend [different retreat] and I haven't been able to come up with anything. While we were worshipping, the Holy Spirit impressed on me that you have a retreat message for me."

When I finished telling him what the Spirit had given me, he commented, "That's only half a retreat!" I assured him that the Spirit would take over the second half, but he walked away shaking his head in distrust.

We could write pages about what happened at our men's retreat that weekend, and others afterward. Trust-strengthening miracles, changed lives, and testimonies to our Father's glory were fruit that spoke of His involvement!

From that time on we focused more on revelation and guidance *from* Him, rather than on what we were doing *for* Him. Revelation from His Spirit increased our humility and dependence on Him as we obeyed His rhema and His Word. In contrast, "doing things for God" had only augmented our pride. Sharing exactly what He showed us to teach brought Him glory as He changed those who had ears to hear.

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As we've ministered over the years we've noticed a prevailing prejudice among Christians toward those who have yet to encounter Jesus:

**Simply put, many church people believe that God has neither involvement with nor influence over unbelievers.**

It's as if Christianity has created a caste system: God loves Christians but has nothing to do with non-Christians. This rationale is often subtle, but it's pervasive.

Several years ago we met with leaders of an international youth ministry on the Hopi Reservation. These folks were well-meaning missionaries, yet after years on the reservation, only a few women and children participated in their activities. We asked if they had first approached the elders of the tribe for permission to minister among the people. They replied, "No. They aren't *Christian!*"

This same international youth ministry accepts young people even if their unbelieving parents object to their involvement. "Oh, the parents are unbelievers", is the common response. For a child to dishonor his or her parents for the sake of ministry is epidemic in the law-less parachurch culture. When we've conducted ***Demolishing Strongholds*** seminars for people involved in this particular youth ministry, the prevailing stronghold has been Rebellion.

A few years later a group of missionaries in Rwanda wrote to let us know they'd followed our advice. They sat with the elders of a tribe for three days

explaining why they'd come. When the discussion was over the elders called the people together. "Listen to these missionaries! They have come for the good of our tribe." Following the protocol of respect, even for unbelievers, can pave the way for a great harvest!

Our God has deep regard for every single person into whom He has breathed life.

- **Each human is born in His image.**
- **Jesus died to make atonement for all mankind.**
- **Our Father accepted the sacrifice of Jesus for each human being.**

What concern our Father showed for the Gentile sinners of Nineveh as He pressed reluctant Jonah to warn them! Think about the great lengths He went to to make sure the message was delivered. And the result of such love? The entire city repented, though the prophet was upset.

Note that God didn't allow that grumbling to pass unchallenged: "*But Nineveh has more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left, and many cattle as well. **Should I not be concerned about that great city?***" (Jonah 4:11).

Now, back to King Nebuchadnezzar... God gives this powerful heathen king another dream. Why? Because the king is not humbling himself before the true God of all creation. Keep in mind that *acknowledging God's existence* is far different than true repentance from a humble heart that glorifies Him.

Daniel leaves no room for doubt when he reveals the dream's meaning:

*This is the interpretation, O king, and*

*this is the decree the Most High has issued against my lord the king: You will be **driven away from people and will live with the wild animals**; you will eat grass like cattle and be drenched with the dew of heaven. Seven times will pass by for you **until you acknowledge that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes**. The command to leave the stump of the tree with its roots means that your kingdom will be restored to you when you acknowledge that **Heaven rules**. Therefore, O king, be pleased to accept my advice: **Renounce your sins by doing what is right, and your wickedness by being kind to the oppressed**. It may be that then your prosperity will continue (Daniel 4:24-27).*

Daniel, like most prophets, is delivering a hard message to the king for his good. But, as with most for whom God's revelation is meant, Nebuchadnezzar refuses to heed. In the same manner today God uses prophets as well as famines, wars, and plagues to get our attention. It must be frustrating for Him to see how few listen!

And, just like my proud ownership of the retreat handout I'd just prepared, Nebuchadnezzar opens his big mouth: "*Is not this the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence, by **my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty?***" (4:30). We cited on page 5 God's warning to the Israelites in Deuteronomy 8:10-18. These words apply to *all of us*, believer and unbeliever alike — Remember

**Keep in mind that *acknowledging God's existence* is far different than true repentance with a humble heart that glorifies Him.**

Who gives you the means to live!

If we don't humble ourselves, God will see to it that we do. (Psalm 107:10-16 gives a vivid portrayal of His relentless desire for reconciliation!) His methods are as impossible for us to withstand as it is for us to live on the sun. And after his apportioned season of alienated disgrace, the Babylonian king was ultimately humbled:

*At the end of that time, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven, and my sanity was restored. Then I praised the Most High; I honored and glorified him who lives forever. His dominion is an eternal dominion; his kingdom endures from generation to generation. All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does as he pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back his hand or say to him: 'What have you done?'* (Daniel 4:34-35).

**If we don't humble ourselves, God will see to it that we do. And His methods are as impossible for us to withstand as it is for us to live on the sun.**

### **Daniel, Chapter 5** **Like Father, Like Son**

Nebuchadnezzar's son, Belshazzar, became king, with the same propensity for pride as his father. We don't know if the elder king warned his son to deter from the arrogant path he'd taken. If he did, Belshazzar didn't learn!

At a lavish banquet Belshazzar and his guests "***praised the gods of gold and***

***silver, of bronze, iron, wood and stone***" (5:4). Can you picture what happens next? "***Suddenly the fingers of a human hand appeared and wrote on the plaster of the wall, near the lampstand in the royal palace. The king watched the hand as it wrote. His face turned pale and he was so frightened that his knees knocked together and his legs gave way***" (5:5,6).

The fingers on the wall were to Belshazzar what Balaam's talking donkey was to him (Numbers 22) — God's warning!

While we've witnessed a number of miraculous signs from our Lord, but not disembodied writing isn't among them! Following the same pattern as his predecessor, the king sought out Daniel for an interpretation. The prophet chastises Belshazzar for ignoring the lessons of his father's prideful downfall. We'd all do well to learn from our parents' mistakes rather than blame them for their errors!

***But when his heart became arrogant and hardened with pride, he was deposed from his royal throne and stripped of his glory. He was driven away from people and given the mind of an animal; he lived with the wild donkeys and ate grass like cattle; and his body was drenched with the dew of heaven, until he acknowledged that the Most High God is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and sets over them anyone he wishes.***

Having reviewed relatively recent history, Daniel continues with specific charges against the king:

***But you his son, O Belshazzar, have not humbled yourself, though you knew all this. Instead, you have set yourself up against the Lord of***

**heaven. You had the goblets from his temple brought to you, and you and your nobles, your wives and your concubines drank wine from them. You praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood and stone, which cannot see or hear or understand. But you did not honor the God who holds in his hand your life and all your ways (5:20-23).**

God's judgments are simple, just and straightforward: *"That very night Belshazzar, king of the Babylonians, was slain, and Darius the Mede took over the kingdom, at the age of sixty-two"* (5:30,31).

Mike: My grandparents, uncles, and aunts were a key part of my upbringing. My siblings and cousins and I benefited as the older people recounted stories from their past. Each family abounds with **biological and spiritual influences** that deeply impact your life. This includes intergenerational strongholds that are passed along within families as well.

If your children don't have ready access to older relatives, you are missing a valuable opportunity for them to learn. First of all, fathers and mothers can help their kids greatly by sharing wisdom they've gained even through poor decisions in their past.

One consequence of the breakdown of intergenerational families has been the selective forgetfulness of many moms and dads. Without grandparents and aunts and uncles offering up *their* version of your youth, you may be presenting to your kids an image of yourself that's slanted toward complete innocence!

It's beautiful when a grandparent or other older relative chimes in to your

children, "Didn't *you* do the same thing when you were that age?" Or when they say to your children, "Now, let me tell you how it *really* happened!" It's sometimes humbling (and even humiliating!) for someone who has known your past to offer your children a different version than the one you tout. But it gives them a more accurate picture of the lessons you too have had to learn along the way.

If you have no extended family nearby, it's all the more crucial that you become vulnerable about what you learned from your past experiences and mistakes. Your children can identify with, and learn more through *your* experiences than from anyone else's. Your history, including your past failings, is invaluable to their development, so be open. If anything, they'll understand more fully just how forgiving our Lord is when you're transparent about your own need for change!

Sue and I have tried to connect our own personal errors to something from God's Word that we violated. In that way our son could see that there are consequences to sin and foolishness. And going back to the Word helps your children see their own need for personal halakhahs to live by.

**It is sometimes humbling (and even humiliating!) for someone else to offer your children a different version than the one you tout.**

## **Daniel, Chapter 6** **The Lions' Dens In *Your* Life**

A principle of God that we've observed time and again in the lives of those who are faithful to God is this:

**People who wholeheartedly love and fear God will inevitably face false accusations and plots against them.**

Somewhere in your pilgrimage to salvation you'll be falsely accused or even plotted against — most likely by those who are churched! In fact, the more devoted you are in your devotion to Jesus, the more envied you'll be by those who despise your walk with Him. Have no doubt. Plots and false accusations are sure to come!

Don't try to avoid these situations. Our Lord intends to use them for a greater purpose. You'll need to trust wholly in His grace to endure these encounters, but don't try to wiggle out of them.

Mike: When I was a counselor to church leaders many years ago, a man with a prophetic gift came to me to warn of an impending plot to discredit me and my ministry. I remembered Agabus coming to Paul to warn him about what was going to happen to him if he went to Jerusalem (Acts 21:10-14). The Holy Spirit impressed on me that I shouldn't avoid what was about to happen.

A few weeks before that warning, God had sent me to a certain clergyman to urge him to reconcile with his father. This pastor was very popular and well-known in our area. But instead of purposing to see his Dad, against whom he'd been bitter for years, he glared at me and vowed, "I'm going to destroy your ministry."

After intense searching he roused a few others to join him in a plot to vilify me. Lies, false accusations and insinuations were knotted together, as well as intimidation toward anyone who spoke against their plot.

Yes, I was hurt! But the greatest pain

came because of what it was doing to those I cared for who knew these men were lying. My greatest effort was spent trying to keep those close to me from becoming bitter.

Near despair, I cried out to God. To plot against someone to bring about their destruction was outside my personal experience, whether within Christianity or not. The Holy Spirit then prompted me to read the Book of Acts and count the number of plots against our Father's children. The answer? Thirteen.

When I finished reading Acts and saw all the intrigue, the Spirit whispered within me, "If *Jesus* could be plotted against, and if *His followers* could be plotted, doesn't He have the right for *you* to undergo this as well?" I cried in agreement.

As a result of this plot, Sue and I ultimately ended up in Israel, where we received the truths of the Hebraic Restoration which we are now sharing with the world. That painful life episode has reaped wonderful joy and purpose for us, but the agony as well as His faithfulness were very real at the time!

In chapter 6 Daniel deals with a third king, Darius. The Godly prophet is far outlasting the kings of the heathen empire! Our God knows how to honor those who are responsible to him, who exemplify deference and who walk in utter dependence on Him.

But along with honor can come plots and false accusation.

*Now Daniel so distinguished himself among the administrators and the satraps by his exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom. 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. 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 (5:3-5).*

Daniel was going to be accused for keeping the law of God. It doesn't get any better than that for someone who is in His grip! When you're falsely accused you'll find out just how God-dependent you really are. Remember, God doesn't intend for plots to destroy you. Rather, He uses them for a greater plan for your life.

The plot in Jerusalem against the apostle Paul was according to God's divine design: *"The Lord stood near Paul and said, 'Take courage! As you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome'"* (Acts 23:11).

At this point in Daniel's text, this third king, Darius, hadn't yet gotten his chance to humble himself and glorify the true God. Don't you think God would give him the same chance he gave the two previous kings? Indeed! Darius was tricked into signing a decree that would carry Daniel into the den with ravenous lions. From our Lord's perspective, these events are spiritual banquets. How He must relish the loving confidence of those who refuse to deny Him!

In our previous Lifebyte we emphasized the vital character quality of **God-dependence**. Daniel exhibited his most faithfully: *"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*

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*a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before. Then these men went as a group and found Daniel praying and asking God for help" (6:10,11).*

All throughout the Scriptures, God sustains people *through* their trials rather than taking the trial away. For instance:

### **Jesus in Gethsemane**

*"Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him. 'Abba, Father,' he said, 'everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will'"* (Mark 14:35,36).

### **Peter's sifting by Satan**

*"Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers" (Luke 22:31,32).*

Or, consider the entire Book of Job. You have 40 chapters of suffering and false accusation before God raises the man up and blesses him. Again, teach your children to *not* avoid what God has in store, but to pray for the courage to have the attitude of Christ through it all. Lion's dens aren't as fearsome as they're made out to be!

*At the first light of dawn, the king got up and hurried to the lions' den. 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?* (Daniel 6:19,20).

The king may have been tricked into signing an edict he couldn't revoke, but he certainly recognized Who the true God was.

**Teach your children to not avoid what God has in store, but to pray for the courage to have the attitude of Christ through it all.**

*Daniel answered, 'O king, live forever! 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.' 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**' (Daniel 6:21-23).*

As with all false accusers, these ended up like Haman (Esther 7:9,10), executed by the very means they intended for others. This is *God's* vindication. We must guard ourselves against attitudes of revenge. If He *never* seems to vindicate, it doesn't matter. What's important is that our lives glorify Him.

*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 (Daniel 6:23,24).*

Again, whether it's through pits of fire or lions' dens, our God wants to be glorified by His creation. If you yearn to follow Jesus wholeheartedly and without reservation, then don't avoid what seems to be a horrible scheme or circumstance. This is the heritage that comes with our pilgrimage to salvation: "*They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; **they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death***" (Revelation 12:11).

We may not all end up being saved from a lion's jaws, but we must certainly be witnesses for the Lord Jesus to the glory of our heavenly Father. Perhaps someday, because of the character of Christ in any one of us, someone will proclaim:

*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**. 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 (Daniel 6:26,27).*

**Help your children and grandchildren develop character qualities that will withstand life's inevitable tests and trials.**

**Guide them to view plots and accusations as our Father's means to glorify Himself.**

**That goal makes the lion's den or fire pit a cause for celebration!**