

THE **crossing** **small groups**

Dave Cover | Daniel 5 Sermon Discussion Participant Guide October 16, 2022

Purpose of Discussion: To continue to go deeper with the theme of pride and to look for, identify and battle against its devastating impact in our lives.

Icebreaker: Share an amusing example of a time when you did something that others warned you against doing, and you ended up learning a lesson the hard way.

Transition: Chapters 4 and 5 in Daniel are both highlighting the pervasiveness of pride and its consequences in the lives of two Babylonian kings. Last week, Keith's sermon highlighted King Nebuchadnezzar and God's merciful intervention in his life to show him his pride. After living like an animal for seven years, Nebuchadnezzar regains his sanity and humbles himself, bowing his knee to the God of creation; we are left to believe that this mighty king understood there is a King greater than himself. This week we fast forward more than two decades to the reign of another king who doesn't seem to want to learn from history.

Let's start by revisiting the two questions that Dave ended his sermon with:

1. Have the things that give you your sense of significance replaced God as your significance?
2. In what ways has Pride's insecurity enslaved you?

These are big questions that we will return to at the end of our time together. For now, be thinking about how you might begin to answer these questions.

Read:

Daniel 5:1-4

King Belshazzar gave a great banquet for a thousand of his nobles and drank wine with them. ² While Belshazzar was drinking his wine, he gave orders to bring in the gold and silver goblets that Nebuchadnezzar his father[Ⓜ] had taken from the temple in Jerusalem, so that the king and his nobles, his wives and his concubines might drink from them. ³ So they brought in the gold goblets that had

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been taken from the temple of God in Jerusalem, and the king and his nobles, his wives and his concubines drank from them. ⁴ ***As they drank the wine, they praised the gods of gold and silver, of bronze, iron, wood and stone.***

Discussion:

1. In what way do you see people living as if God is not in control of events and circumstances around us? In what way do you find yourself drawn to live out what those around you are believing?

In Daniel 4, we see Daniel urging Nebuchadnezzar to humble himself and turn from the judgment to come. Though King Nebuchadnezzar doesn't do this and ends up being severely humbled, he came through that experience acknowledging God's sovereign reign in his life. Now, in chapter 5, Daniel is once again called upon to interpret the judgment of God to another king – but this king is not given a chance to repent. His kingdom has already been taken from him. In many ways, his “party” is an act of insanity. These stories should sober us.

2. Living out our faith and clinging to truth is, in many ways, a community effort. How can we help each other to watch for pride in our own lives, and to humble ourselves quickly when we see pride beginning to enslave us?

Read:

Daniel 5:22-28

“But you, Belshazzar, his son,²² have not humbled yourself, though you knew all this. ²³ 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. ²⁴ Therefore he sent the hand that wrote the inscription.

²⁵ “This is the inscription that was written: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, PARSIN

²⁶ “Here is what these words mean: *Mene*²⁶: God has numbered the days of your reign and brought it to an end.

²⁷ *Teke*²⁷: You have been weighed on the scales and found wanting.

²⁸ *Peres*²⁸: Your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians.”

Discussion:

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3. “You have been weighed on the scales and found wanting”. What a statement! When have you felt this way? It might be a time when others behaved condemningly toward you, or it may be something for which you beat yourself up.

Read:

Romans 5:1-2, 8

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we^a have **peace** with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ² through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we^a boast in the hope of the glory of God.

⁸ ...God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Discussion:

4. How is faith through Christ the antidote to those feelings that might come from feeling condemned by others as “weighed and found wanting?” From condemning ourselves in this way?
5. We all wander back into patterns of prideful behavior – worrying too much about what people think of us, or seeking our significance outside of a life of faithful obedience to Christ. Let’s circle back to Dave’s two final questions now and consider our own answers.
 1. How would you know if something else has God as your sense of significance? How can we ask others to help us watch for pride in our own lives?
 2. Where do you see a sense of inferiority, excessive worrying, a desire to control, resentment and bitterness, or a pervasive sense of guilt in your own life? Do you see how these kinds of patterns of thinking can cause us to feel enslaved?
6. In light of the struggles you’ve just identified, how can you remind yourself of the truth of Romans 5:8 in those moments?

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Sharing and Prayer:

Have the group share something they see in their own life/heart where God is revealing an area of needed growth, OR an area of struggle that they want prayer for. Praise God together in the ways that Jesus has delivered you from the realm of darkness into the kingdom of light, away from prideful living to a life of humility.

Option 1:

Pray briefly for the person to your left, so each person has a chance to speak lifegiving encouragement over one another.

Option 2:

Pray through the following passage, asking God to work in everyone's life to make his promises more and more evident.

Philippians 1:3-6

³ I thank my God every time I remember you. ⁴ In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy ⁵ because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, ⁶ being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

Romans 5:1-2, 8

5 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we^a have **peace** with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ² through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we^a boast in the hope of the glory of God.

⁸ ...God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.