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**Series: The Book of Daniel**  
**Title: "Facing the Lions"**  
**Chapter 6**

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**Introduction**

Daniel and the Lion's Den is one of the most favorite Bible stories. The story contains so many dramatic features; the jealousy of politicians; the vanity of the king; the integrity of Daniel; the power and deliverance of God; add some hungry lions and a little violence, and you've got the makings of a great movie! It all begins in Chapter 6 of Daniel's story.

Let's start with verses 1-3, "It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom one hundred and twenty satraps, to be over the whole kingdom; and over these, three governors, of whom Daniel *was* one, that the satraps might give account to them, so that the king would suffer no loss. Then this Daniel distinguished himself above the governors and satraps, because an excellent spirit *was* in him; and the king gave thought to setting him over the whole realm." (Daniel 6:1-3 NKJV)

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The secular history of this period has no record of a ruler named Darius. Darius is most likely the official known as Gubaru. When Persia captured Babylon, Cyrus appointed Gubaru as the ruler. Darius" could be a title of honor that means "holder of the scepter. Documents show that Gubaru had the power to rule by making appointments, assembling an army, levying taxes, and building palaces. So Gubaru (Darius) truly became the king of Babylon.

Daniel was one of three leaders appointed to be directly under Darius. It's not much of a surprise that Daniel stood out above the other leaders because he had an excellent spirit. Unfortunately, his attitude about life and good work ethic made him the object of jealous attacks by the other leaders.

Scripture identifies several evil and destructive spirits: Jealousy, envy, malice, lust, greed, selfish-ambition, and pride. These hostile spiritual forces opposed the excellent spirit that characterized Daniel.

Daniel's heart desired to please God, and Darius saw Daniel's potential and wanted to promote him. Daniel's competitors heard about Darius' intentions and initiated a plot to kill him.

Verse 4 says, "So the governors and satraps sought to find *some* charge against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find no charge or fault, because he *was* faithful; nor was there any error or fault found in him. Then these men said, "We shall not find any charge against this Daniel unless we find *it* against him concerning the law of his God." So these governors and satraps thronged before the king, and said thus to him: "King Darius, live forever! All the governors of the kingdom, the administrators and satraps, the counselors and advisors, have consulted together to establish a royal statute and to make a firm decree, that whoever petitions any god or man for thirty days, except you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions. Now, O king, establish the decree and sign the writing, so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which does not alter." Therefore King Darius signed the written decree." ([Daniel 6:4-9 NKJV](#))

The other leaders couldn't find a charge or fault to accuse Daniel of because he was faithful. So they made up something and plotted against him.

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Imagine scrutinizing a public servant in office for over 50 years and finding no wrongdoing. No hidden expense accounts. No intern scandals. No questionable business deals. No lavish gifts from lobbyists. No accusations from staff members. They looked, but they could find no skeletons in Daniel's closet. His enemies found nothing, so they had to make up something. They knew women, money, or prestige couldn't entice Daniel because he was devout and faithful to God. The world may be a very poor critic of Christianity, but it is a very accurate critic of Christian conduct.

The enemies of Daniel also knew Darius. They could appeal to his pride and desire for a strong and unified kingdom. "The suggested mode of compelling every subject in the former Babylonian domain to acknowledge the authority of Persia seemed a statesmanlike measure that would contribute to the unification of the Middle and Near East. The time limit of one month seemed reasonable." (Archer)

Daniel's enemies also knew that people would do things they wouldn't normally do as long as they thought everyone else would do it. Of course, they lied when they said all the governors were in support because Daniel was one of the governors, and they didn't consult him.

In the Medo-Persian Empire, when a king formally signed and instituted a decree, it was so binding that not even the king could not change it. The people believed the Personal kings spoke for the gods, who were never wrong and didn't need to change their minds. Once King Darius signed the written decree, no one could change it.

Daniel's enemies knew his faithfulness to God would condemn him to the lion's den. Even though Daniel knew Darius had signed the decree, he went home and opened his window toward Jerusalem, knelt and prayed, and gave thanks to God, as was his custom since his earliest days.

Daniel's enemies were thrilled to find him praying to God. Verse 10 says, "Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper

room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days. Then these men assembled and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God. And they went before the king and spoke concerning the king's decree: "Have you not signed a decree that every man who petitions any god or man within thirty days, except you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions?" The king answered and said, "The thing *is* true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which does not alter." So they answered and said before the king, "That Daniel, who is one of the captives from Judah, does not show due regard for you, O king, or for the decree that you have signed, but makes his petition three times a day." And the king, when he heard *these* words, was greatly displeased with himself, and set *his* heart on Daniel to deliver him; and he labored till the going down of the sun to deliver him. Then these men approached the king, and said to the king, "Know, O king, that *it is* the law of the Medes and Persians that no decree or statute which the king establishes may be changed." (Daniel 6:10-15 NKJV)

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Even though Darius signed the decree, Daniel would not give to the government that which belonged to God alone. It isn't hard to see why people are willing just to go along; especially when others have the power to hire or fire us; break our hearts; slander us; and make our lives miserable. The power to obey and stand for God comes from a settled understanding that God is the One really in control.

Daniel didn't let the decree change his actions one way or another. He didn't pray more or less; he simply continued his prayer life routine. Daniel wasn't courting martyrdom; he was continuing a life of faithful ministry in prayer.

What was Daniel's custom of prayer? He prayed in his upper room. It was private prayer, with no intention of impressing others. He prayed with his windows open toward Jerusalem to remember the place of sacrifice. He prayed according to Scripture. 1 Kings 8 Solomon asked God to give special notice to the prayers of His people when they prayed towards Jerusalem and the temple. He knelt on his knees. (A beggar's posture.) He prayed three times that day. His prayers were filled with thanksgiving.

They found Daniel just as they knew they would - deep in prayer and accused him of disrespecting the king. When King Darius realized what he had done, he was displeased with himself. Instead of blaming others, he knew that he was at fault. He probably wasn't happy with Daniel's enemies but knew he was ultimately responsible. Darius worked to free Daniel as long as he could. According to their custom, the execution would occur the evening the accusation was validated.

Verse 16 says, "So the king gave the command, and they brought Daniel and cast *him* into the den of lions. *But* the king spoke, saying to Daniel, "Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you." Then a stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the signets of his lords, that the purpose concerning Daniel might not be changed. Now the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; and no musicians were brought before him. Also, his sleep went from him." (Daniel 6:16-18 NKJV)

Darius tried everything to save Daniel, but in the end, all he could say was, "The God you serve, He will deliver you." Many believers occasionally display godly character and wisdom but counter-act their good with sinful and wrong behaviors. Daniel's testimony was that he consistently and continually demonstrated his faith in God.

The king sealed the den of lions, and then he couldn't sleep that night. Daniel, on the other hand, fell asleep! "When our lives are centered in God, we can afford to leave our circumstances in the hands of the One in Whom we trust. The occasional is always affected by the habitual." (Morgan)

Verse 19 says, "Then the king arose very early in the morning and went in haste to the den of lions. And when he came to the den, he cried out with a lamenting voice to Daniel. The king spoke, saying to Daniel, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?" Then Daniel said to the king, "O king, live forever! My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths, so that they have not hurt me, because I was found innocent before Him; and also, O king, I have done no wrong before you." Now the king was exceedingly glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no injury whatever was found on him, because he believed in his God." (Daniel 6:19-23 NKJV)

Since the king couldn't sleep, he got up very early to see what had happened to Daniel. When Darius heard Daniel's voice, he knew he had survived the night. Daniel is mentioned in Hebrews 11 as one who, by faith, stopped the mouths of lions (Hebrews 11:33).

We don't know if Daniel *saw* an angel, but he certainly knew that God sent His angel to rescue him. Hebrews 1:14 says angels are ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation.

Daniel told the king, "I have done no wrong before you." Even though he disobeyed the king's edict, he didn't go didn't do it to defy the king. He knew it was in his and the king's best interest for him to stick with honoring the king of kings. Daniel is an example of obedient disobedience. He exercised a living, abiding faith in God even under challenging circumstances. God sent an angel to protect Daniel in response to the prayer of faith coming from a consistent, abiding walk.

Verse 24 says, "And the king gave the command, and they brought those men who had accused Daniel, and they cast *them* into the den of lions—they, their children, and their wives; and the lions overpowered them, and broke all their bones in pieces before they ever came to the bottom of the den." (Daniel 6:24 NKJV)

6 No one had to *ask* Darius to do this. He was ready and willing to bring justice to those who plotted against Daniel. When they threw Daniel's accusers into the lion's den, the lions overpowered them before they even got to the bottom. It validated the angelic protection that saved Daniel. Daniel's accusers perished in the very trap they set for Daniel.

Verse 25 says, "Then King Darius wrote: To all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you. I make a decree that in every dominion of my kingdom, *men must* tremble and fear before the God of Daniel. For He *is* the living God, And steadfast forever; His kingdom *is the one* which shall not be destroyed, And His dominion *shall endure* to the end. He delivers and rescues, And He works signs and wonders In heaven and on earth who has delivered Daniel from the power of the lions. So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus, the Persian." (Daniel 6:25-28 NKJV)

Did Darius become a believer? Probably not. The text reveals Darius as saying "the God of Daniel" rather than the God of Darius. So what can we learn from Chapter 6?

7 From time to time, we all are confronted with situations that test our integrity. Our choices in those times can dramatically affect our character, jobs, self-image, and even our relationship with God. People with integrity follow moral and ethical principles in every area of their life. They are dependable, keep their promises, and can follow through with assigned responsibilities. They are loyal and committed to helping those they serve to achieve their goals. They listen to and respect the decisions of their leaders.

Integrity requires honesty and truthfulness. A person of integrity will own up to their mistakes and learn from them. An honest person is authentic and tells the truth, not what they think someone wants to hear. A person of integrity uses good judgment. They objectively analyze and evaluate an issue using facts, evidence, observations, and arguments to form a sound conclusion. For the believer, insight, perception, and Holy Spirit discernment are also factors. And maybe most of all, people with integrity highly value other people. They show others respect and carefully consider their ideas and input.

## 8 I. Trust in God's Plan

Daniel was a man of integrity. He probably had a bright future back in Israel as an upcoming young and talented leader. In a moment of time, Daniel's life took an unexpected turn. Everything changed: his circle of friends, family, environment, and even the language he spoke. What did he do? Daniel trusted in God's plan.

Have you ever found yourself in a Babylon situation? It can be an abrupt job change, a divorce, death of a spouse or child. Your life dramatically changes, and it's not the way you planned! The temptation is to act unscrupulously and take matters into your own hands. You toss your character and integrity aside as you desperately try to chart a new course for your life.

Daniel didn't throw in the towel and quit. He remained faithful to God with integrity and a consistent lifestyle and witness of his faith. Daniel's circumstances did not dictate his faith. He was a prisoner of war, a foreigner in a strange land, and a slave to a ruthless and terrifying king. But, even as a teenager, Daniel was determined to follow God and refused to eat meat offered to idols or worship other gods.

Daniel teaches us that life can take a very unexpected turn, and there's a temptation to compromise your integrity; remember, God still has a plan for your life! God tells Jeremiah the prophet, "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope." ([Jeremiah 29:11 NKJV](#))

Trust in God's plan for your life; it's always better than your own plan.

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## **II. Seek the Purpose For Pain**

Researchers say people don't give up because their suffering becomes more intense; they give up when they believe it has no purpose or meaning. Try to understand why you are in pain. People lose hope when they no longer see any point to their suffering or how they can honor God by enduring it.

Daniel faced constant jealousy and criticism. He was made a eunuch and was deprived of having a wife and raising a family. And he would never again see the land of Israel that he deeply loved or worship in the temple of the God to whom he devoted his life. Daniel understood pain. But he also understood the purpose of that pain.

If you know there is a purpose behind your suffering and pain you can endure it for the glory of God. 2 Timothy 2:3 says, "You, therefore, must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." ([2 Timothy 2:3 NKJV](#))

Despite all the pain and suffering, Daniel maintained an excellent spirit and lived out what he believed. God may allow evil circumstances to come our way, but he is not the author of them. God has power over all evil but sometimes uses the evil to chastise our sinfulness and challenge us to return to faith in Him. He also uses us as a witness to His standard of righteousness and truth before others.

Does the pain of this life cause you to draw closer to Christ or cause you to become more critical of Him?

### III. God Can Do Anything

Each person will face an impossible situation with seemingly no way out or apparent solution. We are tempted to take matters into our own hands and try to solve the problem on our own, even if we know what we are doing is wrong in God's eyes. It's easy to let the focus become how you get out of the situation rather than how you honor God through it.

Several times, Daniel faced situations that would result in his death if God didn't intervene. Daniel remained loyal to God and steadfast in faith because he knew God could rescue those who trust in Him. Daniel's faith didn't require God to deliver him; His faith was at peace with whatever God decided. Are you at peace with whatever God decides, or do you try to manipulate God to do what you've decided?

Daniel was committed to the God of Ephesians 3:20, which says, "Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen." ([Ephesians 3:20-21 NKJV](#))

Daniel's life demonstrates that God is with us in every situation we face. We don't need to take matters into our own hands; we rather live boldly and unashamedly our faith for all to see. Live your life with integrity and humility, and allow God to work through you to be a blessing to others.

### Conclusion

The truth is that Godly values of the heart always supersede talent or ability. Jealousy is always destructive, will sabotage your faith, and even be fatal. We often judge situations and people by outward appearance, but God judges our inner motivation.

Daniel's situation teaches us that those who usurp authority are never content or secure. Satan loves to exploit a person's pride, and the book of Proverbs says that vanity distorts reality.

People of integrity are not easily intimidated and remain faithful regardless of the consequences. Good people will often do what they can to help you, but only God can deliver you.

We need more courageous examples like Daniel; they inspire us to be decisive and take godly action. Remember that inner character is always more valuable than outward ability. The Bible says that God resists the proud by giving grace to the humble.

When you face the lions of your life, remember that whether in life or death, God is worthy of your worship, no matter what the circumstances.