



# The Book of Daniel: No Compromise

Daniel 9:1-19

Pastor Brad Wood

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Here in the opening verses of Daniel chapter 9, we encounter one of the most powerful prayers of intercession in all of Scripture. Daniel, a man who had lived most of his life in captivity, discovered through his study of Jeremiah's prophecy that the seventy-year exile was nearly complete.

Rather than simply waiting for God's promise to unfold, Daniel positioned himself in humble prayer, fasting, and repentance. What makes this prayer remarkable is Daniel's willingness to identify completely with his nation's sin, even though Scripture records no personal failures on his part. He repeatedly says 'we have sinned' rather than 'they have sinned,' demonstrating a heart of true humility and intercession.

Daniel understood something vital: the captivity wasn't God's failure but Israel's unfaithfulness. They had refused to give the land its Sabbath rest for 490 years, accumulating seventy years of disobedience.

God's judgment was actually His faithfulness to His own word. Yet in response to Daniel's humble prayer, God didn't just confirm the return to Jerusalem. He went far beyond, revealing the precise timing of the Messiah's coming. This teaches us that when we approach God with genuine humility, confessing our need for His mercy rather than claiming our own righteousness, He often answers in ways that exceed our greatest expectations. Our prayers aren't about earning God's favor through our goodness but about aligning our hearts with His purposes and trusting in His character, His mercy, and His unfailing promises.

## Key Takeaways:

- ✓ **True humility identifies with sinners rather than separating from them**
  - Daniel included himself in the nation's guilt, showing authentic humility
- ✓ **Our prayers should be grounded in God's character, not our performance**
  - We come to God based on His mercy and righteousness, not our own goodness
- ✓ **Concern for God's glory should motivate our prayers**
  - Daniel prayed for restoration "for Your sake," not just for personal relief
- ✓ **God often answers beyond our requests**
  - Daniel prayed for restoration; God promised restoration AND the Messiah
- ✓ **Humility in prayer requires honest confession**
  - Acknowledging our failures and God's righteousness opens the door to genuine relationship

# 5-Day Devotional

## Day 1: Understanding God's Word

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*Reading: Jeremiah 25:1-12; Daniel 9:1-2*

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**Devotional:** Daniel was a student of God's Word throughout his entire life. Even after decades of captivity and immersion in Babylonian wisdom, he never abandoned Scripture. His diligent study led him to understand God's timing for Israel's restoration. Like Daniel, we must be committed students of the Bible, allowing it to shape our understanding of God's work in our lives. When we immerse ourselves in Scripture, we gain insight into God's character, His promises, and His timing. Today, ask yourself: Am I regularly studying God's Word? Does my understanding of Scripture lead me to prayer and action? Make time to read the Bible with expectation, trusting that God will reveal His truth to you.

## Day 2: Approaching God with Humility

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*Reading: Daniel 9:3-6; James 4:6-10*

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**Devotional:** Daniel approached God with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes—symbols of deep humility and reverence. He didn't storm heaven with demands or presume upon God's promises. Instead, he came with a broken and contrite heart. His prayer began not with requests, but with confession. True humility recognizes that we have no righteousness of our own to offer God. We come to Him based solely on His mercy and grace. When we pray, are we humble or presumptuous? Do we acknowledge our dependence on God's goodness rather than our own merit? Today, practice humility in prayer. Confess your weaknesses, acknowledge your need for God, and approach Him with reverence, knowing that He honors the humble heart.

## Day 3: Identifying with Others in Prayer

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*Reading: Daniel 9:7-11; 1 John 1:8-10*

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**Devotional:** Daniel could have separated himself from his nation's sins, claiming personal righteousness. Instead, he said "we have sinned" repeatedly, identifying himself with his people's failures. This is the heart of intercession—standing in the gap for others by joining with them in confession. Daniel didn't point fingers or claim superiority; he humbly included himself among the guilty. When we pray for others—our family, church, or nation—do we stand apart in judgment or join them in humility? True intercession requires us to see ourselves as equally in need of God's mercy. Today, pray for someone who has fallen into sin, but include yourself in the confession, acknowledging your own need for grace.

## Day 4: God's Righteousness in Every Circumstance

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*Reading: Daniel 9:12-16; Job 1:20-22*

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**Devotional:** Despite enduring captivity from his youth, Daniel never blamed God. He acknowledged that God was completely righteous in His judgments and that Israel's suffering was the result of their own disobedience. This perspective requires tremendous spiritual maturity—to see God's hand even in hardship and declare His righteousness. When we face trials, our natural tendency is to question God's fairness. But Daniel shows us a better way: trust God's character even when circumstances are difficult. He is righteous in all His ways. Today, consider any hardship you're facing. Can you, like Daniel and Job, declare that God is righteous regardless of your circumstances? Trust that He is working all things for good.

## Day 5: God Answers Beyond Our Expectations

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*Reading: Daniel 9:17-23; Ephesians 3:14-21*

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**Devotional:** Daniel prayed for the restoration of Jerusalem, and God answered immediately. But the answer was far greater than Daniel imagined—God revealed the coming of the Messiah! God is "able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think." When we pray in humility and alignment with God's will, He often answers in ways that surpass our limited vision. We ask for temporal blessings; He gives eternal promises. We seek relief from present troubles; He reveals His ultimate plan of redemption. Don't limit God with small prayers or narrow expectations. Trust that His answer, whatever it may be, will be better than anything you could envision. Today, bring your requests to God, but remain open to His greater purposes and plans.

# Practical Applications:

**Choose at least one of the following to practice this week:**

## **Option 1: Prayer of Confession**

- Set aside 15-30 minutes for prayer using Daniel 9 as a model
- Begin by acknowledging God's character and greatness
- Confess personal and corporate sins (family, church, nation)
- Ask God to act for His glory, not based on your merit
- Journal about the experience

## **Option 2: Scripture Study Leading to Prayer**

- Like Daniel, let Scripture reading lead you to prayer
- Read a passage and ask: "What does this reveal about God's character? What does it reveal about my need?"
- Respond in prayer based on what you discover

## **Option 3: Intercession for Others**

- Identify someone or a group you're tempted to judge or blame
- Practice Daniel's approach: identify with them in prayer rather than separating yourself
- Pray for God's mercy on them (and yourself) rather than judgment

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## **Reflection Questions for Personal Quiet Time**

1. Am I more likely to approach God with demands or with humble requests?
2. Do I tend to blame God when I experience consequences of my own (or others') poor choices?
3. When I pray, am I more concerned with my comfort or God's glory?
4. How often does my Bible reading actually lead me to prayer like it did for Daniel?
5. Who do I need to intercede for with Daniel's heart of humility and identification?

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**Memory Verse for the Week:** *"For we do not present our supplication before you because of our righteous deeds, but because of your great mercies."* - Daniel 9:18b

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# Small Group Guide: A Prayer of True Humility

## Discussion Questions:

- How does Daniel's willingness to identify himself with the sins of his nation, despite his personal faithfulness, challenge our tendency to distance ourselves from the failures of others in our community or church?
- In what ways does Daniel's example of beginning to pray years before the prophesied end of captivity speak to our own prayer life and our tendency to wait until circumstances become urgent?
- What does it reveal about God's character that He answered Daniel's prayer immediately at the beginning of his supplication, even before Daniel finished praying?
- How does Daniel's approach of fasting, wearing sackcloth, and ashes demonstrate that true humility is not self-degradation but rather a posture that builds us up before the Lord?
- Why do you think God chose to answer Daniel's prayer for restoration with a prophecy that went far beyond the immediate request to include the coming of the Messiah?
- How does Daniel's refusal to blame God for the judgment of captivity, instead accepting responsibility and acknowledging God's righteousness, contrast with our natural human tendency when facing hardship?
- What does it mean to pray with concern for God's glory and reputation rather than our own needs, and how might this shift in focus change the way we approach prayer?
- How does the fact that Israel failed to give the land its Sabbath rest for 490 years, resulting in 70 years of captivity, illustrate the principle that God will ultimately fulfill His commands whether we obey or not?
- In what ways does Daniel's prayer demonstrate the importance of being a student of God's Word, and how did his understanding of Scripture shape both his prayer and his faith?
- How does Paul's declaration that God is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think relate to the way God answered Daniel's prayer, and what does this teach us about trusting God's answers even when they differ from our expectations?

## Further Discussion Questions:

- What motivated Daniel to pray? How did his study of Scripture (Jeremiah's prophecy) lead him to intercession?
- Daniel had been in captivity since his youth, yet he never stopped studying God's Word. What does this teach us about remaining faithful in difficult circumstances?
- How did Daniel demonstrate humility in his prayer? Look specifically at verses 4-6. What stands out to you?
- Daniel identified himself with the sins of his nation, saying "we have sinned" even though Scripture records no specific sins Daniel committed. Why is this significant? How is this different from how we typically approach prayer?
- Pastor Brad mentioned that Daniel didn't come to God with a "holier-than-thou" attitude or blame others. When are you most tempted to blame others for problems rather than accepting corporate or personal responsibility?
- What does Daniel mean when he says "righteousness belongs to You, but to us shame of face" (v. 7)? How does this contrast with how people often approach God today?
- Daniel acknowledged that God was completely righteous even in judgment. How can we maintain this perspective when experiencing hardship or consequences of sin?
- In verse 18, Daniel says, "we do not present our supplication before you because of our righteous deeds, but because of your great mercies." What does this teach us about the basis of our prayers?
- Daniel repeatedly asked God to act "for Your own sake" and for "the Lord's sake" (vv. 17, 19). What does this reveal about Daniel's priorities in prayer?
- How can we ensure our prayers are more focused on God's glory than our own comfort or desires?
- God answered Daniel's prayer about restoration, but also revealed the coming of the Messiah—far exceeding what Daniel asked. How does this demonstrate the truth of Ephesians 3:20 that God does "exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think"?

- In his sermon, Pastor Brad noted that after receiving this prophecy, Daniel didn't faint or become ill (unlike after previous visions). Why might this answer have strengthened rather than troubled him?

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