

## Living Holy in a Godless World

### The Life of Daniel

by Annette Gullick 12/1/2001

#### Lesson Three: Be in Community

**Bible Passage: Daniel 2: 12-19, 48, 49**

**Bible Truth: Daniel had close relationships of mutual support with others who shared his faith.**

**Lesson Objective: That students seek Christian friendships, in which they give and receive support.**

#### **Before You Begin:**

- ◆ copies of “autograph hunt” handout
- ◆ pencils
- ◆ chalkboard or large white paper to write on
- ◆ something to write with

#### **Opening:**

**Hand out the sheet "autograph hunt" and pencils to the students, read the instructions out loud, and give them a few minutes to do it. When someone has gotten all of the signatures or when the designated time has finished, have everyone return to their seats. Congratulate the students who got the most signatures. Then have each student share with the group one new thing they learned about someone else in the group.**

*Even though we see each other on a regular basis, as we've just seen there is a lot we don't know about each other. Today we are going to be learning another key from the life of Daniel to help us live successful Christian lives in the non-Christian world that surrounds us: the importance of being in community, of having relationships of mutual support and encouragement with other Christians.*

*The first step to having these relationships is for us to get to know each other. The second step is to learn to trust each other.*

## Interactive Learning

**TRUST CIRCLE:** Break the students into groups with a minimum of 7 people per group. Choose one person from each group to stand in the center and have the others sit on the floor in a tight circle around him/her, placing their feet around the ankles of the person in the middle. The person standing in the middle of the circle crosses his arms across his chest, stiffens his body and falls backwards. It is very important to emphasize that the player in the middle must keep his feet together and must remain very stiff. If he bends at the waist he will fall because the group cannot support him! The people in the circle work together to catch the person and pass him back and forth around the circle. Encourage several students to take a turn, then have them go back to their seats and ask:

- *Those of you who were in the middle, what did it feel like to fall into your group members hands?*
- *How did those of you supporting the one in the center feel?*
- *In this activity how necessary were the others in your group?*
- *When have you needed to rely on your friends or other believers?*
- *One man said this: "What kept me consistent in my walk with God during my high school years was my Christian friends. We not only had fun together. We could pour out problems to each other on the phone and trust each other with our secrets. Each morning at school a friend would ask me what I'd gotten from the Word that morning. Just knowing he'd be there asking me gave me the motivation to be consistent. My close, accountable relationships with other Christians made the Christian life so much easier."*

*Let's look together at a time when Daniel needed to rely on his friends and see what he did.*

## Bible Application

*We're not exactly sure how old Daniel was when he started his training in the palace of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, but he probably wasn't too much older than many of you. I'm sure he struggled with many of the same things you struggle with, like peer pressure from classmates whose beliefs are different than yours. We've already seen that Daniel is a great role model for us in that he was*

*willing to go against the pressure of society and keep himself pure and that he took initiative and put his faith in God into action. Today we are going to see that Daniel did not live a successful life all alone. He had close relationships of mutual support with others who worshiped God. Our third key to living a successful Christian life in a pagan world is "Be in Community." [Write this across the top of the chalkboard]*

- *We have already met Daniel's friends--Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah or as they were called in Babylonian, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego-- in chapter 1 when, like Daniel, they didn't eat the food from the king's table. What does that tell us about the kind of people they were? [get several answers from the students. Summarize them or write on the board the answer that is the closest to this: "people who love and obey God"]*

*The first important thing about being in community is that this community must be made up of people who not only call themselves Christians and go to church, but who really try to glorify God with their lives.*

**Ask a student to read aloud Daniel 2: 12-19.**

- *Verse 18 tells us the specific reason Daniel went and talked to his friends, what was that reason?*

*We see here that these friends were not just people that Daniel hung out with, but they were people he knew he could depend on, people who not only cared about him but would turn that feeling into action, the action of praying. [Write on the board "support and prayer"] We don't have the time right now to do an in-depth study about prayer but I just want to make two comments here.*

- ◆ *First, prayer is not trying to bribe or manipulate God. Instead, by means of prayer God has given us a way to participate in his plan for the world. As we talked about last week: God's plan was not for Daniel to die, but for this crisis to be a great opportunity to glorify Himself and to bring blessing into Daniel's life. God created the world in such a way that he gives us the joy of knowing that our prayers affect what happens in the world.*
- ◆ *Second, the Bible indicates that there is more power when two or more believers are united in prayer. Read Mt. 18:19, 20. So we've seen that Daniel was part of a community of believers who supported each other and prayed for each other and that God blessed them. There is one last thing we want to learn from this passage. Ask someone to read Daniel 2:48, 49.*

- ◆ *How did Daniel treat his friends after the king promoted him to a very important position? (v. 49) [after a few responses, point out that the relationship and support was mutual and write on the board "mutual" in front of where you have written "support and prayer"]*
- ◆ *You may be thinking, "I would really like to be in the kind of community where people care about me and pray for me, but no one around me is like that." Well, there is a saying, "to have a friend, be a friend." Take just a moment to think, "Who in my life do I pray for and support?" [give them a moment to think] A supportive community of Christians does not develop automatically. It takes commitment, energy and prayer.*
- ◆ *How can we apply to our lives and to our group these lessons we've learned from Daniel and his friends?*

## Commitment

**In order to begin strengthening the sense of community in the group, have the students break into groups of three and turn their chairs to form small circles. Explain that each person in the group will share their name, one thing they thank God for, and one thing that they are worried about. Emphasize that the prayer request must be something in their life; it cannot be for someone else, for example NOT "My Aunt Virginia is sick," unless this is causing you grief. After each person has shared, have the students pray for the specific praise and request of the person seated on their left.**

### **Action Points:**

- 1. When the students have finished and are back seated in one group challenge them to remember to pray for that person at least once during the coming week**
- 2. Challenge students to this week find at least one person who can be their "accountability partner," one you can share prayer requests with and share what your getting out of the Word in your devotions. This person may be the key to your spiritual progress over the coming years.**

## Closing

**Hand students a blank piece of paper and a pencil and ask them to write their name on the top. Collect the papers, shuffle them, and hand them out, making sure that none have their own sheet. The goal of this activity is for each student to end up with a piece of paper on which her classmates have written compliments or positive statements about her. If you have more than 15 to 20 students, for the sake of time you could have ten to fifteen students write on each sheet instead of everyone in the whole group.**

**Tell the students to write a compliment or something positive about the person whose name is on the top of the paper. When they finish, have them pass that sheet to the left and write a compliment on the sheet they receive from the person next to them until everyone has had a chance to write something positive about everyone else in the group. Then collect them and give each person the sheet with their name on it.**

**Close with a prayer in which everyone is standing in a circle with their arms on the shoulders of the person next to them praying that God would make the group more of a supportive community.**

# Autograph Hunt

Find someone who matches each of these statements and have them sign your sheet next to the statement.

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*You can sign your own sheet once. No one may sign more than twice.*

- 1 I have met someone famous. \_\_\_\_\_  
(Who? \_\_\_\_\_)
- 2 I play an instrument. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 I became a Christian after I was 10 years old. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 My parents were not Christians when I became a Christian. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 You and I live near each other. \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 My birthday is this month. \_\_\_\_\_
- 7 You and I are the same height. \_\_\_\_\_
- 8 You and I like the same type of music. \_\_\_\_\_
- 9 I don't like vegetables. \_\_\_\_\_
- 10 You and I have the same number of letters in our name. \_\_\_\_\_
- 11 I wear glasses. \_\_\_\_\_
- 12 I was born in another state. (write where). \_\_\_\_\_
- 13 I have more than 5 brothers and sisters. \_\_\_\_\_
- 14 I wear shoe size 13 or bigger. \_\_\_\_\_