

STUDY GUIDE

SIX SESSIONS



THE
DANIEL
PRAYER

PRAYER THAT MOVES HEAVEN
AND CHANGES NATIONS

ANNE
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LOTZ

SESSION 2



PREPARING FOR PRAYER

Just as an athlete can't expect to win by showing up at game time without having practiced, the commitment to pray doesn't just happen. It requires preparation.

Anne Graham Lotz

When we first meet Daniel, we find that he and his people (the Israelites living in Judah) were in trouble. After years of warnings from God to turn from their wicked ways, judgment had finally come upon them in the form of a foreign invading force. “In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it” (Daniel 1:1). In a relatively short period of time, Judah was erased from the map. She no longer existed as she had for more than 500 years. She was a people and a nation in exile.

Daniel was approximately fifteen years of age when he was captured by the Babylonians, taken from his homeland, and transported 800 miles away to serve as a slave in the king’s court. In a moment, everything about Daniel’s life changed: his culture, his customs, his language, his clothes, and his name. Because his immediate superior was chief of the eunuchs, he may also have been cruelly stripped of his masculinity to make him more subservient to his new master. His situation must have seemed utterly hopeless to him—because, in every obvious way, it was. Yet through it all, Daniel maintained his faith in God and his devotion to Him.

We see this most clearly in the way that Daniel made prayer the center of his life. He never forgot the temple that had been at the heart of Jerusalem and of the nation. Even later in his life, he remained mindful of the sacrifices that had been offered to God there as an act of worship. He longed for Jerusalem every day, as evidenced by the fact that three times daily, when he prayed, he turned his face in the direction of his beloved city that once had been.

Daniel had to make a choice after his circumstances so drastically changed. He could have chosen to be bitter against God. He could have chosen to turn his back on his people. He could have chosen to just compromise with his new culture. But instead, he turned to God and sought to change his people’s situation through fervent prayer.

On one occasion, we overhear him pleading with God on behalf of his nation. Ultimately, God answered by moving a ruler named Cyrus to issue a decree that

after seventy years of captivity, every Jew living in Babylon could return home. Just think about this. What kind of prayer—offered by one person—could move Heaven and change nations? What was needed for Daniel to be able to pray in that way? What can we learn from his example?

One of the first lessons we learn is that kind of prayer requires *preparation*. The kind of preparation Jesus taught His disciples in Matthew 6.

PRE-SESSION BIBLE STUDY

Begin this week by reading Matthew 6:5–18, and then work through each of the personal Bible studies using the steps you learned in the workshop. You will review the lessons and personal applications during your group session and then watch the teaching from Anne, which points out the application in Daniel’s life of the principles Jesus taught.

STUDY 1

STEP 1

Read God's Word

Passage: Matthew 6:5

⁵ “And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full.”

STEP 2

What Does God's Word Say?

(List the facts.)

STEP 3

*What Does God's Word Mean?
(Learn the lessons.)*

STEP 4

*What Does God's Word Mean in My Life?
(Listen to His voice.)*

STEP 5

*How Will I Respond to God's Word?
(Live it out!)*

Name: _____ Date: _____

STUDY 2

STEP 1

Read God's Word

Passage: Matthew 6:6

⁶ “But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.”

STEP 2

What Does God's Word Say?

(List the facts.)

STEP 3

*What Does God's Word Mean?
(Learn the lessons.)*

STEP 4

*What Does God's Word Mean in My Life?
(Listen to His voice.)*

STEP 5

*How Will I Respond to God's Word?
(Live it out!)*

Name: _____ Date: _____

STUDY 3

STEP 1

Read God's Word

Passage: Matthew 6:7–8

⁷ “And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words.

⁸ “Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.”

STEP 2

What Does God's Word Say?

(List the facts.)

STEP 3

*What Does God's Word Mean?
(Learn the lessons.)*

STEP 4

*What Does God's Word Mean in My Life?
(Listen to His voice.)*

STEP 5

*How Will I Respond to God's Word?
(Live it out!)*

Name: _____ Date: _____

STUDY 4

STEP 1

Read God's Word

Passage: Matthew 6:9–13

⁹ “This, then, is how you should pray:
‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be
your name,

¹⁰ “your kingdom come, your will be
done on earth as it is in heaven.

¹¹ “Give us today our daily bread.

¹² “Forgive us our debts, as we also have
forgiven our debtors.

¹³ “And lead us not into temptation, but
deliver us from the evil one.”

STEP 2

What Does God's Word Say?

(List the facts.)

STEP 3

*What Does God's Word Mean?
(Learn the lessons.)*

STEP 4

*What Does God's Word Mean in My Life?
(Listen to His voice.)*

STEP 5

*How Will I Respond to God's Word?
(Live it out!)*

Name: _____ Date: _____

STUDY 5

STEP 1

Read God's Word

Passage: Matthew 6:14–18

- 14 “For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.
- 15 “But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.
- 16 “When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full.
- 17 “But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face,
- 18 “so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.”

STEP 2

What Does God's Word Say?

(List the facts.)

STEP 3

*What Does God's Word Mean?
(Learn the lessons.)*

STEP 4

*What Does God's Word Mean in My Life?
(Listen to His voice.)*

STEP 5

*How Will I Respond to God's Word?
(Live it out!)*

Name: _____ Date: _____

VIDEO TEACHING

The following outline may help you as you watch the video teaching.

- I. A prepared place to pray . . .

- II. A prepared time to pray . . .

- III. A prepared atmosphere for prayer . . .

- IV. A prepared attitude for prayer . . .

GROUP DISCUSSION

Take a few minutes to discuss some of these questions with your group.

1. What is the “Daniel Prayer”? How is it different from other kinds of prayer?

2. What is the best place for you to meet God each day in prayer? Share your ideas, settle on the best one for you, and commit to do it.

3. What is the best time for you to set aside for prayer?

4. How can you create an atmosphere that is more conducive for prayer?

5. What are some ways you can cultivate an attitude of gratitude when you come to God in prayer?

CHOICES

This week, you studied Matthew 6:5–18 and learned what Jesus teaches about preparing for prayer. Think back on how you responded to this passage of Scripture (step 5 in your daily studies). Write down some areas you need to work on to better prepare your heart to pray as Daniel did.

What I will do to prepare for prayer . . .

WRAPPING UP

Some 700 years before the conquest of Judah, King Solomon had prayed, “When [the people] sin against you . . . and you become angry with them and give them over to the enemy . . . and if they turn back to you with all their heart and soul in the land of their enemies who took them captive, and pray to you toward the land you gave their fathers . . . then from heaven, your dwelling place, hear their prayer and their plea” (1 Kings 8:46, 48–49). Daniel had followed this practice of praying toward Jerusalem during his captivity, and he did not alter it even in the face of death. Why was he so committed to this practice?

Three times a day, when Daniel went to his designated place for prayer, he opened his windows toward Jerusalem. The poignant gesture revealed not only the longing in his heart for his city and his people, but also his exclusive focus on the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The God of his fathers. The God who had been with him throughout his lifetime, for over eighty years. The one, true, living God whom Daniel worshiped and served and obeyed.

—Anne Graham Lotz, *The Daniel Prayer*, page 38

Daniel had cultivated a lifetime habit of prayer and was unwilling to compromise even the smallest detail in his worship to the Lord. Even though he was in captivity and under constant threat, three times a day—without fail—he expressed his thankfulness to God. Today, as you prepare to move forward, consider what it would look like for you to cultivate such an attitude toward God. On the lines provided, write out your own heart-prayer to God, expressing your gratitude to Him in spite of whatever challenges or trials you are facing.

MY PRAYER



MOVING FORWARD

For the next session, you will be assigned 2 Chronicles 6:40–7:22 to study using the approach you learned in the Bible study workshop. Make sure to complete the worksheets on pages 46–55 before your next meeting. Once you take the first step of preparing a time, place, atmosphere, and attitude for prayer, you are ready for the next step. You must now consider what *prompts* you to pray the kind of heartfelt cry to God that Daniel prayed for others. We will examine this aspect of the Daniel Prayer in the next session.