



USER FRIENDLY GUIDE TO DANIEL 1-6

Has the Bible anything to say to someone who finds it tough studying in a pagan college, trying to hold onto the bit of faith in God they have, and seeming to lurch from one crisis to another?

Has the Bible anything to say to those who long to be in a big CU but God has called them to a place where the CU is no more than three others? Yes it has ...

This User Friendly Guide will help you find your way around the early chapters of Daniel. You will discover together just how spot on these Words of God are to the 21st Century. Who would have thought it?

"Glorify the King of Heaven , because everything He does is right and all His ways are just." Daniel 4 v 37

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Something you need to know...

All the passages are longer than most of the other "User Friendly Guides" so try and read them before you get together.

Recommended for further reading:

"Dare to Stand Alone" by Stuart Olyott. One of the Welwyn Commentary Series published by Evangelical Press. A big-ish, but very readable book- definitely brings the book of Daniel alive.....

Study 1: Tough Times at Babylon College

DANIEL'S FIRST YEARS IN BABYLON

Key Verse

"But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with....." v.8

Way In

Think of a time when your circumstances have dramatically changed, for example when you first started at college. What were some of the immediate trials & temptations you faced?

Read: Daniel 1

Questions to Answer

1. What were some of the new things (at least 3) Daniel and his friends had to deal with in Babylon? Can you spot the serious one?
2. Daniel saw the food issue as very serious indeed. Look at the key verse... what does "Daniel resolved" really mean in practice?
3. What was the result of Daniel's actions?

Reflection and Action

1. How do you decide which aspects of college life are OK to go along with? Daniel knew his bible well enough - do you as a CU need help with this? If there are issues you are uncertain about find someone to help you.
2. Agree to support one another and pray that God would help you in these every day decisions to live for him.

PRAY

Study 2: Who's knows what is going on?

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM

Key Verse

"Surely your *God* is the *God* of gods and the Lord of kings and the revealer of mysteries." v.47

Way In

"Policeman, big bearded man upstairs, the great zapper in the sky", how would your friends describe *God*?

Read: Daniel 2

Questions to Answer

1. What were the gods of the Babylonians like? v.10-11
2. How different is Daniel's *God*? Spend sometime discovering all you can about *God* from Daniel's prayer. v.12-23
3. How does Daniel behave in his conversation with Nebuchadnezzar? What can we learn from this as we are put on the spot about our beliefs? v.27-30

Reflection and Action

1. "God of heaven" and "great *God*" are terms Nebuchadnezzar would understand, what can we learn from Daniel about how to talk to people who have crazy ideas about *God*?
2. Pray that *God*'s Spirit would enable you to boldly proclaim the good news in his strength.

PRAY

Study 3: When life gets really tough

THE FIERY FURNACE

Key Verse

"The God we serve is able to save us... ..but even if he does not ...
...we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold." v.17-18

Way In

You know it isn't right, but your friends insist you join them..... what do you do?

Read: Daniel 3

Questions to Answer

Remembering the 2nd commandment (no images)...

1. v.8-15. Why were the 3 friends so determined not to bow down to the image?
2. v.16-18. What's so amazing about their defence and loyalty?
3. v.23-30. God intervenes. How does he do this?
What difference does the 4th person in the furnace make?

Reflection and Action

The story ends well, but Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego didn't know that it would.

1. Do you have their confidence (v.17-18) to trust God even if things doesn't look too good?
2. Pray for each other that you will learn to trust God more.
Don't forget to pray for Christians in other countries who do face death because of their faith e.g. Sudan, Pakistan.

PRAY

Study 4: God at work

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S INSANITY

Key Verse

"at that time I lifted my eyes towards heaven " v.34

Way In

"I've lived a life that's full, I've travelled each and every highway
And more, much more that this- I did it my way..."

This song ("my Way") has been recorded by more artists than any other - why do you think it is so popular?

Read: Daniel 4

Questions to Answer

1. v.19-30. What warning has Nebuchadnezzar heard about his future? And what does he do about it?
2. v.33. Compare Nebuchadnezzar as he is now to what he was a few verses ago? How has the dream been fulfilled?
3. v.34-37. How much of the old Nebuchadnezzar is evident as the story ends? What does this say to us about personal achievements and how we should view them before God?

Reflection and Action

1. Honesty time - are we ready to let God "do as he pleases" (v.35) with our lives, or do we want to run the show? How hard is that?
2. What do we need to do to help our not yet Christian friends bring God into their thinking? Is there anything we can do as a CU?

PRAY

Study 5: A step too far

BELSHAZZAR'S LAST PARTY

Key Verse

"But you did not honour the God who holds in his hand your life and all your ways." v.23

Way In

Why do people think that they can get away with things as far as God is concerned?

Read: Daniel 5

Questions to Answer

1. What a party it turned out to be. Can you pick out some of the key moments?
2. Belshazzar acted as though the God of Heaven was insignificant. What were the consequences?
3. "There is a man in your kingdom..." What evidence do we have of Daniel's faithfulness?

Reflection and Action

1. Students in your college face hearing the verdict of God on their life. Unless they have accepted that Christ died on the cross in their place they will face the same verdict as Belshazzar. Do we believe this?
2. Are we really concerned for our friends?
Pray for them and for yourselves that you would be faithful like Daniel

PRAY

Study 6: Jealousy and rescue

THE DEN OF LIONS

Key Verse

"Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed to God, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before." (v10)

Way In

Think of some of the films, books and TV dramas you know about good versus evil. Pick out some of the best ones.

Read: Daniel 6

Questions to Answer

This is a classic story of good against evil. All Daniel had done in his life/work was done well, and he was hated for it.

1. What are the motives of the people throughout these events:
 - ~ The administrators
 - ~ Daniel
 - ~ Darius
2. Faithfulness and prayer are key characteristics Daniel. What evidence do we see of them here?
3. What does Darius' decree show us that he has learnt about the God of Daniel?

Reflection and Action

Think of the things you have learnt from Daniel.

1. How can you encourage one another live differently in your college?
2. Pray for yourselves and each other.
3. Pray for fellow students who need to know the God of Heaven.
4. Plan how you can get the gospel out in your college.

PRAY