

THE EFFECTUAL PRAYERS OF DANIEL

TEXT: DANIEL 9:1-4

Introduction:

1. When we think of Daniel the prophet, we think of his wonderful prophecies. About half of the book of Daniel deals with prophecy. One cannot understand the book of Revelation until he first studies the book of Daniel.
2. When we think of the book of Daniel, we also think of the exciting stories, such as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego being delivered from the fiery furnace in Daniel chapter 3. Or Daniel being thrown into the lion's den in Daniel chapter 6.
3. Then there is the fascinating story in Daniel 5 of King Belshazzar's great feast, when the king and his lords, and his princes, and his wives, and his concubines drank wine out of the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple in Jerusalem.
4. Daniel 5:4 and 5 says, "They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone. In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaister of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote."
5. The king was terrified when he saw the writing on the wall. His astrologers and soothsayers could not read the writing, nor interpret it for King Belshazzar.
6. So they called for Daniel, and Daniel interpreted the writing on the wall. MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. PERES; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.
7. Daniel 5:30 and 31 says, "That night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old."
8. However, in addition to its value in understanding Bible history, and Bible prophecy, the book of Daniel also presents an amazing demonstration of effectual, intercessory prayer.
9. Intercessory prayer is earnestly praying for others (Daniel 9:5, 11).

I. THE DISCIPLINE OF DANIEL'S EFFECTUAL PRAYING

1. Daniel is one of the great heroes of the Bible. He was taken as a child to Babylon, a wicked, idolatrous heathen country. But Daniel maintained his godly testimony the whole time he was there.
2. The key to understanding Daniel's godly character is his prayer life. Daniel's prayer of intercession in Daniel 9 is a great lesson in effectual fervent prayer.

3. Daniel 6:10 says, “Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.”
4. When it comes to prayer, discipline is very important. Psalm 55:17 says, “Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice.”
5. Surveys have revealed that many Christians spend less than five minutes a day praying! Even many pastors and deacons and Sunday School teachers are lazy and undisciplined when it comes to prayer.
6. Oftentimes Christians make excuses for their prayerlessness. They say they are too busy to pray. But Daniel was a very busy man. He was a high-ranking government official – like a prime minister.
7. Christians must cultivate the practice of regular systematic prayer. There must be a regular place of prayer – what our Lord referred to as the prayer “closet” (Matt. 6:6).
8. It is good to start the day with prayer.
9. It is good to have a prayer list.
10. There must be humble submission and dependence upon God in prayer. In Daniel 9:3, we are told that Daniel set his face unto the Lord God, “to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes.”
11. And there must be persistence in prayer. That is why Jesus said, “And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened” (Luke 11:9, 10).
12. George Muller said, “We should continue in prayer till the blessing is granted; without fixing to God a time when, or the circumstances under which, He should give the answer. Patience should be in exercise, in connection with our prayer.”
13. Andrew Murray said, “Of all the mysteries of the prayer world, the need of persevering prayer is one of the greatest. That the Lord, who is so loving and longing to bless, should have to be asked, time after time, sometimes year after year, before the answer comes, we cannot easily understand. It is also one of the greatest practical difficulties in the exercise of believing prayer. When, after persevering pleading, our prayer remains unanswered, it is often easiest for our lazy flesh, and it has all the appearance of pious submission, to think that we must now cease praying, because God may have His secret reason for withholding His answer to our request. It is by faith alone that the difficulty is

- overcome. When once faith has taken its stand on God's word and the Name of Jesus, and has yielded itself to the leading of the Spirit to seek God's will and honor alone in its prayer, it need not be discouraged by delay."
14. Persevering in prayer means not being discouraged by delay. In Daniel 10:2 and 3, we are told that Daniel persevered in prayer and fasting for "three full weeks." (I'll say more about these delays later.)
 15. Oftentimes we must wait much longer than that, but we must not give up praying. If God has given you a burden, do not stop till your prayer is answered.
 16. Another important part of Daniel's prayers was confession of sin (9:4, 20).
 17. The Bible does not mention any sins in Daniel's life. In all ways he appears blameless. However, it is a fact that the closer a Christian gets to God, the more aware he is of his own sinfulness.
 18. Both experience and the Bible teach us that many Christians do not get convicted of certain sins until after they are saved. Jonathan Edwards was one of the godliest men our country ever produced. He wrote this twenty years after his conversion: "Often since I have lived in this town I have had very affecting views of my own sinfulness and vileness, very frequently to such a degree as to hold me in a kind of loud weeping, sometimes for a considerable time together, so that I have been often obliged to shut myself up. I have had a vastly greater sense of my own wickedness and the badness of my heart than ever I had before my conversion."
 19. Another great preacher, A.J. Gordon, just before his death, desired to be left alone. He was then overheard confessing his sins in such seemingly extravagant terms that his family thought he was delirious.

II. THE METHOD OF DANIEL'S EFFECTUAL PRAYING

1. Daniel prayed effectively because Daniel knew the Word of God (Dan. 9:1, 2; cf. Jeremiah 25:11, 12). Daniel "understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem" (9:2).
2. Daniel knew the 70 years were just about up.
3. We need to saturate our minds and our hearts with the Word of God if we desire to pray effectively like Daniel.
4. Our Lord said in John 15:7, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."

5. The Bible says we are to pray according to the will of God. First John 5:14 says, “And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask any thing according to His will, He heareth us.”
6. Here is where some Christians get confused. How are we to know the will of God? We understand the will of God by reading the Word of God. Just like Daniel.
7. God wants us to know His will. Our Lord said in John 15:15, “Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.”
8. Ephesians 5:17 says, “Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.”
9. James 1:5 says, “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.”
10. We can understand the will of God. Therefore, we can pray according to the will of God, and we can have the assurance that our prayers will be answered (I John 5:14, 15).
11. Let us also consider the effectual fervent prayer of Elijah the prophet (James 5:16-18).
12. Elijah’s prayer was based upon faith in the Word of God. Under the reign of Ahab and Jezebel, Israel had gone into apostasy and idolatry. They were worshipping Baal, the false god of the heathen.
13. Elijah knew the Word of God. Therefore, he was praying according to the will of God. Deuteronomy 11:13, 14 says, “And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love the LORD your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul, That I will give you the rain of your land in his due season.”
14. Deuteronomy 11:16, 17 says, “Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them; And then the LORD’s wrath be kindled against you, and He shut up the heaven, that there be no rain.”
15. Therefore, Elijah’s pray was according to the Word of God. That is why Elijah could pray earnestly that it might not rain, “and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months” (James 5:17; cf. I Kings 17:1).
16. Answered prayer glorifies God. Jesus said, “And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son” (John 14:13).
17. Elijah’s prayer glorified God. Elijah prayed, “Let it be known this day that Thou art God in Israel” (I Kings 18:36).

18. Elijah and Daniel (and many others in the Bible) prayed because God put the burden to pray in their heart. Elijah prayed, “I have done all these things at thy word” (I Kings 18:36).
19. Earnest prayer, believing prayer, effectual prayer, and fervent prayer is produced by the Spirit of God and the Word of God.
20. Romans 8:26 says, “Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us...”
21. Intercessory prayer starts with the Holy Spirit.
22. “And He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God” (Romans 8:27).

III. THE RESULTS OF DANIEL’S EFFECTUAL PRAYER

1. Three times in the Gospel of John, our Lord referred to Satan as “the prince of this world” (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11).
2. In Ephesians 2:2, the apostle Paul refers to Satan as “the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.”
3. In II Corinthians 4:4, Paul refers to Satan as “the god of this world.”
4. In Ephesians 6:12, Paul says, “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”
5. In other words, Satan and his large number of demons are highly organized in their efforts to influence and control the governments of this world.
6. The devil and his demons want to hinder the advance of the Gospel.
7. The devil and his demons want to stop missions and soulwinning.
8. Therefore, Christians must break these satanic strongholds through fervent intercessory prayer – prayer that is motivated by the Spirit of God and the Word of God.
9. “World conditions today reveal how strategically the Devil is deploying his forcers in the conflict” (D. Edmond Hiebert).
10. Therefore, God’s people need to learn how to pray like Daniel.
11. Daniel’s praying set the unseen, supernatural world in motion (Daniel 9:20-23).
12. God is looking today for men and women who can pray like Daniel. The Lord says in Ezekiel 22:30, “And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none.”
13. In Daniel 10, we are told Daniel prayed for three weeks but his prayer was still not answered. After three weeks of praying, Daniel’s prayer was

- answered and he was told why it took three weeks for God to answer his prayer (Dan. 10:11-13).
14. This angel had started immediately in response to Daniel's prayer, but he had been fiercely opposed by demonic powers. Daniel's prayer had set off a gigantic spiritual conflict in the unseen heavenly realms.
 15. We read the newspapers and try and keep up on world events, but this is the real background to what is happening in the world. In Daniel 10 our Lord draws back the veil for a few moments and gives us a glimpse to the spiritual battle we are in (cf. Eph. 6:12).
 16. It is reasonable to conclude that if Daniel had given up praying, his prayer would not have been answered. So do not stop praying!

CONCLUSION:

1. The great evangelist RA Torrey said, "There is no more blessed training in prayer than that that comes through being compelled to ask again and again and again even through a long period of years before one obtains that which he seeks from God."
2. Dr. Torrey pointed out that many people call it submission to the will of God when God does not grant them their requests at the first or second asking. They give up praying and say, "Well, perhaps it is not God's will."
3. RA Torrey said this is not submission, but spiritual laziness. "We do not call it submission to the will of God when we give up after one or two efforts to obtain things by action; we call it lack of strength of character. When the strong man of action starts out to accomplish a thing, if he does not accomplish it the first, or second or one hundredth time, he keeps hammering away until he does accomplish it; and the strong man of prayer when he starts to pray for a thing keeps on praying until he prays it through, and obtains what he seeks. We should be careful about what we ask from God, but when we do begin to pray for a thing we should never give up praying for it until we get it, or until God makes it very clear and very definite to us that it is not His will to give it."
4. Let us ask the Lord to teach us how to pray effectually and fervently.
5. In Luke 11:1, we are told that one of our Lord's disciples came to Him and said, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples."