

Additional meditation: What can we learn from the character of Daniel?

Here are the 11 characteristics of Daniel everyone should learn from.

- 1 The first characteristic we can learn from Daniel was that he was decisive and stuck to his belief in God.
- 2 The second characteristic we can learn Daniel was that he trusted God
- 3 The third characteristic we can learn from Daniel was that he respected authority
- 4 The fourth characteristic we can learn from Daniel was that he used discretion and discernment
- 5 The fifth characteristic we can learn from Daniel was that he enlisted prayer warriors
- 6 The sixth characteristic we can learn from Daniel was that praised God when He answered
- 7 The seventh characteristic we can learn from Daniel was that he humbly gave God the Glory publicly
- 8 The eighth characteristic we can learn from Daniel was that he shared the accolades
- 9 The ninth characteristic we can learn from Daniel was that he delivered bad news with compassion and respect
- 10 The tenth characteristic we can learn from Daniel was that he spoke boldly with respect
- 11 The eleventh characteristic we can learn from Daniel was that he prayed for the sins of the people and included himself

1- The first characteristic we can learn from Daniel was that he was decisive and stuck to his belief in God

Do you have days like I do where it seems life is so overwhelming that I can't make a simple decision? Not Daniel. He made up his mind to not defile himself with the King's food. (Daniel 1:8) Daniel knew, deep within his heart and soul, that this was not something he should do. Being wise, even at the age of 15, Daniel knew the Jewish law.

Daniel stuck to his belief in God. He was faithful and prayed to God three times a day, every day (Dan 6:10). The satraps, governors of provinces, and commissioners in the kingdom wanted to find a way to trap Daniel. Scripture says that "No error or fault was found in him" (Dan 6:4), so they decided they could trap Daniel in how he regarded the law of God (vs 5).

Even when Daniel knew the document had been signed, he still went up to the roof to pray, with his windows open, toward Jerusalem, just as he had done every day.

How would you fair under those circumstances? Would you stand up for what is right? It is hard to think about being thrown into a den with bloodthirsty lions. But how could I bow to some other god besides the LORD our God??

Yet, there are times I have done that in many other ways. I have made 'things' in my life an idol. Food, binge-watching a tv show, reading books for hours on end or my desire to get ahead in my career are all types of an idol.

2- The second characteristic we can learn Daniel was that he trusted God

When Darius threw Daniel into the lion's den, scripture doesn't record Daniel's reaction. He was just put in the lion's den.

When he is removed the next day, Daniel is gracious and says, “O king, live forever!” (Dan 6:21). Then he tells how God sent an angel to shut the lion’s mouth as he was found innocent before God and also towards the king (vs 22).

I love what scripture records next! “So, Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no kind of harm was found on him, because he had trusted God” (Dan 6:23 ESV).

Daniel did trust God. He knew that God is all-powerful and sovereign! God had a plan for Israel and this nation, and that Daniel was a part of it. He also knew that if God wanted him to perish, God would still get the glory!

3- The third characteristic we can learn from Daniel was that he respected authority

When Daniel didn’t want to defile himself with the King’s food during his three-year training, he asked permission from the commander.

When you have someone in authority over you, do you ask questions? Do you ask permission, so to speak, to do it in a different way? Then offer an option of how it could be done with a test period to see if that solution is a better one.

4- The fourth characteristic we can learn from Daniel was that he used discretion and discernment

The captain of the guard, Arioch, went out to begin slaying all the wise men, which would include Daniel and his three friends. Daniel replied to him with discretion and discernment wondering why the King’s decree was so urgent. Then Daniel proceeded to go into the king and to request time to declare the interpretation of the king’s dream to him (vs 14).

How often are we the brunt of someone’s anger and we respond inappropriately? Daniel’s response was such a conviction to me! If someone is mad and yelling at me, it is hard to respond with discretion and discernment. The next time it happens to me, I pray that I will reply with discernment and respond in a calm and respectful manner. How about you?

5- The fifth characteristic we can learn from Daniel was that he enlisted prayer warriors

After Daniel obtained some time from the king to give him the interpretation of the dream, he went home, explained the situation to his friends, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah and asked for their help. Daniel asked them to pray that God would have mercy on them and reveal the mystery of this dream. Understanding the mystery would prevent Daniel, his friends and all the other wise men from being killed (Dan 2:17-18).

Do you ask your friends for prayer help? God’s power is so miraculous. With that same power within us, we can do more than we could ever ask or imagine. I have some friends that I can text, and they will begin praying right away.

6-The sixth characteristic we can learn from Daniel was that praised God when He answered

That night, the mystery of the dream was revealed to Daniel. He blessed the God of heaven and said a prayer full of praise and thankfulness for how God is sovereign overall all the kings and reveals these hidden secrets (Dan. 2:19-23).

It is so great to hear when God has answered a believer’s prayers! We learn from this that the moment we have an answer, we need to stop and thank God for His answer and provision. We have such a loving and caring Father. When He takes a moment to hear our prayer, the least we can do is thank Him.

7-The seventh characteristic we can learn from Daniel was that he humbly gave God the Glory publicly

When Daniel appears before the king who asks him if he is ready to tell him about the dream and what it means. Daniel begins by telling the king that no wise man can answer this but there is a God in heaven who can. This God is not one of the man-made idols that Nebuchadnezzar served. He reveals mysteries and it wasn't wisdom that Daniel had from within him that made it possible to know it. God allowed Daniel to know the mystery so that he could tell the king the dream and its purpose (Dan. 2:27-30).

Daniel was humble and told the King that it wasn't his doing or any knowledge that he had on his own. Giving God the glory in small ways or in front of people at church is easy. But to say that publicly in front of a lot of people would be hard to do. I have heard athletes who have received a trophy or won a championship give God the glory. Honestly, I marvel at that because I don't know if I can do that in front of a crowded stadium, let alone millions of people watching on TV.

8- The eighth characteristic we can learn from Daniel was that he shared the privilege.

After Daniel had interpreted King Nebuchadnezzar's dream, the king fell on his face to worship him and ordered incense and offerings to be made to him. Then he gave Daniel gifts and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon. He also made him in charge over all the wise men of Babylon.

At this point, Daniel made a request of the king. While Daniel was in the king's court, he wanted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to be appointed administrators over the province of Babylon.

When someone gives me thanks for something that was a shared responsibility or totally the idea of another person, I will speak up and say, "I can't take credit for this. This person over here helped me." Without this person's help, I could not have done the best job I could do. They deserve to have the credit given to them too. Do you share privileges when it is due to others?

9- The ninth characteristic we can learn from Daniel was that he delivered bad news with compassion and respect

In chapter 4, Daniel was asked interpret Nebuchadnezzar's dream. Daniel was so alarmed that he wished that the dream would apply to anyone else but the king he was standing in front of. What compassion he had for this man in knowing the outcome of the dream was not a good one!

He gives King the interpretation that he is to be removed from his office and would dwell among the beasts of the field until he recognizes that God is the Most High is ruler over earth and He is the one who gives it to whom he wills (vs 20-25)

Daniel then asks that his advice be pleasing to him and that the king would repent from his sins and be merciful to the poor. Perhaps in doing so, the king will still have a time of prosperity (vs 27). In addition to having compassion, Daniel respectfully gives him advice on how he could respond to this dream.

10- The tenth characteristic we can learn from Daniel was that he spoke boldly with respect

In chapter 5, Daniel speaks respectfully and tells King Belshazzar about how God bestowed honor on his grandfather Nebuchadnezzar. Then he shares how the king's pride had resulted in his throne being

taken away. Daniel tells Belshazzar, point-blank, how his heart was not humble and that bringing God's sacred vessels, originally from the temple, out to drink from exalted himself against the God of heaven. He then interprets the handwriting on the wall for King Belshazzar (Dan. 5:18-29 ESV). As a result, the King immediately gave him the gifts he mentioned. Later that night, the king was killed.

Daniel could have told Belshazzar to take a flying leap after he read the inscription on the wall. However, he was a man of integrity, and respectfully told the king what he requested. I like his approach of giving the king a history lesson about his grandfather King Nebuchadnezzar who learned his lesson about pride and humility. Then he respectfully let him have it by telling him how his lack of humility was his downfall.

11- The eleventh characteristic we can learn from Daniel was that he prayed for the sins of the people and included himself

In Chapter 9:2, Daniel was reading the Scriptures and realized that the number of years that they were being held captive in Babylon all these years was because of their sin. The Jews had not given the land a Sabbath rest for 490 years. Every seven years, the land had a Sabbath and was not plowed, and crops were not grown. So, 70 sabbath rest years were missed and that accounted for the 70 years that they were being held in captivity! See these scriptures about this for more study (Jeremiah 29:1-14, 2 Chronicles 36:20-23 and Leviticus 25:1-7 ESV).*

After studying this, Daniel fasted, prayed and asked for forgiveness. For the people AND for himself. With every phrase of his prayer, he said we and not they. He took responsibility for his part in the sins of the people.

I have always appreciated the humility of the prophets when they pray for the people and include them in the prayers of repentance.