

## DANIEL – Hope Student Ministry August 2023

**SERIES MAIN POINT: Daniel influenced the king because his main influence was the King of Kings.**

Series Main Scriptures: Daniel 1-6, 1 Timothy 4:12, & 2 Corinthians 4:8

Series Overview: Our culture is obsessed with influencers. How we dress, what we buy, even often what we do and say is impacted by influencers. In this series we will ask students to reflect on who is influencing them and who should be their #1 influence. In this series we will also encourage students that they are not too young to make a difference and be positive influencers pointing those around them to Jesus. Through studying how Daniel and his friends handle some ridiculously hard situations we will learn how we can trust God is in control, our strength, and our King. As we learn about Daniel and his friends we want to emphasize that *God is the hero of this story, not these 4 young men. They are an inspiration for us that points us to God's goodness and greatness. God is our hero. Daniel and his friends were young, in a country that did not honor God, and we can get insight from how to live as God as our #1 influencer and our King.*

### Series Student Takeaways:

- Daniel and his friends were young, in a country that did not honor God, and we can get inspiration from how to live as God as our #1 influencer and our King.
- We are called to live set apart from the world for God.
- God is my King.
- God is sovereign, which means He is in control of all things.
- Daniel and his friends were in a tough spot over and over again. God is our Rescuer and in control of all things, but He doesn't always take us out of discomfort or hardship. Instead, He strengthens us to get through it.

### **Week 1: MAIN SCRIPTURE: Daniel 1 + 1 Timothy 4:12 (Fasting)**

**MAIN POINT: God should be my #1 influencer.**

- **"Big Church" Guiding Thought:** We're in Babylon, but God is sovereign even here.
- **Tension 1:** Ever have someone tell you that you are too young or think you are too young to make a difference?
- **Truth 1:** *"Don't let anyone think less of you because you are young. Be an example to all believers in what you say, the way you live, in your love, your faith, and your purity."* – 1 Timothy 4:12 NLT
  - The truth is you don't have to wait for "one day" (maybe show Frozen 2 clip of "when I'm older." God wants to move through you to make a difference, starting today.
  - Over the course of this series we are going to be looking at a group of young men, teenagers actually, and the story of how they influenced the cultured around them because of who was their #1 influencer.
- **Tension 2:** Who is your #1 influence?
- **Truth 2:** God was Daniel's #1 influence.
  - Set up context for Daniel 1
  - Read Daniel 1:6-16 (*pro tip: because this is a long passage keep your students' attention by having 5 student volunteers act out this scene as you read*)

- Daniel said no to the kings food – why? (give cultural context)
  - Daniel said no to a privilege no one around him would've judged him for taking – why? Because his the #1 audience he was living for wasn't those around him, it was God.
- Student Takeaways:
  - **MAIN POINT: God should be my #1 influencer.**
    - Point back to 1 Timothy 4:12
      - In what you say – do your words and comments build others up or tear them down?
      - In your love – The way you treat other people
      - In your faith – the way you treat God
      - In your purity – the way you treat yourself
  - **God is sovereign, which means He is in control of all things.** (brief intro, will unpack more next week)
    - Trust God is in control – even when you aren't sure what He is up to
  - **We are called to live set apart from the world for God.** (brief intro, will unpack more later in series)
    - A prom dress / suit is set apart for a special purpose and occasion than the rest of our closet. God calls us to live holy, which means set apart for a special purpose.
    - **Gospel Invitation + Response**
- Large Group Engagement (Could be discussion question / interactive / etc )
  - Whiteboard three sections:
    - Who are top influencers in our world / teen's world today?
    - How do they influence people? (Style trends, dance trends, political beliefs, what is ok to say / do / or not)
    - What would it look like if God was our #1?
    - What are 4 different ways we can use what we say to influence others and show them Jesus' love? (point back to 1 Timothy 4:12)

**Week 2: MAIN SCRIPTURE: Daniel 2 (Neb's 1<sup>st</sup> Dream)**

**MAIN POINT: God is in control, and we can trust Him, even when things get tough.**

- "Big Church" Guiding Thought: When things get bad, don't panic.
- Tension: If God is in control, why do I face hard things?
  - Ever feel like you are in a tug-of-war between doing the right thing and offending those around you and maybe losing their friendship?
  - You aren't alone. It's happened to me. It happened to Daniel.
- Truth:
  - Recap Daniel 2 and read Daniel 2:27-28
  - The king was looking for someone to help him find answers. Whether you realize it or not, this is similar to the world around you: friends, classmates, brothers, sisters, are confused and looking for answers – maybe not to fortune tellers – but to somebody.

- Who do YOU look to for answers? Nothing the world has to offer will be able to solve the world's problems, that's why we have to look to our Creator.
- Student Takeaways:
  - **God is sovereign, which means He is in control of all things.**
    - God = the revealer of mysteries (He is so much smarter and wiser than us).
    - This was God's plan: He gave the king this dream.
    - Daniel and his friends were in a tough spot over and over again. God is our Rescuer and in control of all things, but He doesn't always take us out of discomfort or hardship. Instead, He strengthens us to get through it.
  - **MAIN POINT: God is in control and we can trust Him, even when things get tough.**
    - Daniel and his friends lives were on the chopping block – talk about pressure – and they knew they had to turn not to the world for answers but to God.
    - Daniel was in a tough spot. God is our Rescuer and in control of all things, but He doesn't always take us out of discomfort or hardship. Instead, He strengthens us to get through it.
    - Cross Connection: Jesus took a bold and risky step of faith to save us. He laid his life down on the cross so that our relationship with God could be restored.
  - Large Group Engagement:
    - What does it mean to you that God is in control?
    - What can make it hard for us to trust God?
    - How can we trust God, even when things get tough?

### Week 3: MAIN SCRIPTURE: Daniel 3 (The Furnace)

**MAIN POINT: We are called to live set apart from the world for God.**

- "Big Church" Guiding Thought: Where will you draw the line?
- Tension: Ever struggle with being different? Ever had other people jealous of you?
- Truth:
  - Daniel and his boys were different from everyone else around them and called out for it in a pretty scary way.
  - The astrologers were jealous of Daniel / snitches / tattletales / made things hard for Daniel and his boys
  - Set up and read Daniel 3:16-18
  - This is a crazy response! Look at their boldness!
    - What made them so bold?
    - Large Group Discussion: Get into pairs and discuss: Imagine you were in these guys' shoes – what would that have been like? How would you have felt?
  - Cross Connection: We've all had moments where we've done something we shouldn't have – maybe we had the chance to stand up for Jesus but didn't. God offers us forgiveness, not earned by our perfect behavior but by Jesus' sacrifice for us on the cross. The only way to be "good enough" is for us to have faith in Jesus.
- Student Takeaway:
  - **MAIN POINT: We are called to live set apart from the world for God.**

- We talked 2 weeks ago how a prom dress / suit is set apart for a special purpose and occasion than the rest of our closet. God calls us to live holy, which means set apart for a special purpose.
  - Not everyone liked how these guys were different / not everyone will like or support you being different for God
  - So how can we live set apart? FIND YOUR PEOPLE. These guys rolled together.
  - TRUST GOD – even when things get hard (like we've been talking about – it's a theme we see over and over because it's such a big deal)
    - Cross Connection: Just like God rescued them from the fire, God is our Rescuer from spiritual death. We go from death to life when we put our faith in Jesus.
- Large Group Engagement:
  - What are ways you can live set apart for God?
  - What could be an “even if He doesn't” step of faith for you? (For example, even if God doesn't keep that guy at school from making fun of me, I'm going to pray for him.)

#### **Week 4: Daniel 4 + 5 (Neb's 2<sup>nd</sup> Dream + Writing on the Wall)**

**MAIN POINT: God is my king.**

- “Big Church” Guiding Thought: Reaching the lost: our job and God's job.
- Tension: Ever hear the saying, “Pride comes before the fall.” Ever had a moment where your pride lead you to do something dumb?
- Truth:
  - We see God take down two kings because of their sin and pride.
  - This is some crazy Dr. Strange kind of stuff – I need some popcorn when I read about how God scared the king after false worship with writing on the wall with a ghost hand.
  - God's punishment comes after pride and false worship.
- Student Takeaway:
  - **MAIN POINT: God is my king.**
    - A king is the highest authority and exercises the highest power.
    - Whether we acknowledge it or not, God is our king. It's much better for us when we acknowledge it.
    - God's punishment came like a loving parent – to correct
  - **Reaching the lost: our job and God's job.**
    - God shows Himself to those who don't follow Him.
    - We can point others to Jesus too.
- Large Group Engagement:
  - Why can pride be so dangerous?
  - What does it mean for God to be our king?
  - How can we point others to Jesus?

#### **Week 5: Daniel 6 (Lion's Den)**

**MAIN POINT: Healthy spiritual habits grow our relationship with God.**

- “Big Church” Guiding Thought: A life well lived (Daniel in the lions' den)

- Tension: Ever had trouble starting a new habit?
- Truth:
  - New habits can be hard to start but today we are going to look at an inspiring story where Daniel had amazing faith habits in his daily routine and how he did it.
  - Give some context and then read Daniel 6:4
    - Daniel was faithful, always responsible, and completely trustworthy
    - The jealous haters are back to try to tear Daniel down again (give more context)
    - What does Daniel do? Read Daniel 6:10
  - Cross Connection: God wants us to build healthy spiritual habits into our lives to grow our relationship with Him, but our relationship isn't based on our habits. That is good news because we all mess up sometimes. Our relationship is built on Jesus and His sacrifice for us.
- Student Takeaway:
  - **Healthy spiritual habits grow our relationship with God.**
    - Prayer: talking to God on the regular
      - How often do you talk to God?
      - What do you talk to Him about?
      - How can you grow your prayer life?
  - **Healthy spiritual habits one step at a time.**
    - You probably have many habits now that you didn't start off perfectly. (Maybe brushing your teeth?)
    - What is one way you can grow in one healthy spiritual habit this week?
    - Keep at it until it's natural, then ask yourself that question again and start with something new
- Large Group Engagement: get in groups of 3 and discuss:
  - What stood out to you from today's talk?
  - Why is it hard sometimes to take bold steps of faith?
  - Make a list of 5-10 healthy spiritual habits we can practice to grow in our faith.
  - What are tips or tricks you do when you are trying to build a new habit?