



## Parkway Fellowship

I Wish I was There • With Daniel in the Lion's Den • Daniel 6:1-28 • 04/29/2018

### Main Point

There is often a cost to our comfort when we choose to obey God rather than man.

### Introduction

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

**Have you ever been caught speeding? Did you feel like it was a speed trap?**

**How does it make you feel when you realize you are being pulled over?**

No one likes to get a speeding ticket. In fact, we dislike them so much that sometimes when we travel, friends or family will tell us to go slow in certain areas because that place is a “speed trap”. Places where the speed limit drops is a great place for officers to wait and enforce the speed limit law.

Speed limit laws are just and are made to protect life, so while we might complain about getting a ticket, we usually deserve it. Today, we are going to read about the prophet Daniel who got caught, not in a speed trap, but in a prayer trap. Unlike the speed limit, this law was unjust, and Daniel could not in good conscience obey it.

### Understanding

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| Ask a volunteer to read Daniel 6:1-9

**Does Daniel remind you of any other biblical character in this section?**

**Why do you think King Darius signed this prayer edict? How might our similarly arrogant actions affect others?**

Daniel’s struggle in Babylon are not unlike Joseph’s struggles in Egypt. Both men lived above all reproach in their exile, and others were constantly causing trouble for them or framing them. Joseph was framed by

Potiphar's wife and thrown into prison. Here, Daniel was set up by these jealous rulers so that they could take him down. Likely, they did not want Daniel in charge because he was not corrupt, and because he was not corrupt, he would not put up with their corruption either.

It was not unusual for kings of that day to masquerade as gods. Pharaoh pretended to be a god as well, as did Caesar in Rome. This led to the people fearing the King, and it made it easier to rule them. Darius signed this law in arrogance, not knowing that his sin would nearly cost his faithful advisor his life.

| Ask a volunteer to read Daniel 6:10-18.

**What does it tell us about Daniel that these men were able to lay this trap for him?**

**What do we learn about King Darius in this passage?**

For this group of men to set this trap for Daniel, they had to know Daniel was faithful to God. They knew that he prayed three times a day toward Jerusalem, and they knew his convictions well enough to know that he would not stop praying regardless of the King's edict. Daniel's example teaches us what it looks like to live out our faith even in a place that may be hostile to it. It is challenging to meditate on whether or not we live our faith publicly enough for people to be as aware of our faith as they were Daniel's.

King Darius cared for Daniel, and he was greatly distressed that his edict might cost him such a faithful servant. Darius' folly teaches us that our decisions have consequences, and that even when we try, we cannot always escape those consequences.

| Ask a volunteer to read Daniel 6:19-28.

**What was the result of Daniel's faith? How do you think this impacted the King?**

**Why hadn't Daniel committed a crime against the King by disobeying the edict? Isn't breaking that law a crime?**

**What do you think of the punishment of the conspirators?**

Daniel's faith resulted in him being rescued from the lions, but we need to point out that this is not always how things end. Stephen's faith did not save him from being stoned to death by the religious leaders in the book of Acts, and it did not save James the brother of John from martyrdom either (Acts 7:54-8:2, 12:1-2). Sometimes, the Lord allows His beloved children to pay a very high price for the sake of their faith. In this case, God chose to deliver Daniel, and because of this deliverance, the faith of King Darius was greatly affected.

Daniel is able to say that he did not sin against the King because it would have been a sin for him to pray to the King. Daniel knew that Darius was no god, and praying to Darius as a god would have been a sin against both God and Darius. It would have helped Darius stay in his arrogance. Instead, Darius praised the God of Israel. The law that Darius passed was wicked, and it would have been sin to follow it.

In Psalm 141:9-10, David writes, “Protect me from the trap they have set for me, and from the snares of evildoers. Let the wicked fall into their own nets, while I pass by safely.” This is precisely what happened to Daniel’s enemies. Sadly, their wicked plot not only cost them their lives, but also the lives of their wives and children. The fact that the lions broke all their bones before they even “reached the bottom of the den” demonstrates that it wasn’t a matter of the lions not being hungry or fierce that saved Daniel, but God’s providence.

## Application

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**Do you tend to equate trust in God with things going well in your life? What does Daniel's life and experience with God say about that?**

**How important was prayer to Daniel if he was willing to risk his life for it? What does this teach us about how badly we need to spend time with the Lord in prayer?**

**What do we learn about integrity from Daniel's story?**

**How can we use Daniel’s story to encourage those who are having a difficult time and face difficult decisions because of their faith?**

**What things do we do publicly that would let people know about our faith as others knew of Daniel’s?**

## Pray

In a time of group prayer, ask the Father to help us depend on him as Daniel did. Pray that God will help us understand the importance of prayer, and the importance of being a good witness for His greatness in public. Ask the Lord to be with those who are struggling because of persecution for their faith, and pray that He will deliver them from their troubles.

## Commentary

| Daniel 6

6:1–15. Daniel continued to prosper under Persian rule. Darius the Mede made him one of three administrators over the 120 districts within his jurisdiction. Daniel was so successful that he aroused the

jealousy of other administrators and officials. Knowing that Daniel was loyal to his God, they devised a plot by which they hoped to have him executed for treason. Appealing to Darius's vanity, they convinced the king to issue a decree commanding his subjects to worship him exclusively for one month. Violators would be thrown to the lions. When Daniel defied the decree and openly prayed to the Lord, the conspirators reported him to the king. Realizing he had been tricked, Darius tried to absolve Daniel of guilt; but Daniel's enemies reminded the king that royal decrees could not be altered.

6:16–28. Darius had no other alternative than to throw Daniel to the lions. A stone was placed over the entrance to the den, and the king sealed it with his own ring so that it might not be disturbed. After a long, restless night Darius returned to the den in the morning. To his amazement Daniel was still alive. Daniel explained that the Lord had miraculously preserved him by closing the lions' mouths. The king ordered that Daniel be lifted from the den and his accusers thrown in. Darius then issued an official statement praising Daniel's God as the sovereign Lord of the universe, who miraculously delivers His servants.