

BAND of BROTHERS

SUMMER SERIES 2023 – WEEK 5

Nebuchadnezzar: Pride goes before the fall

*And he gives grace generously. As the Scriptures say,
 “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”
 So humble yourselves before God.*

– James 4:6-7 NLT

- **A man after *your* own heart**

- Who was Nebuchadnezzar?
 - King of one of the greatest empires in history
 - Conqueror and destroyer of the nation of Judah
 - A tool in the hand of God used to punish His chosen people
 - A Gentile unbeliever
 - His country came to represent all that is decadent, immoral, and ungodly
- So why study the life of this godless king?

...such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. – 1 Corinthians 6:11 ESV

- Nebuchadnezzar suffered from a problem common to all men

Pride – believing that I have achieved what God has done through me or others have done for me. Seeking the praise of men and taking credit for the achievements of others.

- Pride resides at the core of all sin
- Pride and godliness cannot coexist in the life of a believer

All who fear the LORD will hate evil. Therefore, I hate pride and arrogance, corruption and perverse speech. – Proverbs 8:13 NLT

- **What does God’s Word tell us about pride?**

- It is of this **world**

For the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions. These are not from the Father, but are from this world. – 1 John 2:16 NLT

- God **stands against** the prideful

God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. – James 4:6 ESV

- God considers the prideful to be **wicked**

Everyone who is arrogant in heart is an abomination to the LORD; be assured, he will not go unpunished. – Proverbs 16:5 ESV

- He **despises** it in His people

“This is what the LORD says: This shows how I will rot away the pride of Judah and Jerusalem. These wicked people refuse to listen to me. They stubbornly follow their own desires and worship other gods. Therefore, they will become like this loincloth—good for nothing!” – Jeremiah 13:9-10 NLT

How did Nebuchadnezzar exhibit pride in his life?

- He was used to getting his own way (Daniel 1:3-5)
- He was demanding (Daniel 2:5)
- He fostered fear in others but not respect (Daniel 1:10)
- He tended to overreact (Daniel 2:12)
- He got angry when things didn't go his way (Daniel 3:13, 19)
- He worried about the future (Daniel 2:29)
- He was obsessed with his power, position, and possessions (Daniel 2:31)
- He took credit for his success (Daniel 2:37)
- He admired and emulated those who were successful and powerful (Daniel 2:46)
- He had an overinflated sense of self-worth (Daniel 4:11-12)
- He displayed a god-complex (Daniel 3)

● **The consummate self-made man**

- Nebuchadnezzar had all the trappings of success:
 - A position to die for
 - Unparalleled power and authority
 - Possessions and pleasures
 - Ambitious plans and the resources to achieve them
 - But he had no peace
 - He worried constantly'
 - He suffered from recurring nightmares
 - He felt threatened
 - He was insecure
 - And he couldn't trust anyone

- His testimony (Daniel 4)
 - The audience
 - “...to all peoples, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth...” – vs 1
 - He wanted everyone to know
 - The message
 - “...the signs and wonders that the Most High God has done for me.” – vs 2
 - His signs are great
 - His wonders are mighty
 - His kingdom is everlasting
 - His dominion is from generation to generation

- The dream
 - He was living the dream life (vs 4)
 - He was king of the greatest empire on earth
 - He was wealthy and powerful
 - He had just conquered Egypt
 - He was enjoying a period of peace and prosperity
 - He felt secure and successful

“I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at ease in my house and prospering in my palace.” – vs 4

- He had become cocky and overconfident

As for me, I said in my prosperity, “I shall never be moved.” – Psalm 30:6 ESV

In the pride of his face the wicked does not seek him; all his thoughts are, “There is no God.” His ways prosper at all times... He says in his heart, “I shall not be moved; throughout all generations I shall not meet adversity.” – Psalm 10:4-5, 6 ESV

They name their lands after themselves, but, despite their wealth, people do not last. They are like animals that perish. This is the destiny of fools... – Psalm 49:11-13 NET Bible

- His dream is interrupted by a nightmare (vs 5)
 - He’s frightened
 - Sometimes God must go to extremes to get our attention
 - He could choose to ignore it
 - Or he could listen and learn
- He looked for an answer (vss 6-9)
- But he doesn’t get the answer he was looking for (vss 19-27)

- *“It is you, O king” – vs 22*
“...you have grown and become strong”
“...your greatness has grown and reaches to heaven”
“...your dominion reaches to the end of the earth”
- *“It is a decree of the Most High” – vs 24*
 ~ It is binding
 ~ It is unavoidable
- It is not good news – vs 25
 ~ You’ll be driven away from mankind
 ~ You’ll become a brut beast
 ~ You’ll lose everything you value for seven years

His kingdom	His mind
His fancy robes	His power
His fine home	His influence
His “wheels”	His comfort
His fine food	His joy
His money	His relationships
His free will	
- It’s up to you – vs 25-27
 ~ *“know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men”*
 ~ *“know that heaven rules”*
 ~ *“break off your sins by practicing righteousness”*
 ~ *“break off your iniquities by showing mercy to the oppressed”*
- The nightmare becomes a reality – vss 28-33
 - Time has a way of making us forget God’s promptings

*All this came upon King Nebuchadnezzar. **At the end of twelve months** he was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon... – 4:28-29*

- But he still had “I” problems
 ~ He was basking in his glory
 ~ He had forgotten Daniel’s warnings
 ~ He had forgotten God’s decrees
 ~ He did no fear of God

“Is not this great Babylon, which I have built by my mighty power as a royal residence and for the glory of my majesty?” – 4:30

- The fall can be hard

Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. – Proverbs 16:18 ESV

*A rich man's wealth is his strong city,
and like a high wall in his imagination.
Before destruction a man's heart is haughty,
but humility comes before honor. – Proverbs 18:11-12 ESV*

- Repentance can bring restoration
 - ~ He looks to heaven
 - ~ His reason returns
 - ~ He learns a series of valuable lessons:

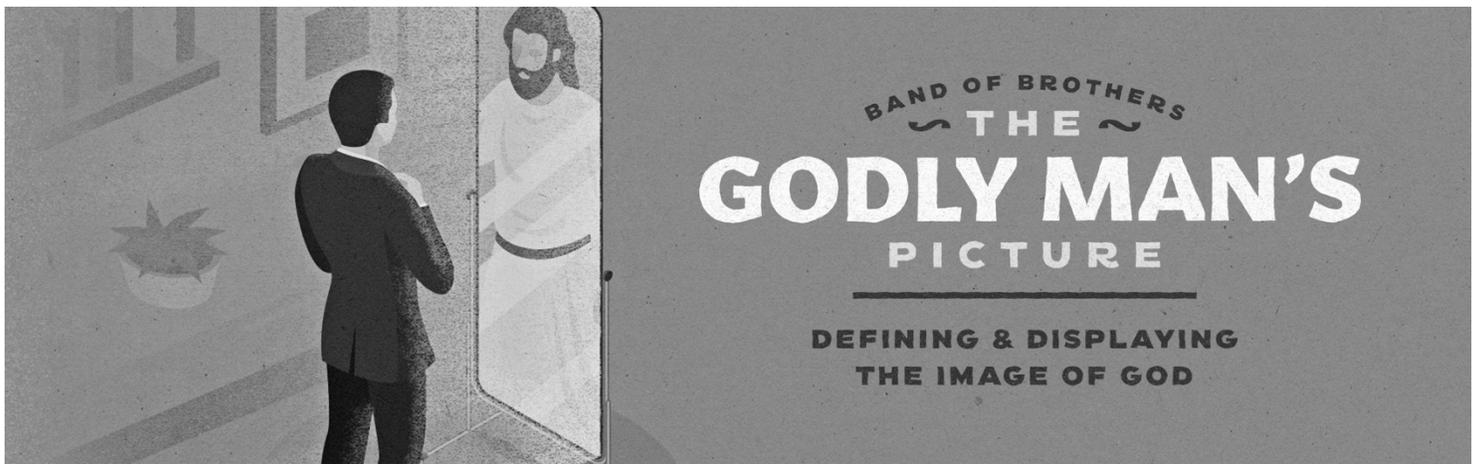
*The Most High God lives forever – NOT ME
His dominions is everlasting – NOT MINE
His kingdom is from generation to generation – NOT MINE
All nations are nothing before Him – INCLUDING MINE
His will always wins out – NOT MINE
His power is irresistible – NOT MINE
His sovereignty is universal – NOT MINE
His works are true – NOT MINE
His ways are just – NOT MINE
He is able to humble those who walk in pride – INCLUDING ME*

FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION

Look at that last list of lessons Nebuchadnezzar learned through his ordeal. Which one(s) do you feel like God wants to teach you and why?

In what ways does Nebuchadnezzar's life display his lack of fear of God, his unawareness of God's love, and no desire for intimacy with God? Why are these three concepts so important for all men to grasp?

Why is it so dangerous for us to embrace the idea of the self-made man? Read John 15:5 for an important insight from Jesus.



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SUMMER SERIES 2023 – WEEK 6 HOMEWORK

WEEK 6 – Daniel: Sold Out to God

The king declared to Daniel, “O Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?” Then Daniel said to the king, “O king, live forever! My God sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths, and they have not harmed me, because I was found blameless before him.

– Daniel 6:20-22 ESV

Most of the men we have studied so far teach us as much by their mistakes as by their virtues. Each of them had serious blemishes and dark chapters in their lives marked by unworthy conduct. But Daniel is one of the few men in the Bible whose life, so far as we know, was marked by righteousness and truth. He remained devoted to God throughout his life, despite living as an exile in Babylon. If not for the fact that the Bible is the inspired word of God, we could easily write off Daniel’s seemingly perfect life as nothing more than exaggerated myth. But the Scriptures present Daniel as a man who loved God more than anything else in his life, including fame or fortune. He was a man after God’s heart.

- Read 2 Kings 24:10-16. Daniel was just a 15-year-old boy when these events took place. Take a few minutes to consider what thoughts went through this young man’s mind as he watched the destruction of his hometown and as he made the long journey to Babylon as a captive. How would this devastating disaster impact his view of God?
- Read Daniel 1:1-9. As if being taken captive was not bad enough, upon his arrival in Babylon, Daniel is immediately separated from his family and placed in the king’s court to be trained as a servant. What does verse 4 tell about Daniel? What qualities and characteristics did he possess as a young boy?

According to verse 5, what did the king command?

What was Daniel's response to the command? Why do you think he was so stubborn about not defiling himself with the king's choice food and wine?

- Daniel found himself living in one of the most decadent and immoral cities on the face of the earth. Yet he never seems to have compromised his standards. As Christians, we sometimes struggle with the idea of living in the world but not being part of it. It seems like an impossible assignment.

Read John 17:14-16. This is part of the high priestly prayer of Jesus. In it, He is asking the Father not to remove His disciples from the world, but to protect them from the evil one. As Christians, we are not of this world, yet we have to live in it. Daniel, as a faithful Jew, found himself living in the middle of Babylon, yet he was able to remain faithful to God.

Read Daniel 6. In verse 4, Daniel's enemies try to find any ground of accusation to discredit Daniel in the eyes of the king. What did they accuse Daniel of and what does this reveal about his character?

When Daniel hears about the edict from the king, what is his response and why is this important?

What is Daniel willing to suffer in order to keep from compromising his belief in God? According to verse 23, what gave Daniel the strength to face the consequences of his stand?

- Read 1 John 2:15-17. List the things of this world that you tend to love and that cause you to compromise your faith in order to have them.

- Read Philippians 3:17-21. Paul describes those who have become enemies of the cross of Christ because their god is their belly. What do you think he means by this statement?

Why does Paul encourage his readers not to set their minds of earthly thing? What is the alternative and how would this help us live godly lives in a godless world?