

—{1}. Daniel 6:10 The Habit of Thanksgiving

A. The Story —{2}.

1. Daniel

- a. part of the captivity of Jews taken from Jerusalem
 - (A) possibly from the royal family or the nobles of Judah
 - (B) but certainly a promising young man
 - (C) trained in Babylon University for the king's service
- b. and for some 40–50 years had served
 - (A) first Nebuchadnezzar
 - (B) and later his son or grandson Belshazzar
 - (C) being elevated to the highest post in the land
 - (D) pointing these rulers to the One True God
 - (E) disclosing to Belshazzar his coming defeat by the Medes and the Persians (MENE, TEKEL, & PERES)
- c. now is distinguished among all the rulers set up by the new king of Babylon, Darius the Mede
- d. and Darius contemplates a further promotion, bringing

2. the counteraction of his fellow rulers

- a. there is their **jealousy** which then led to
- b. **conspiracy**
 - (A) **they examined his public life** seeking pretext to accuse him – and drew a complete blank
 - (B) **they examined his private life** seeking pretext – nothing – except, his faithful worship the Jehovah
- c. so they used **flattery** – “King Darius, god for a month,” that appealed to his pride. He liked the idea, to think that for thirty days no one could pray to any God, only to him. The decree was signed. Now if that kind of law were passed in our country, it would not bother a great many people at all. – how easy it would be for many of us to go for a month without prayer, without thanksgiving, without worship!

3. so how did “**chancellor**” Daniel respond? ... did he pause to debate with himself? ... to weigh all the

alternatives? ... no!

- a. there was no change in his practice
 - (A) he went to his usual place of prayer, the roof chamber
 - (B) he adopted his usual posture of prayer: he kneeled
 - (C) he continued his usual plan of prayer: 3 times a day
 - (D) he prayed in his usual fashion: there were petitions and there was thanksgiving

4. now since we didn't read the rest of the chapter
 - a. I will tell you, although I am sure you already know
 - b. and, if not, you can check it for yourself in Daniel 6
 - c. that God did deliver Daniel from the den of lions
 - d. but let us turn from the story to ...

B. The Habit of Thanksgiving

1. critics would like to raise difficulties about the book of Daniel, but whether these pose a difficulty depend upon the nature of the God whom you trust and worship
 - a. such precise predictions of the future kingdoms poses no difficulty for an all-knowing God
 - b. such miracles in delivering Daniel and the three friends pose no difficulty for an all-powerful Lord
 - c. that Daniel in his eighties be accepted as a wise counsellor in a great kingdom is no difficulty to an all-wise God
 - d. that in the face of Darius' edict, Daniel should immediately go to prayer is no difficulty if one has a love relationship with a God who is a *"refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble"* (Psalm 46)
 - e. such problems disappear when you know God's character
 - f. but, that Daniel should give thanks in such a situation! ... now for most of us that is a difficulty! ... since we are well aware of the weakness of our human nature! ...but not for the man who had made thanksgiving a matter of habit!
2. how did this come to be?
 - a. as every parent knows, and every child is reminded, we can develop either bad habits or good; perhaps

you were taught as was I the little rhyme:

Hearts are like doors
that open with ease
to very, very little keys;
and two of these are
"Thank you, sir"
and "if you please."

b. habit starts with the way we think; Talmadge observed:

"Sow a thought, reap an action.
Sow an action, reap a habit.
Sow a habit, reap a character.
Sow a character, reap a destiny." —^{3}.

c. for Daniel the roots of his habit of thanksgiving are found Daniel 1: 8 (NAS): "But Daniel made up his mind that he would not defile himself ..."

d. for you see, then, that Daniel had purposed to bring God into his thoughts and his every action, even in the simple matter of what he would and would not eat

3. how can you and I develop this habit of thanksgiving?

a. well, it will have to start with our thought life

(A) if we feed our thoughts with what the secular world would fill them

(B) or with what the media would present as the norm

(C) then our understanding of God, our relationship with God, our recognition of God will be damaged

(D) so that ingratitude will gradually replace thankfulness

b. our minds need feeding as Philippians 4:8 (NASB): "Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things."

c. the Christian should find such food in God's word; the Old Testament hymn and prayer book, the Psalms, starts with this description of the righteous man; of God's man: "But his delight is in the law of the Lord and in His law he meditates both day and night" (Psalm 1:2)

d. No wonder that such a man can habitually be filled with thanksgiving, that he may express it with such

words as

(A) Psalm 26:7 (NAS): That I may proclaim with the voice of thanksgiving, And declare all Thy wonders.

(B) Psalm 39:30: I ... shall magnify Him with thanksgiving

(C) Psalm 95:2 (NAS): Let us come before His Presence with thanksgiving ...

e. for, you see, as you come to know God better through His word and through prayer, thanksgiving becomes a habit

C. Conclusion

1. I find myself agreeing with the pastor who said ^{-{4}}.

a. There aren't many people who impress me, but I must confess that I am impressed with this man called Daniel.

b. The great wisdom he had doesn't impress me.

c. The great authority he was given by Darius doesn't impress me.

d. Not even his ability to interpret dreams impresses me.

e. But I am impressed with the words of Gabriel to Daniel in chapter 9.

(A) Daniel had been praying.

(B) Gabriel came and said, "As soon as you began to pray an answer was given... for you are highly esteemed."

f. Now, that impresses me.

2. The primary components of prayer are praise and petition

a. and the primary part of praise is thanksgiving

b. as Paul drew near to the close of his first letter to the church at Thessalonica, he left them, and us, with this exhortation: "in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." (5: 18 NAS)

c. "Now when Daniel knew that the document was signed, he entered his house (...); and he continued kneeling on his knees three times a day, praying and giving thanks before his God, as he had been doing previously" (Daniel 6: 10, NASB)

d. friends, get in the habit of giving thanks to the living God, knowing that it is He "who gives us richly all things to enjoy" (1 Timothy 6:17, NKJV)

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Various English versions of the Holy Bible are used in this sermon. Some (for example, the AV, ASV, and NAS) seek to be strictly translations, while others (and especially PHIL) contain paraphrasing which involves a certain amount of subjective interpretation. Nevertheless, there is little material difference in meaning among these. Some prove slightly clearer on some verses than others. Looking at more than one version sometimes sheds additional light on any particular verse. Explanatory additions to the Bible text are shown in [square brackets]. The versions are identified as:

ASV	American Standard Version of 1901
AV	Authorized (King James) Version
NAS	New American Standard version © 1975 The Lockman Foundation
NIV	New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society
NKJV	New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers
PHIL	New Testament Translation © 1972 by J. B. Phillips
RSV	Revised Standard Version © 1946, 1952 by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A.
WEY	The New Testament in Modern Speech © 1902, 1912 R. F. Weymouth

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2. Part of the outline of this section suggested by the sermon, “How to Tame Lions,” Rev. Denis Lyle, Lurgan Baptist Church, Northern Ireland – Kerux sermons #7046
3. From “Sow Your Destiny” by A. J. Gordon – Kerux illustration #882
4. In sermon entitled, “The Secret Weapon,” by Rev. Ben Hayes, Friendship Baptist Church, Bon Secours, Alabama – Kerux sermons #7339