

**Fearless:
When Lions Sit Down to Pray**

How to maintain integrity when the lions are already seated about, praying and giving thanks for their next meal — *you*.



Daniel 6: 12b-16 (NRSV)

The king answered, "The thing stands fast, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be revoked." Then they responded to the king, "Daniel, one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or to the interdict you have signed, but he is saying his prayers three times a day." When the king heard the charge, he was very much distressed. He was determined to save Daniel, and until the sun went down he made every effort to rescue him. Then the conspirators came to the king and said to him, "Know, O king, that it is a law of the Medes and Persians that no interdict or ordinance that the king establishes can be changed." Then the king gave the command, and Daniel was brought and thrown into the den of lions. The king said to Daniel, "May your God, whom you faithfully serve, deliver you!"

Reflections

Following the straight-and-narrow. Being the person God calls us to be. Doing the right thing. "Being good." We are called to serve more than our mortal flesh. But even when we try our best, so many things seem to stand in our way. In the Bible, our "moral compass", it seems that our own sinful nature is the common culprit. Lust, fear, jealousy, and greed are just a few of the conditions which conspire to send us off the path God intends for us. Our own sin can be enough of a challenge.

And what about when others enjoy watching us fail? We can feel isolated and powerless to maintain our integrity. In the case of Daniel, we see a man who did his job well. A man who accepted responsibility and maintained integrity.

As he progressed in his career, we learn that even his detractors were unable to find fault with him. Jealous of his power, they schemed against both him — and indirectly — the king. Even when he knew their trap had been laid, he stood steadfast in his commitment to God.

***...remember that
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In an environment free from religious oppression, not to mention lions, Daniel's story can seem distant and surreal. If we feel put-upon by our own sin, busyness, or 'life in general', how can we relate to a

man subject to such a scheme? Perhaps we do well to consider the fruits of his faithfulness. In addition to an unscathed and prosperous Daniel, we see a king witness to God's power through Daniel. A king who would then decree to his people:

"For he is the living God and he endures forever; his kingdom will not be destroyed, his dominion will never end."

As we ready ourselves for challenges to come, and face our own fears along the way, remember that our God is the very same God who stood by Daniel. In the most unfair of circumstances. In such clear danger, God was with Daniel. And He is with us.

— Mike West

Readings

Sunday, January 25

Daniel 6:1-6

Why did the administrators and satraps conspire against Daniel?

Monday, January 26

2 Samuel 11:1-11

Consider how being in a position of authority opens up opportunities for sin.

Tuesday, January 27

Genesis 37:3-4; Genesis 4:1-5

How should Joseph's brothers have reacted? How do you think Cain perceived the situation? Was his jealousy warranted?

Wednesday, January 28

Proverbs 21:25, 26:13-14, 26:16

Is laziness a form of sin? Consider how acts of omission (i.e., not doing something we should be doing) affect our relationship with God.

Thursday, January 29

2 Chronicles 33:21-25

There are many examples of the natural consequences of sin in scripture. How does Amon's situation differ from that of Daniel? What motivated Daniel's enemies? What motivated Amon's enemies?

Friday, January 30

Genesis 37:5-11

Can our successes be too much for friends to bear? Have you experienced a situation in which your joy led directly to another's jealousy?

Saturday, January 31

John 18:29-40

Was Pilate afraid to act, or was he convinced of Jesus' innocence? Consider the similarities to Daniel's situation.

Don't have a Bible? Access these scriptures at biblegateway.com.