

Small Group Leaders Guide:

Daniel 10 -When Heaven Responds



Warm Up

Opening Prayer

Begin your time together asking God to open hearts and minds to His truth and to help group members apply what they learn.

Leader Tip:

- Invite someone besides yourself to open in prayer to encourage participation. You might prompt them: “Pray that God would help us see the unseen spiritual battle and show us where we need to die to self.”

Icebreaker

Share one thing you've been praying about consistently. How long have you been praying, and have you seen any answers yet?

Leader Tips:

- Go first and model honesty and appropriate vulnerability. Share something that's not neatly resolved yet.
- If someone shares something very heavy, pause briefly and say, “Thank you for trusting us with that,” but save extended prayer for the end so you can still work through the study.
- Keep this to 8–10 minutes so you have time for discussion later.



Know It

Key Scripture

Daniel 10:1-14 (Focus verses: 12-13)

"Don't be afraid, Daniel, he said to me. For from the first day that you purposed to understand and to humble yourself before God, your prayers were heard. And I've come because of your prayers. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia opposed me for 21 days."

Leader Tip:

- Have different people read chunks of the passage (e.g., 1–3, 4–9, 10–14). Hearing multiple voices helps engagement and keeps people from checking out.

Small Group Leaders Guide:

Daniel 10 -When Heaven Responds

Sermon Summary

Pastor Todd explored Daniel 10, revealing the reality of spiritual warfare and the importance of dying to self. At 85 years old, Daniel prayed and fasted for 21 days, concerned not about himself but about God's people. The passage unveils the unseen spiritual battle happening around us and challenges us to move beyond radical individualism to embrace God's bigger picture.

Leader Tip:

- Ask: “Is there anything you’d add to that summary—or anything from the sermon that really stuck with you?” Let 1–2 people share briefly before moving on.

Key Takeaways

- **Your prayers are heard from day one** - Even when you don't see immediate results, God hears you instantly
- **Spiritual warfare is real** - There are demonic forces with dominion over regions and people
- **Radical individualism conflicts with Christianity** - We must die to self and care about something bigger than our personal spiritual development
- **You are treasured by God** - No matter what you're facing, God loves you and values you
- **We're in a battle, not on a cruise ship** - The Christian life requires spiritual warfare, especially for our families
 - **Leader Tip:**
 - You could ask: “Which of these five hits you the hardest right now—and why?” Let that guide where you spend a bit more time in discussion.

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Text

- **What struck you most about the 21-day delay in Daniel's prayer being answered?** How does knowing that spiritual warfare was happening behind the scenes change your perspective on unanswered prayers?
 - **Leader Tips:**
 - If the group is quiet, rephrase: “How do you normally feel when God seems silent? How does this story challenge that feeling?”

Small Group Leaders Guide:

Daniel 10 -When Heaven Responds

- Watch for hopelessness (“prayer doesn’t work anyway”) and gently bring them back to verse 12: “From the first day...your prayers were heard.”
- **Daniel was 85 years old and praying for something he'd never personally benefit from.** What does this teach us about the nature of prayer and concern for others?
 - **Leader Tips:**
 - Draw out the generational aspect: “What would it look like to pray for things you’ll never see the result of—like your grandkids’ grandkids, or revival in this town?”
 - Affirm any examples of selfless prayer, even if small.
- **Read Ephesians 6:12 together.** How does this passage connect with what happened to Gabriel in Daniel 10? What does this reveal about the nature of our struggles?
 - **Leader Tips:**
 - Have someone read Ephesians 6:12 aloud.
 - If people seem confused by “spiritual warfare,” keep it simple: our real enemy is not our spouse, kids, boss, politicians, etc., but spiritual forces behind the scenes.
 - Avoid speculation about specific demons; keep the focus on Scripture, not sensational details.



Share It

Personal Reflection

- **Pastor Todd asked: "When's the last time you worried about something bigger than yourself?"** Take time to honestly reflect and share. What consumes most of your prayer life?
 - **Leader Tips:**
 - Normalize honesty: “It’s okay if the honest answer is ‘mostly me and my stuff.’ This is about growth, not guilt.”
 - If someone dominates with a long story, gently summarize and move to others: “That’s really helpful—thank you. Who else relates to that?”

Small Group Leaders Guide:

Daniel 10 -When Heaven Responds

- **The sermon challenged "radical individualism" in American Christianity.** How have you seen this play out in your own spiritual life? In what ways do you approach faith as primarily about "me and Jesus"?

- **Leader Tips:**

- Model with a brief personal example where you treated church as “what am I getting?” rather than “how can I serve?”
 - If someone becomes defensive (“That’s just being responsible!”), acknowledge the tension: “There is a healthy sense of personal responsibility—but what Pastor Todd was pushing on is when it becomes all about my preferences.”
- **"If you're not growing at a local church, it's not the church's fault—it's yours."** This was a strong statement. How did you react to it? Do you agree or disagree? Why?

- **Leader Tips:**

- This can get spicy. Let people react, but keep it respectful: “Let’s speak from our own experience, not bash specific churches or leaders.”
 - If someone strongly disagrees, you can say, “It’s fair to say churches can fail too. But what personal responsibility in growth do you think this is trying to highlight?”
- **Have you truly "died to self"?** What would that look like practically in your life right now? What would you need to surrender?

- **Leader Tips:**

- This is vulnerable. You might say, “Share as much as you’re comfortable; no one has this fully figured out.”
- If the group goes vague (“Just need to trust God more”), press gently: “What’s one concrete example of what that would look like this week?”

Application

- **Pastor Todd said, "If Satan can't make you evil, he will make you busy."** Evaluate your schedule. Are you too busy for prayer, church involvement, or spiritual growth? What needs to change?

Small Group Leaders Guide:

Daniel 10 -When Heaven Responds

○ **Leader Tips:**

- Encourage specificity: “Name one thing you’re doing that you suspect is crowding out spiritual priorities.”
- Resist turning this into a productivity session—keep it about priorities in light of spiritual battle.
- **Spiritual warfare over our region:** The sermon mentioned that demonic forces have dominion over certain areas. How should this awareness change the way we pray for our community, church, and region?

○ **Leader Tips:**

- Steer away from fear or paranoia. Emphasize confidence in Christ’s victory.
- Ask: “Instead of complaining about our town/region, what would it look like to intercede for it like Daniel did for his people?”
- **For parents/grandparents:** When's the last time you "went to war" praying for your children or grandchildren? What would it look like to intensify your prayer life for the next generation?

○ **Leader Tips:**

- If you have non-parents in the group, include them: “If you’re not a parent, think about kids in this church, or spiritual children you influence.”
- You might end this question by asking if anyone wants to briefly name a child/grandchild to be prayed for in closing.



Live It

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge

Choose at least one of these to commit to this week:

Small Group Leaders Guide:

Daniel 10 -When Heaven Responds

Individual:

- Write the five assurance verses on note cards and memorize one per day:
 - Assurance of salvation: 1 John 5:11-12
 - Assurance of answered prayer: John 16:24
 - Assurance of victory: 1 Corinthians 10:13
 - Assurance of forgiveness: 1 John 1:9
 - Assurance of guidance: Proverbs 3:5-6
- Commit to focused prayer and fasting for something bigger than yourself (your church, community, nation, or global missions)
 - **Leader Tips:**
 - Ask: “Which one of these are you most likely to actually do?” Have people state their choice out loud; that increases follow-through.
 - Clarify fasting if needed: it can be a meal, a day, or even fasting from media—encourage people to consult their health needs.

Family:

- Walk the boundaries of your property praying over your household
- Have a family conversation about spiritual warfare and how to put on the armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-18)
 - **Leader Tips:**
 - Suggest simple versions for families with kids: short prayer walks, drawing the armor of God, or a short bedtime talk.
 - Encourage people to report back next week on how their family responded.

Group:

- Identify one specific spiritual battle your group can unite in prayer about for the next 21 days (mirroring Daniel's commitment)
 - **Leader Tips:**
 - Spend 3–5 minutes brainstorming possibilities (e.g., a prodigal child, unity in the church, revival in your town, protection for students, etc.).
 - Narrow to one clear focus and decide: Will you text reminders? Pray at a set time each day? Revisit it next meeting?

Small Group Leaders Guide:

Daniel 10 -When Heaven Responds

Reflection Exercise

Dying to Self Inventory:

Take 5 minutes of silence for group members to prayerfully answer these questions:

- What area of my life am I still holding onto control instead of surrendering to God?
 - Am I more concerned about my comfort or God's kingdom?
 - What would change in my life if I truly believed "I don't know best—God does"?
 - What is one specific way I can die to self this week?
- **Leader Tips:**
 - Actually time the silence; people need longer than you think to slow down.
 - Before the silence, say, “No one has to share afterward. This is between you and the Lord—but we’ll give a chance for anyone who wants to.”
 - Afterward, affirm any sharing and avoid fixing people. Just listen and thank them.



Prayer

Prayer Time

Spiritual Warfare Prayer Focus:

- Pray for protection over your families, marriages, and children
- Pray against the spiritual forces opposing your church and community
- Pray for perseverance in prayer, even when you don't see immediate answers
- Pray for the humility to die to self and embrace God's bigger picture
- Pray for awareness of spiritual realities and wisdom to stand firm

Consider praying through **Ephesians 6:10-18** as a group, putting on each piece of spiritual armor together.

- **Leader Tips:**
 - You can assign each person (or pair) one piece of armor (belt of truth, breastplate of righteousness, etc.) and have them pray into that specifically.

Small Group Leaders Guide:

Daniel 10 -When Heaven Responds

- Keep prayers focused and faith-filled, not fearful. Emphasize God's authority and victory in Christ.
- Invite quieter members to pray one simple sentence if they're comfortable.

Looking Ahead

Next week we'll study Daniel 11-12, continuing this prophetic vision. Come prepared to discuss how understanding end times prophecy should affect how we live today.

- **Leader Tip:**

- Encourage the group to read Daniel 11–12 during the week and jot down one question or observation to bring to group.

Closing Thought

"You are treasured by God. God loves you. God has a plan and a purpose for your life. God is active. He is not inactive. God hears you."

Let this truth anchor you this week as you engage in spiritual battle for His honor and glory.

- **Leader Tip:**

- End by having the group read that statement aloud together, or have you read it slowly over them as a kind of benediction.