

Living Holy in a Godless World

The Life of Daniel

by Annette Gullick 12/1/2001

Lesson Four: Be in Communion With God

Bible Passage: Daniel 6: 10

Bible Truth: Daniel had intimate, daily communion with God.

Lesson Objective: That students commit to having daily intimate communion with God.

Before You Begin:

- ◆ salt
- ◆ cups & water
- ◆ slips of paper with verses
- ◆ handout "I want you to know"

Opening:

Explain that you are going to read three definitions and ask the students what comes to their minds.

1 - A chemical compound formed by replacing all or part of the hydrogen ions of an acid with one or more metallic ions, also an element that gives flavor or zest.

Get a few responses then put about 1/4 teaspoon of salt in each person's hand and ask them to lick it. Then have them describe the salt.

Read the second definition and ask what they think it is:

2 - A sensation of dryness in the mouth resulting from a condition that arrests the secretion of the pharyngeal mucous membrane.

Now ask them to describe thirst.

And finally:

3 - A clear, colorless, nearly odorless and tasteless liquid.

After they respond give cups of water to everyone to quench their thirst from the salt. After they have drunk their water ask them to describe water.

- *How was hearing the definition different than experiencing the thing?*
- *How did experiencing salt, thirst and water help you describe it?*
- *Let's apply what we've just learned to our spiritual lives. Is there a difference between knowing about God and knowing God? How are they similar? How are they different?*

Interactive Learning

Ask the students to pair up with the person they know the least, telling them that they are going to spend two minutes getting to know each other. Once they have formed partners explain that during this time they may not talk, write notes, touch each other or communicate in any other way. Make sure the full two minutes pass before you break the awkward silence and, while they remain with their partners, ask the group:

- *How much did you learn about each other?*
- *Is it possible to get to know someone and build a relationship with him or her without communication?*
- *I want you to think about the person you most enjoy, it could be a friend, boyfriend, girlfriend, or parent. What would your relationship with them be like if you didn't spend any time together?*
- *So what's our point when applied to our relationship with God. (Just like it's important to spend time with a friend or boyfriend to have a good relationship, we need to spend time with God if we want to have a good relationship with him.)*

Bible Application

Ask them to turn in their Bibles to Daniel 6:10 and read it out loud together.

Here we find out next key to living a successful Christian life in a pagan world; Daniel prayed three times a day "as was his custom since early days." In Daniel chapters 2 and 7 we can read some of Daniel's prayers and we see that these prayers weren't just a routine like our prayers before meals often are. Daniel poured his heart out to God. Daniel lived in communion with God. (Write as a heading on the board, "Be in Communion with God")

Then have them return to their partner and find out five things about them that they didn't know before.

- *Since just sitting next to them didn't help much, what did help you get to know your partner better? [Write on the board their answers, things like talking, listening, time]*

We also need those things to develop intimacy in our relationship with God.

- *How do we talk with God? [pray, sing to Him]*
- *How do we listen to God? [read the Bible, be sensitive to the Holy Spirit, listen to pastors or other Christians]*

It is really amazing that the God who created everything that exists loves us, is involved in the details of our lives, and wants to have an intimate, personal relationship with us. He wants that so much that he has preserved for us in the Bible lots of ideas for how to have communion with him.

Before class write the references on pieces of paper and give each pair of students a verse. They should read the verse together and decide what advice it gives us about how to deepen our relationship with God through reading the Bible or prayer. Look especially for ideas that God may want you to concentrate on in your personal relationship with Him. [note: Leaders should ahead of time read through the verses to have a general idea of what they are saying, then write out on strips of paper the approximate number of verses you will need. Remember each pair of students gets one verse. During the study try to hand out approximately the same number of verses dealing with scripture and with prayer].

Studying Scripture: James 1:22-25 [don't just hear it, do it]; 2 Tim 2:15 [don't misuse or misapply the Bible]; Ps 119:11 [memorize scripture]; Ps 119:15 [don't just read it quickly, meditate on it]; Ps 119:33,35 [ask God to help you understand]

Prayer: 1 Thes. 5: 16-18 [rejoice, pray, and give thanks continually], Mt. 6:7 [pray from the heart, not some formula]; Mt 6:16-17 [do fast sometimes, but not for show]; 1 Tim. 2:1,2 [include thanksgiving and petitions for rulers in your prayers] 1 Jn. 5: 14, 15 [God hears us and will give us what we ask according to his will] James 5:13 [trouble? Pray. Happy? Sing to God].

When the students have finished ask each group to explain what their passage says that can help us in our prayer and Bible study (feel free to have them read their verses as well if you have time) and then (you) write their summary on the board. Then ask,

- *Has anyone thought of other passages that have other helpful advice in these areas?*
- *Thinking about your devotional life, have any of these (pointing to list of responses written on the board) been helpful to you?*
- *What habits or hints have helped you in your relationship with God?*
- *Are there any that you haven't done, but you would like to?*
- *It is normal to see someone feeding a baby. But what would you think if you went into a restaurant and saw a woman feeding her husband every bite of his dinner? You would probably think that there was something wrong with him. One of the signs of maturity is being able to do things for yourself. But all too often we are content to be spiritual babies. We only get "fed" spiritually when we come to church and someone else feeds us. Daniel was in a foreign land far from the temple of God in Jerusalem. The Bible doesn't tell us about anyone who came to teach him about God. He had to "feed" himself spiritually,*

and he did. He spent time with God every day. I want to challenge you today to "grow up" in your faith. Don't be content to be a baby. The most important step you can take towards growing up is to spend time with God, reading His word and talking with him every day.

- **ALTERNATE ILLUSTRATION:** *I heard it said that members of a certain primitive tribe sometimes cook their meat by covering it with sand and building a fire over it. Problem is, some of the sand stays in the meat, with the long-term side effect of grinding down their teeth over a lifetime of eating. So, in order to feed the elderly members, younger members actually chew up the food for them, giving the prechewed meat to their grateful elders. As gross as this may sound, many Christians think nothing of surviving off predigested Bible passages, relying totally on the teachings of others, rather than using their full set of healthy teeth to feast on the Word, reading and meditating on it for themselves. My challenge this week is that if you've never before tasted the fresh meat of the Word for yourself, do it this week.*

Commitment

- *How many of you read the Bible outside of church?*
- *How many of you would like to read the Bible more than you do?*
- *What are the things that make reading the Bible hard for you?*
- *What are some specific things you can do this week to make your prayer and bible reading more personal?*

God, who is perfectly wise, gave us in the Bible what He knew we need to know. True, some parts are easier to understand, and some parts harder, so start with the easy parts. And you can't expect to understand what God is trying to tell you if you read a section quickly, close your Bible, and don't think about it again. Here we have a worksheet that can help you understand the Bible better when you read it.

Pass out the handout, explaining it has the title, "God I want to get to know you better" because we should always remember that the Bible is like a letter from God to us. Of course it contains all kinds of literature forms like history, poetry, and prophecy, but it's all there because God has something he wants us to learn from it. So we should always begin by praying and asking God to help us understand what He wants us to learn. Then tell the students that for the next few minutes they should read Daniel 6:10-24 and answer the questions on the handout. After the majority has finished, discuss as a group what they wrote for each question.

Closing

Explain that the other three sections on the handout are to help them get in the habit of having intimate communion with God by doing one section each week for the next three weeks. Encourage them to put the sheet in their Bible and to take time before the next meeting to read Daniel 4:1-27 and to answer the questions. Close with prayer asking for God's help in the life of each person to develop deeper communion with him.

***God, I want to get know you better,
so please help me understand...***

Passage: Daniel 6: 10-24

What are you saying?

(What is this passage talking about?)

What do you mean?

(What is the meaning of what it says?)

What do you want me to do?

(How does this passage apply to my life?)

What am I going to do about it?

(How will my life be different because of this?)

***God, I want to get know you better,
so please help me understand...***

Passage: Daniel 4: 1-27

What are you saying?

(What is this passage talking about?)

What do you mean?

(What is the meaning of what it says?)

What do you want me to do?

(How does this passage apply to my life?)

What am I going to do about it?

(How will my life be different because of this?)

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