

STUDY GUIDE

SIX SESSIONS



FAITH + FOOD + FITNESS + FOCUS + FRIENDS

THE **DANIEL** PLAN

40 DAYS *to a*
HEALTHIER LIFE

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faith

NURTURING *your* SOUL

"I can do all things
through Christ who
strengthens me."
Philippians 4:13 (WEB)

Many of us are disciplined when it comes to spiritual practices like reading our Bible or going to church, but we may not have that same discipline when it comes to caring for our physical health. Others are careful about eating habits, but ignore caring for the soul. But our spiritual health and physical well-being are intimately connected—and each can strengthen the other. This week, we'll introduce you to the five Essentials of The Daniel Plan, focusing on Faith and its impact on our overall health.



COMING TOGETHER

In this first section, everyone will have the opportunity to evaluate their starting point for the study, and pick one area of health they would like to focus on for the next six weeks. Since this is the first meeting, go around the room and make sure everyone knows each other's name.

Before you begin, use the Small Group Roster in the appendix to get everyone's contact information. Ask someone to type up the list and email it to everyone in the group this week.

Also, you'll need some simple group guidelines that outline values and expectations. Use the sample in the appendix and make sure that everyone agrees with and understands those expectations.

Use the questions on the following page to start your discussion:

1

The Daniel Plan is a journey toward better health in five essential areas of life. How healthy do you feel in each of these areas, compared to a year ago?

	NOT WELL AT ALL	SOME GOOD DAYS	IMPROVING	MAKING GOOD PROGRESS	DOING GREAT
Faith	1	2	3	4	5
Food	1	2	3	4	5
Fitness	1	2	3	4	5
Focus	1	2	3	4	5
Friends	1	2	3	4	5

2

Pick one of the five Essentials where you'd like to experience positive changes over the next six weeks. What, specifically, are you hoping for in this area of your life?

LEARNING **TOGETHER**





A MESSAGE FROM

Pastor Rick

Watch the video together. Use the following outline to take notes. The answers are in the appendix if you need them.

1

Life is a battle, because everything in the world is _____.

“I don’t understand myself at all, for I really want to do what is right, but I can’t. I do what I don’t want to—what I hate. I know perfectly well that what I am doing is wrong, and my bad conscience proves that I agree with these laws I am breaking. But I can’t help myself because I’m no longer doing it. It is sin inside me that is stronger than I am that makes me do these evil things.”

Romans 7:15-17 (LB)

“No matter which way I turn I can’t make myself do right. I want to but I can’t. When I want to do good, I don’t; and when I try not to do wrong, I do it anyway.”

Romans 7:18-19 (LB)

“My new life tells me to do right, but the old nature that is still inside me loves to sin. Oh, what a terrible predicament I’m in! Who will free me from my slavery to this deadly lower nature? Thank God! It has been done by Jesus Christ our Lord. He has set me free.”

Romans 7:23-25 (LB)

“If you are in Christ there is no condemnation for your life.”

- Pastor Rick -



Romans chapter 8 gives us six wonderful benefits of _____ in God's Spirit.

“So there is now no condemnation awaiting those who belong to Christ Jesus. For the power of the life-giving Spirit—and this power is mine through Christ Jesus—has freed me from the vicious circle of sin and death.”

Romans 8:1-2 (LB)

» All change starts with _____.

» The second thing that helps us to change is the _____.

“Following after the Holy Spirit leads to life and peace, but following after the old nature leads to death.”

Romans 8:6 (LB)

“You are controlled by your new nature if you have the Spirit of God living in you.”

Romans 8:9 (LB)

“So, dear brothers, you have no obligation, whatever, to your old sinful nature.”

Romans 8:12 (LB)

“We are saved by trusting. And trusting means looking forward to getting something we don't yet have—for a man who already has something doesn't need to hope and trust that he will get it. But if we must keep trusting God for something that hasn't happened yet, it teaches us to wait patiently and confidently. And in the same way—by our faith—the Holy Spirit helps us with our daily problems and in our praying.”

Romans 8:24-26 (LB)

» We do this by _____.

“And we know that all that happens to us is working for our good if we love God and are fitting into his plans.”

Romans 8:28a (LB)

» God will work all for _____.

“What can we ever say to such wonderful things as these? If God is on our side, who can ever be against us? Since he did not spare even his own Son for us but gave him up for us all, won’t he also surely give us everything else?”

Romans 8:31–32 (LB)

» God wants you to _____ in your life.

“For I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from his love. Death can’t, and life can’t. The angels won’t, and all the powers of hell itself cannot keep God’s love away. Our fears for today, our worries about tomorrow, or where we are—high above the sky, or in the deepest ocean—nothing will ever be able to separate us from the love of God demonstrated by our Lord Jesus Christ when he died for us.”

Romans 8:38–39 (LB)

» God’s _____ will never stop.



AN INTERVIEW WITH

Jimmy Peña Founder of Prayfit

3

_____ is the foundation of The Daniel Plan because faith is the foundation of every part of our lives.

- » True faith motivates us to do God's will.
- » God's Word provides important tools for overcoming obstacles in our lives.

4

Grace removes the burden of trying to _____ a body that won't last, and yet grace is the reason to honor it, every day that it does.

- » It's not about the mirror; it's about the one we're trying to mirror.



5

Our health is about _____.

- » That's the focus of The Daniel Plan: harnessing God's Word, spending time with it every day, and setting the tone for an abundant life.



“Therefore, honor God with your bodies.”
1 Corinthians 6:20b (NIV)



GROWING TOGETHER

In this section, discuss what you learned from the video teaching. There's no single "right answer" here—just a chance for people to share their stories and listen to each other.

1

Pastor Rick talked about Paul's struggle against his sinful nature, which he writes honestly about in Romans 7. Which of the five Essentials (Faith, Food, Fitness, Focus, or Friends) comes to mind when you read Romans 7: knowing what to do but not doing it?

2

Many of us wrestle with shame—feeling condemned or not good enough. If the Bible says that we have no condemnation, what does that mean to you personally?

3

Jimmy talked about the truth that grace means we don't have to be perfect. Have you ever wrestled with perfectionism? If so, how has that impacted your relationships with God and others?

"My son, pay attention to what I say; turn your ear to my words. Do not let them out of your sight; keep them within your heart; for they are life to those who find them and health to one's whole body."

Proverbs 4:20-22 (NIV)

In the next section, called Better Together, we will offer you practical next steps to explore what you have learned and apply it to your everyday life. This week we will offer next steps for The Daniel Plan Essential of Faith, along with Food and Fitness tips and recommendations.

BETTER TOGETHER

Let's get practical—and put what we're learning into action. This week, we're talking about Faith, so be sure you're reaching out and sharing what you are learning about God's truths and promises! We also have Food and Fitness activities for you to choose from.

We have terrific resources to help you on your Daniel Plan journey. Each group member can go to danielplan.com and set up a FREE Daniel Plan Health Profile to track their progress and download The Daniel Plan App with recipes, exercises, and social tools to connect with each other.

Journaling is a great tool for nurturing your faith. *The Daniel Plan Journal: 40 Days to a Healthier Life* helps you track your progress and includes short encouraging devotionals to motivate and inspire you.



FAITH NEXT STEPS

- Pair up with one other person in the group. This will be your spiritual and encouragement partner for the study, your new Daniel Plan buddy. We have learned that people who do The Daniel Plan with another person or a group lose 50 percent more weight! Commit to checking in with each other throughout the week. Even a short text of encouragement is a loving way to let your buddy know you care. Now each of you answer this question: What are you hoping God will do during the next six weeks of this study? After sharing, pray briefly for each other.

- Based on your conversation and prayer, select one of the verses from this week's study that you think would be particularly encouraging to your partner. Share that verse with them by writing it on a card for them, or texting it to them. Call or text each other at least once during the week, and pray for each other during the week.

- Pick a Bible verse from any part of today's lesson. Write it down, and then read it every day. Try memorizing it and sharing with the group next time. Consider taking on this challenge: memorizing one verse each week during the six weeks of the study.



Here are a few tips and suggested activities to help you move forward on your journey toward health. **Check one or two boxes** next to the options you'd like to try—choose what works for you! You'll find helpful bonus material on the video.

FOOD NEXT STEPS



☐ **Food Tip of the Week:** A great way to start your Daniel Plan lifestyle is to clean out your pantry. Click on the QR code to watch a video and learn how, or go to danielplan.com/videos/clean-your-pantry.



☐ **Recipe of the Week:** Learn how easy it is to make a delicious breakfast smoothie. Just click The Daniel Plan Recipe of the Week button on the screen, scan the QR code, or go to danielplan.com/videos/breakfast-smoothie.

- ☐ **Group Activity of the Week:** Watch the videos together, and then make plans with one or two other group members to clean out your pantries. Help each other get ready to begin a healthy Daniel Plan lifestyle.



FITNESS NEXT STEPS

- **Fitness Tip of the Week:** The first step in reaching your fitness goals is to believe that you can change. Forget about yesterday, no matter what your attempts to change in the past have been. Today is a new day, and with God's help and power you can do it—one day at a time!
- **Move of the Week:** Watch the one-minute Daniel Plan Move of the Week video (just click The Daniel Plan Move of the Week button on the screen). Be adventurous, and try it right now with the group. Or use the QR code, or go to danielplan.com/videos/move-of-the-week to watch it on your own.
- **Group Activity of the Week:** Plan an outing with other group members and go for a walk or hike together. If you live near each other, walk in your neighborhood or find a local trail to enjoy.



EACH WEEK

We highly encourage you to read a few chapters of *The Daniel Plan: 40 Days to a Healthier Life* as you go through this study. This week, read chapters 1-3: How It All Began, The Essentials, and Faith.

PRAYING TOGETHER

Because our efforts at living healthier are strengthened by prayer, we end each meeting with prayer and encourage group members to pray for each other during the week.
This week, try praying this way:

In the large group, simply share your answer to the question, “What are you hoping God will do in your life through this study?” so that others can get to know you and pray for you during the week.

If group members feel comfortable, have a time of prayer in which anyone who would like to pray a short prayer for someone else in the group may do so. The leader can close with the following benediction:

“Father, thank you so much for what you’re going to do in our lives. Thank you in advance for giving us the desire to become healthier. We want to get well. We trust that by living out the biblical principles of The Daniel Plan, we will feel better, have more energy, and, Lord willing, live a healthier and longer life. Increase our faith so that we might be a better witness for your glory. We pray this in Jesus’ name. Amen.”

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