

May 21, 2023

RESOLVED: Better Choices, Better Life 6 - I am faithful

Daniel remained true to his faith and values even though he was a captive in a hostile culture that was actively trying to change his values and beliefs.

How did Daniel remain FAITHFUL in that setting?

He was Resolved, Ready, Consistent, Devoted, Kind, and **He was Faithful.**

This series is about being convinced that decisions we make today are not merely decisions for a moment, but that each decision has a trajectory. So, let's review our trajectory.

I am RESOLVED: I will not let my feelings overrule my logic. I will not choose short-term pleasure over long-term benefits. I will follow God's will.

I am READY: To be battle ready, I will pre-decide to be faithful, and I will pre-solve my pressure points before I am tempted.

I am CONSISTENT: I know that successful people do consistently what other people do occasionally, and that if it is important to me, I will find a way, NOT an excuse!

I am DEVOTED: I will strengthen my emotional attachment to God through daily relational routines to strengthen my relationship with God.

I am KIND: Because my pride gets in the way, I know I am not consistently KIND, *"But God gives us more grace..."* And that is why I will humble myself before God, because *"...God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble."* –James 4:6

I love the real life stories we have been studying in Daniel. There is so much to learn from these powerful stories. Although these stories are highly motivating, to be "Resolved" like Daniel, we need more than motivation. We need God's help. It's God's grace and God's power that changed Daniel. We see this not only in the stories, but today we are up close and personal as if listening over the shoulder while Daniel prays and seemingly downloads God's grace and power through prayer.

In chapter 9 we learn that DANIEL WAS

1. Faithful to STUDY God's WORD

Daniel 9:2 (NIV) — in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, understood from the Scriptures, according to the word of the Lord given to Jeremiah the prophet, that the desolation of Jerusalem would last seventy years.

Jeremiah 29:10 (NIV) This is what the Lord says: “When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my good promise to bring you back to this place.

It's now 70 years after the exile, Babylon was overthrown by the Medo- Persian Kingdom, so Daniel prayed.

2. Faithful to PRAYER

Daniel 9:3 (NIV) — So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes.

He humbled himself before the Lord and pleaded with him. Let's see why as we listen in on Daniel's prayer.

3. Faithful to LOVE and WORSHIP God

Daniel 9:4 (NIV) — I prayed to the Lord my God and confessed: “Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and keep his commandments,

- Daniel *leads his life with his lips* speaking praise and worship, verbalizing the greatness of God, “the great and awesome God” who what?...
 - *Keeps his covenant of love ...*
 - *with those who love him...*
 - *and keep his commandments (it's what faithfulness looks like)*
 - God is **faithful**, so Daniel responds in **faithfulness!**
 - BUT this explains what he prays next...
 - God built into his covenant what to do WHEN you fail in your faithfulness. (not if, but WHEN)

4. Faithful to CONFESS his SIN

Daniel 9:5 (NIV) — we have sinned and done wrong. We have been wicked and have rebelled; we have turned away from your commands and laws.

Daniel 9:20 (NIV) — While I was speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel . . .

5. Faithful to his covenant COMMUNITY

Let's listen in on how Daniel prays on behalf of his covenant community.

Daniel 9:6–14 (NIV) — 6 We have not listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes and our ancestors, and to all the people of the land. 7 “Lord, you are righteous, but this day we are covered with shame—the people of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem and all Israel, both near and far, in all the countries where you have scattered us because of our unfaithfulness to you. 8 We and our kings, our princes and our ancestors are covered with shame, Lord, because we have sinned against you. 9 The Lord our God is merciful and forgiving, even though we have rebelled against him; 10 we have not obeyed the Lord our God or kept the laws he gave us through his servants the prophets. 11 All Israel has transgressed your law and turned away, refusing to obey you. “Therefore the curses and sworn judgments written in the Law of Moses, the servant of God, have been poured out on us, because we have sinned against you. 12 You have fulfilled the words spoken against us and against our rulers by bringing on us great disaster. Under the whole heaven nothing has ever been done like what has been done to Jerusalem. 13 Just as it is written in the Law of Moses, all this disaster has come on us, yet we have not sought the favor of the Lord our God by turning from our sins and giving attention to your truth. 14 The Lord did not hesitate to bring the disaster on us, for the Lord our God is righteous in everything he does; yet we have not obeyed him.

Did you notice that **He prays in solidarity with his covenant community**. He does not pray about “them”— “they did this and that” but he prays “We did this and that”, and asks for mercy, and prays on their behalf. We often forget our covenant solidarity. We don’t think “we”, we often think and speak about “them”. Hurling criticism and accusation. We think, “If they” would shape up... **then** God would bless.

DANIEL WAS

1. Faithful to **STUDY** God’s **WORD**
2. Faithful to **PRAYER**
3. Faithful to **LOVE** and **WORSHIP** God

4. Faithful to CONFESS his SIN
5. Faithful to his covenant COMMUNITY
6. **Faithful to live for God's HONOR**

Daniel 9:17–19 (NIV) — “Now, our God, hear the prayers and petitions of your servant. For your sake, Lord, look with favor on your desolate sanctuary. 18 Give ear, our God, and hear; open your eyes and see the desolation of the city that bears your Name. We do not make requests of you because we are righteous, but because of your great mercy. 19 Lord, listen! Lord, forgive! Lord, hear and act! For your sake, my God, do not delay, because your city and your people bear your Name.”

Daniel was so highly esteemed by God, he sent the Angel Gabriel to encourage him, and give him a PREVIEW of the next 70 x 7 years.

[Bible project video, “Life in exile”]

We have an advantage Daniel did not have. Jesus’ accomplished work. Let’s finish today with the “I AM FAITHFUL” affirmation statement.

I am FAITHFUL: “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” –Galatians 2:20

Prayer TEAM get ready...

NEXT WEEK *OVERFLOW!*

Lord, listen! Lord, forgive! Lord, hear and act! For your sake, my God, do not delay, because WE, your people, bear your Name. We have been purchased by the blood of Jesus, and filled by your Spirit. Help us to be RESOLVED, READY, CONSISTENT, DEVOTED, KIND, and FAITHFUL, living for your glory and honor! Amen

Talk It Over

SMALL TALK

1. When did prayer first become your own conversation with God?

VIEWPOINT

2. **Read Daniel 9:1-19.** In Daniel's prayer, what specific examples does he provide to highlight God's promise-keeping faithfulness to the Israelites?
3. How does Daniel's recognition of God's faithfulness in the past impact his confidence in God's ability to deliver the people in the present situation?
4. What characteristics of Daniel's character and faith shine through in his prayer, and how do they inspire you to deepen your own faithfulness to God?

GETTING PERSONAL

5. From this series "Resolved", what were some of the most challenging or impactful truths for you? How have these helped you?
6. Reflecting on Daniel's unwavering commitment to prayer, what practical steps can you take to prioritize and strengthen your own prayer life and relationship with God?

MAKING PROGRESS (THIS WEEK)

7. Which statement, and which step(s) associated with the statement, would you like to focus on a bit more this week: I am RESOLVED, READY, CONSISTENT, DEVOTED, KIND, or FAITHFUL?