

December 6/7, 2025

"Daniel"

Pastor Jeff Manion



**Beyond the
Weekend**

SPEND DAILY TIME WITH GOD AS YOU READ, THINK, PRAY + ACT.

2025 Focus: 50 Key Truths

Each Friday, explore a key truth about our Christian faith and how we can live in light of this truth.

Day 1 [Daniel 1](#) | God is at Work

And the Lord delivered Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the articles from the temple of God. These he carried off to the temple of his god in Babylonia and put in the treasure house of his god. [Daniel 1:2](#)

The book of Daniel opens with a painful scene. King Nebuchadnezzar attacks Jerusalem, takes sacred items from God's temple and carries them off to the temple of a Babylonian god. To flex his power, he also takes many of Jerusalem's brightest young leaders as captives, including Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. Their world is shaken. Yet, instead of living in fear, these teenagers remain faithful. Daniel chooses to trust that even in exile, God is still working behind the scenes. Though everything feels chaotic, God has not lost control. God is carrying out his purposes for nations and for individual lives.

We experience our own version of exile in disorienting or painful circumstances. Sometimes, our exile comes from our own choices; other times, it comes from someone else's. In those seasons, it can be easy to wonder if God has stepped back. But God often works in ways that are unfamiliar to us. Even in confusion or heartbreak, he gives us glimpses of his restoring work. He restores through simple obedience, moments of forgiveness and ordinary places where Christ is acknowledged. Through difficulty, he shapes endurance, grows spiritual maturity and deepens our hope in him. These glimpses remind us that a greater restoration is coming – when Jesus returns to make all things right.

TODAY: Ask God to give you fresh eyes to see one way he is at work in your life right now. Write it down, thank him for it and let that reminder strengthen your hope.

Day 2 [Daniel 1:8-21](#) | Decide in Advance

But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself in this way. [Daniel 1:8](#)

When Daniel and his friends are taken into Babylon, the goal is clear: reshape their identities until they no longer resemble the people of God. They are given new names that honor Babylonian gods, an indoctrination shaped by Babylonian values and food from the King's table meant to create dependence and loyalty. Yet Daniel makes a quiet but courageous decision. He resolves not to defile himself with food that violates God's law. He is not living in the moment. He decides ahead of time. Daniel asks for an alternative food option, trusts God with the outcome and after a trial period, he and his friends appear healthy and stronger than everyone else. God honors their resolve, and his favor rests on them.

Like Daniel, we must decide ahead of time where we will draw our lines in a culture trying to pull us away from God. Predetermined convictions provide clarity, strength and peace. As students we can decide now what our relationship with alcohol will be. As employees we can decide now to work with integrity, even if no one is watching. When dating, we can decide now to pursue people who show spiritual maturity and godly character. In managing money, we can decide now that generosity and obedience will guide our choices. Deciding in advance will become an anchor when temptations feel strong.

TODAY: Identify three areas where you will choose ahead of time to honor God – one relational, one personal and one vocational or practical. Write them down. Pray over each one. Ask God to strengthen your resolve and give you courage to live it out.

Day 3 [Daniel 1:8-16](#) | Kingdoms in Conflict

He asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way. [Daniel 1:8](#)

Daniel and his friends find themselves far from home, serving a king they did not choose, in a culture very different from their own. They are citizens of two kingdoms – Babylon and God’s. At times, these kingdoms collide. Daniel is expected to eat the king’s food and drink his wine. Eating that food meant breaking God’s dietary laws, and Daniel was committed to honoring God even in small decisions. Instead of reacting with disrespect, Daniel acts with humility. He asks permission to follow a different diet. His conviction is firm, but his attitude is gracious. He holds fast to God’s truth while showing respect to the people around him. God honors Daniel’s faithfulness by giving him favor with the chief official ([Daniel 1:9](#)).

Daniel’s story reminds us to approach conflict with grace and truth. We also live in two kingdoms. We belong to Jesus, but we move through workplaces, schools, teams and communities daily. Sometimes the values of God’s kingdom conflict with the expectations around us. When that happens, we can respond as Daniel did – with conviction grounded in God’s Word and with grace that reflects God’s heart. Jesus teaches us to pray, “Your kingdom come, your will be done” ([Matthew 6:10](#)), inviting God’s ways to shape our choices.

TODAY: Identify one situation in your week when you feel tension between cultural expectations and God’s values. Pray this throughout as you enter that situation: “Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven,” and trust God with the outcome. Explore Daniel’s story further on the *Beyond the Weekend Podcast*—find it wherever you listen to podcasts or on [YouTube](#).

Day 4 [Daniel 6:1-28](#) | Praying for Restoration

Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to God, just as he had done before. [Daniel 6:10](#)

Daniel spends his life serving foreign kings, and now, in his eighties, he serves under King Darius. Daniel is such a trustworthy leader that he wins the king’s respect – and the jealousy of other officials. Unable to find fault in his work, they attack his faith by creating a law that bans prayer to anyone but the king. Daniel knows the law, but he continues his rhythm of praying three times a day. He prays openly toward Jerusalem, likely asking God to restore his people and God’s honor, just as Solomon instructed centuries before ([1 Kings 8](#)). Daniel keeps praying because only God can give what he truly needs.

We also long for restoration. We face brokenness around us – shattered marriages, children who have walked away from the faith, fractured friendships and our own sinful nature. We see God restore in bits and pieces now. Yet we long for when his kingdom comes in full. When Jesus returns, he will restore all things and right all wrongs. Until that day, we continue to turn our hearts to God and pray for his kingdom to come. God invites us to turn to him each day, praying for restoration now and in the future. We can trust that he will fulfill his promise to restore.

TODAY: Join Ada Bible Worship as they sing “[Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus](#).” Use this song as a prayer of patient longing for Jesus to return and restore all things.



Day 5 [Romans 8:16-18](#) | Question 48: Eternity

Question: Why does understanding eternity matter for our lives now?

Answer: Understanding eternity affects how we see people, invest our time and live our lives on earth.

"I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us." [Romans 8:18](#)

Paul encourages believers facing hardship by giving them an eternal perspective. He declares that the challenges they faced paled in comparison to the joy that awaited them with God. Paul isn't minimizing pain but placing it within the scope of eternity. Paul understands that how people view the future directly affects how they live in the present. They will grieve differently and relate to others in more life-giving ways ([1 Thessalonians 4:13](#)). Understanding eternity offers hope and brings conviction. Their lives really do matter. The choices they make, whether for Christ or apart from him, have eternal consequences.

An eternal perspective transforms our daily decisions and priorities. Maintaining a proper perspective on eternal destinies is vital because it affects how we see people and how we choose to invest our time. Scripture calls us to live lives that build on the reality of God in Christ and to treat our time on earth as an investment in God's eternal kingdom. If we want our lives and efforts to matter, we must live with an eye on eternity. We can be encouraged and endure what we face today with patience and love, because in Christ our future is settled ([1 Peter 1:7](#)). This motivates us to make a difference in this life and to invest our time in ways that glorify God and yield eternal rewards.

TODAY: Ask God to help you see people and situations through eternity's lens. Thank him that your present sufferings cannot compare with the coming glory. Choose one way to invest in God's eternal kingdom today. Learn more about eternity in our We Believe document [HERE](#).