

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

Keith Simon | Daniel 4 Sermon Discussion Participant Guide

Purpose of Discussion: To heed the warning from God that pride keeps us isolated from God.

Icebreaker: Share about a time you did something embarrassing.

Discussion:

Transition: King Nebuchadnezzar takes charge of the narration in Daniel 4. From his perspective, He has done only good things. He has worked hard to build his empire. It's been his decisions and governing that have led to prosperity and flourishing in Babylon. Yet, God sends him another warning. This warning is meant to wake King Nebuchadnezzar up. To wake him up to the reality that there is one mightier, holier, and more sovereign than even him. The dream is meant to be a reality check for the King, will he listen?

Read:

[Daniel 4:4; 29-30](#)

⁴ I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at home in my palace, contented and prosperous.

“We care more for our possessions with which we hope to make our way in the world than with our thoughts and dreams which tell us who we are in the world.”

— **Eugene H. Peterson, A Long Obedience in the Same Direction**

1. Are there areas of your life that are off limits to God? In other words, like King Nebuchadnezzar do you find it hard to let go of control of your life?

Read:

[Daniel 4: 19-20, 22, 25, 27](#)

¹⁹ Then Daniel (*also called Belteshazzar*) was greatly perplexed for a time, and his thoughts terrified him. So the king said, “Belteshazzar, do not let the dream or its meaning alarm you.”

Belteshazzar answered, “My lord, if only the dream applied to your enemies and its meaning to your adversaries! ²⁰ The tree you saw, which grew large and strong, with its top touching the sky, visible to the whole earth...

²² Your Majesty, you are that tree!

²⁵ You will be driven away from people and will live with the wild animals; you will eat grass like the ox 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 all kingdoms on earth and gives them to anyone he wishes...

²⁷ Therefore, Your Majesty, 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.”

2. Two part question;
 - a. Has God given you a Daniel in your life? Someone who can point out sin and at the same time God’s truth.
 - b. Why is it hard for us to receive correction and truth?

Keith said that one way pride is manifested in our life is how we react to the success and failure of others. Pride is excited that people got what they had coming, when we can say ‘good thing I’m not like them.’ Yet, Daniel does not live this way. Instead, he speaks truth and engages with King Nebuchadnezzar for his benefit and God’s glory. Daniel is walking a fine line. He refuses to compromise his core convictions and yet he is willing to engage, work for, and help a pagan nation that stands against everything he cares about.

3. Name some areas where it is easy to judge and respond with excitement or inner joy when others fall or fail.
4. What is challenging/encouraging to you from Daniel’s willingness to serve King Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon despite their differences?

We see in verses 2 and 37 that God is delighted to deliver King Nebuchadnezzar from his sin and waywardness. God brought him low and he was humbled (v.31-36). The antidote to pride is humility. Through a period of isolation King Nebuchadnezzar comes to see the truth; that God is mightier, holier, and sovereign over all. Humility gives us a proper perspective.

5. Share a specific time when you have been encouraged by the truth that God delivers us from our sin and the kingdom of darkness?

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The truth is that Jesus is King, and we are his subjects. Jesus lived a life of ultimate humility and demonstrated obedience through His sufferings. We live in this bigger story, a story where pride doesn't have to rule the day, where humility is not only a virtue, but a fruit of living as followers of Jesus. Paul tells the people of Ephesus to "be completely humble and gentle; bearing with one another in love." (4:2)

6. How can you live in humility this week, loving someone that is normally difficult to love?

Sharing and Prayer:

Share as a group how you are encouraged by the message of Daniel 4. Rejoice 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 over the ways God is working in one another's lives to reveal pride and teach us humility.

Option 2:

Pray over Ephesians 2:1-10. Read a verse as a reminder of our secure seat in the Kingdom of Heaven, pausing for a moment before the next verse to dwell in it's truth.

¹ As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, {pause}

² in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. {pause}

³ All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. {pause}

⁴ But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, {pause}

⁵ made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. {pause}

⁶ And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, {pause}

⁷ in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. {pause}

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⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— {pause}

⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast. {pause}

¹⁰ For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. {pause & close}