



DANIEL

Unshakable Trust — in — Uncertain Times



Sunday
October 18, 2026

Daniel 6:1-29

Example Teaching Rhythm

Welcome and Connect: 10 Minutes

This helps people feel connected and more comfortable participating in the study and discussion.

Look Forward: 5-10 Minutes

Share any important church events, service opportunities, or upcoming group plans. Keep this brief but clear.

Look at Scripture: 25-35 Minutes

This is the main focus of Community Groups. Read the selected scripture together and guide the group through discussion questions and observations.

Prayer: 10 Minutes

Invite members to share prayer requests and praises, then pray together as a group. This is a time to support one another.

Explaining the H.E.A.R Method

The acronym **HEAR** stands for **Highlight, Explain, Apply, and Respond**. Each of these four steps aims to cultivate an atmosphere to hear God speak.

Highlight - After praying for the Holy Spirit's guidance, read the passage of scripture, and highlight each verse that speaks to you.

Explain - Explain what the text means. Ask questions like:

- Who wrote this, to whom, and why? What does this reveal about God? What do the key words actually mean? What did this call the original audience to, and what does that reveal for me?

By asking questions, with the help of God's Spirit, and by using helpful study resources, you can understand the meaning of a passage or verse.

Apply - Application is the heart of the process. Everything you have done so far culminates under this heading. As you have done before, work to uncover the significance of these verses and the implications they have. Ask questions like:

- What does this passage reveal about God, yourself, or the world that you need to embrace or sit with? Does this passage challenge an attitude, assumption, or habit that needs to change? Is there something to do? Is there someone to love?

Respond - Your response to the passage may take on many forms. Ask: Is there something to pray? - Let the passage shape your prayer, not just inform it. Use the "Five Daily Prayer Prompts" to guide you in your response.

Integrity

Staying the same person in the dark as in the light

Introduction

By this point in the story, Daniel has outlasted an empire.

Belshazzar is dead – judged mid-party, and Babylon fell to the Medes and Persians the same night. A new king, Darius the Mede, now sits over a kingdom Daniel didn't choose, didn't vote for, and had no hand in building.

He's an old man by now, decades removed from the teenager who first refused the king's food. And somehow, under a government that never knew him, he's promoted again – one of three men set over a hundred and twenty satraps, distinguished above the rest because, as the text puts it, an excellent spirit was in him.

That phrase is doing more work than it looks like. The other officials comb through decades of his record looking for a way to bring him down: a rumor, a rounding error, a favor called in the wrong direction. Verse 4 is almost funny if you slow down and read it straight – professional investigators, motivated by envy, given full access to his entire public career, come up empty. So they stop looking for a crime in his work and manufacture one in his worship instead.

The trap is elegant. Get the king to sign a thirty-day ban on praying to anyone but himself, lock it into Medo-Persian law so not even Darius can undo it, and wait. They know exactly what Daniel will do, because they've apparently been watching him long enough to know his schedule. Three times a day, windows open toward Jerusalem, on his knees. The decree doesn't need to name him. It only needs a habit predictable enough to convict him.

And Daniel's response to a signed death warrant is almost anticlimactic. He goes home. He opens the windows. He kneels down and prays – the text is specific – as he had done previously.

That's the whole chapter in one clause: as he had done previously. Everything else – the lions, the sleepless king, the stone and the seal – is just what happens when a life that consistent finally gets tested where it can be seen.

Discussion Questions + Illustration

Select a question or two below to open up discussion.

- Think of someone who's the same person no matter who's in the room. What makes that rare?
- Have you ever changed a habit – even briefly – because someone might see? What did that reveal?
- When has an ordinary habit turned out to be the bravest thing you did that week?
- What's the difference between someone with convictions and someone with a persona?
- Can someone be trustworthy publicly while cutting corners privately? Which one is the truth of who they are?

In 482 BC, Athens held an ostracism vote – citizens scratched a name onto a shard, and whoever got the most votes was exiled ten years, no charge required. The statesman Aristides, known as "the Just" for decades of fairness, was handed a shard by an illiterate voter who didn't recognize him and asked him to write "Aristides" on it. Asked what wrong the man had done him, the man said, "None – I'm just tired of hearing him called 'the Just' everywhere." Aristides wrote his own name and handed it back.

- His integrity was so consistent it became grounds to vote him out, the way Daniel's enemies could only attack him through the trait that made him blameless. What does it cost to be known for something that steady?

Highlight | Daniel 6:1-29

Darius splits the empire into a hundred and twenty satrapies under three overseers. Daniel stands out "because an excellent spirit was in him" (v.3) – enough that the king considers setting him over the whole kingdom.

The other officials hunt for grounds to remove him and find nothing – "no ground for complaint" (v.4) – so they resort to "the law of his God" (v.5). That itself is a backhanded compliment: the only fault they can pin on him is his devotion to God.

The decree they engineer is airtight: thirty days, capital punishment, locked into a law "which cannot be revoked" (v.8), even by the king who signs it. Daniel's response is one verse doing enormous work – he prays "as he had done previously" (v.10). Same posture, same schedule, same direction toward Jerusalem. The habit outlasts the threat because it was never built around the threat's absence.

From there it plays out almost mechanically: Daniel is caught as planned (v.11), Darius works until sundown to save him (v.14), the den is sealed, and a sleepless king runs to it at dawn (vv.19-20).

Verse 22 names the mechanism: God's angel shut the lions' mouths "because I was found blameless before him... and also before you, O king." Two audiences, one record.

- His accusers had his whole public career to work with and could only attack his private devotion. Where did his integrity actually live?
- The king who signed the decree is the one left sleepless. Who really held power in that room?

Explain | Consider the Context

Daniel's posture – kneeling, three times daily, windows toward Jerusalem – matches Solomon's temple-dedication prayer almost verse for verse (1 Kings 8:46-49). Solomon, dedicating a temple he assumed would stand forever, still asked God to hear the prayers of exiles who would one day face captivity in a foreign land and pray "toward this land" anyway. Daniel isn't inventing a discipline under pressure. He's keeping a promise God made to be reachable from exile, centuries before Daniel's family was ever born – in a temple that's already gone by the time he's praying toward it.

The three-times-a-day rhythm wasn't unique to him, either – Psalm 55:17 describes the same pattern, evening, morning, and noon, in a prayer David wrote generations earlier. It's a shared inheritance of exile: a people scattered under one empire after another, still keeping the same hours, facing the same fixed point, long before anyone thought to make a law out of it.

- Solomon prayed for exiles centuries before there were any. What does it mean that Daniel's habit answers someone else's prayer?
- This wasn't a private habit Daniel invented – it was shared practice among exiled Jews, handed down before he was even born. What's the difference between faith you inherit and keep in community, and faith you have to reinvent on your own?

Apply | Discuss as a Group

Nobody could catch Daniel doing something wrong, so they built a law around something he'd always done right. The attack targets a strength so consistent it became predictable – and predictability is what integrity looks like from the outside.

That consistency doesn't happen by accident under threat – it's built for decades before anyone's watching for a reason to punish it. Daniel's prayer life in chapter 6 wasn't decided under pressure; it was already decades old, the same rhythm kept in a city that isn't his, under kings who keep changing. By the time it's tested, there's nothing left to decide – that happened long ago.

Darius spends the night fasting, unable to sleep (v.18) – a pagan king more shaken by what he's done to a righteous man than the man himself seems to be. A strange reversal: the one with everything to lose is calm, and the one who signed the decree is coming apart.

- Where has plain steadiness proven your faith more than any bold moment could?
- If someone spent months hunting for a legitimate accusation against you and came up empty, what's the one area they'd have to attack instead – the way Daniel's enemies attacked his prayer life?
- Have you ever quietly changed a habit that mattered because the room got more dangerous? What would it take to go back to doing it "as you had done previously"?

Respond | How should I live/pray?

Start by naming the habit in your own life that would most reveal who you actually are if it suddenly became costly. For Daniel it was already decades old by the time it was tested – a discipline built in private, long before anyone thought to weaponize it. Ask God, honestly, whether your own private practices – prayer, honesty in small things, how you treat people who can't help your career – would hold up the same way if someone went looking for a reason to come after you.

Then consider the actual shape of Daniel's prayer life: three set times a day, a specific direction, a long-practiced posture. This wasn't a crisis response. It was a rhythm that existed before the crisis and simply kept running through it. If your own devotional life only shows up when things get hard, this chapter is an invitation to build something steadier and more regular, so that when pressure comes, there's already a rhythm underneath it to keep going.

Finally, sit with Darius for a moment. He's a minor character in this chapter, but a telling one – a pagan king who ends the story writing his own decree that "all peoples, nations, and languages" should tremble before the God of Daniel (v.26). One man's unremarkable consistency moved an emperor to worship words he never chose to say. You may never know who's watching the rhythm you think nobody notices.

- What's one private practice you could commit to keeping "as you have done previously," specifically because it would be easier to quietly let it slide?
- Who in your life has never seen you fail a real test of integrity – and what would it cost you to make sure that stays true?

Response Tool: Five Daily Prayer Prompts

As you leave today, let these five questions carry the weight of your response into the week ahead – not as a checklist, but as an ongoing conversation with God. Introduce the five daily questions as a simple spiritual practice that can help us intentionally live out our faith in our workplaces, homes, families, and communities.

- God, where do you want me to go?
- God, who do you want me to see?
- God, what do you want me to say?
- God, what do you want me to pray?
- God, how do you want me to serve?

After this time of reflection, transition into a time of prayer requests. Allow time for members to share and, if appropriate, allow others in the class to pray for each other.

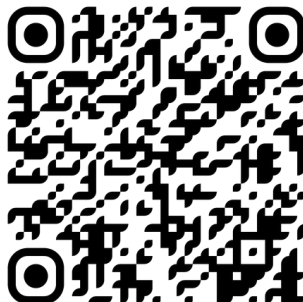
Additional Commentary

- On the "excellent spirit" (רוח יתירָא, ruach yattira, v.3): the same root (yattir, "surpassing") appears describing Daniel's wisdom back in 5:12, tying this chapter's promotion to a pattern established under the previous regime – Daniel's reputation transfers intact across a change of empire.
- On "no ground for complaint or corruption" (v.4): the accusers' language covers both incompetence and moral failure, a deliberately exhaustive pairing. The narrator is ruling out every ordinary line of attack before showing us the only one left.
- On "as he had done previously" (מִן־קִדְמַת דְּנָה, min-qadmat denah, v.10): literally "from before this" – an idiom for established, prior custom. The phrase doesn't describe a decision Daniel makes in the moment; it describes a decision that was already made, long before this decree existed, being carried out again.
- On the law "which cannot be revoked" (דָּת דִּי־לֹא תַעֲבִיד, dat di-la te'de, vv.8,12,15): the same root (adah, "to pass away") describes God's kingdom in 7:14, "his dominion... shall not pass away." A law modeled to sound as permanent as God's own kingdom becomes the very thing that traps its author – and the same word later describes a permanence only God's reign can actually claim.
- On "found blameless" (v.22): Daniel's claim rests on two separate grounds – innocence before God and innocence before the king – echoing his refusal in chapter 1 to give either Babylon or God any legitimate grievance against him.
- On Darius's decree (vv.26-27): his language – "the living God," "enduring forever," a "kingdom that shall not be destroyed" – echoes Daniel's own praise of God after the dream in chapter 2 (2:44) and Nebuchadnezzar's confession in chapter 4 (4:34). Three separate pagan kings, three times, arrive at strikingly similar language. Scripture lets Babylon's own rulers keep testifying against their own gods.

Community Group Resource Page

Visit our website to view our **leadership resources**.

From Community Group training and resources to Discipleship Group starter guides, we want to equip you to make disciples.



Additional Study

Watch/Listen

Bible Project - Daniel



See a collection of videos, classes, and articles that dive into the book of **Daniel**.

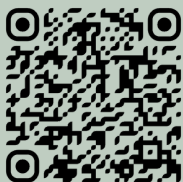
Bible Project - So Righteous



See a collection of videos, classes, and articles that dive into **Remaining Faithful**.

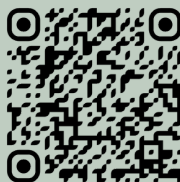
Overview

Enduring Word - Daniel 6:1-29



Text commentary, written materials, and audio/video recordings over **Daniel 6:1-29**.

Got Questions - Lions Den



Biblical Q&A, articles, translations, audios, videos, apps, podcasts and more on **the Lions Den**.

Expand

Bible Reference - Daniel 6



Explore chapter and verse commentaries to deepen your understanding of **Daniel 6:1-29**.

Bible Hub - Daniel 6:1-29



Parallel translations, language tools, commentaries, and much more on **Daniel 6:1-29**.

Deepen

Logos Facts - Lions Den



Logos Factbook shares information resources and articles about **the Lions Den**.

Blue Letter Bible - Daniel 6



Original texts, Translations, Cross-Refs, Commentaries, Dictionaries + more on **Daniel 6**.

