

REVIEW

What did you learn about Daniel that you hadn't realized before? How can understanding the context of Daniel's stories help you see beyond the lion's den or the fiery furnace?

After watching Steve and Jeanne Bessant's tragic story of losing their son, what surprised you about what they shared? In what ways did God surprise them?

BIBLE EXPLORATION

Jeremiah 29:11: How has this well-known verse offered you comfort? And yet, how does knowing this verse was written to a people who would remain in exile give you additional hope?

Jeremiah 28:1–17: What did Hananiah the Seer do wrong? What was Jeremiah's reaction? Who today utters this same prophecy, that all will be well? How does believing that influence the way you deal with further difficulties?

John 16:33: How does knowing the truth that pain and trials will be part of our life help you face them today? How does knowing that Jesus has overcome the world help you during your darkest trials?

Hebrews 12:4–11: Who does God discipline? Why does He discipline His children? If you have children, why do you discipline them? Do they always enjoy it? But what is the greater purpose?

Daniel 3:1–15: How did the king blaspheme God? How does Nebuchadnezzar's demand of the people echo Satan's request to Jesus during His temptation in the wilderness?

Habakkuk 3:16–19: What does this Scripture tell us about the character of God? Does God always promise deliverance? And what did Habakkuk choose to do in the midst of a failed crop, starvation, and deprivation? How does Habakkuk's response help you to face your current trials?

What are 3 situations in your life where you currently need a Daniel-like perspective?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Consider the list above. what is one way you can, like Habakkuk, choose to praise God in the midst of your “exile”?

What is one source of media negativity you can fast from this week?

What stands in the way of you believing God is working all things for good behind the scenes (See Romans 8:28)?

How can a strong, Daniel-like belief in God's rule over everything help you put your current circumstances in perspective?

DEEPER WALK

Select at least one activity below to complete during the next week.

- **Personal Action:** Fast from whatever media platform causes you the most stress and worry. Recount how the fast changed your perspective.
- **Mentoring:** Who do you know right now who, like Daniel, has trusted God in the midst of a painful/difficult circumstance? Ask this question: What helped you thrive in the midst of a painful trial? What gives you peace when the culture seems to be getting crazier and more godless?
- **Conversation:** Talk to a significant friend or group of friends about the three things you listed in the Last Word section. Ask for input about how you can experience God's presence in the midst of those difficulties. Ask your friends what their list of three would be. End the time praying directly and specifically for each other.
- **Memorization:** Write down Habakkuk 3:17–18 on a 3 x 5 card, then keep it with you in an obvious place (purse, wallet, car, mirror). Read and memorize it when life feels out of control.
- **Pray:** Ask God to give you His perspective on a painful situation. Ask Him to teach you what it means to thrive in Babylon.
- **Read:** For deeper study on the topics we talked about this week, read chapters 1–4 in *Thriving in Babylon: Why Hope, Humility, and Wisdom Matter in a Godless Culture*.

REVIEW

How do hardship and trials in your life right now help you see God's hand? What have you learned recently in the midst of a difficult situation?

What role does obedience have in the growth of a follower of Christ? What is God asking you today to obey?

BIBLE EXPLORATION

1 Corinthians 10:13: Why do you think God provides a way of escape? Have you found it to be true that God provides you with an escape hatch from sin?

Matthew 12:33 & Luke 6:43–45: How important is bearing fruit in the disciple's life? What is the natural outcome of a seed planted in the soil? Why do you think people's words carry so much weight in today's world (as opposed to their actions)?

Matthew 13:1–23: Which soil indicates the counterfeit of the "fast start" that Larry shared? Who in your life represents rocky ground? Shallow soil? Thorns? Good soil?

Hebrews 5:8, Matthew 21:28–32, & Proverbs 3:5–6: What do these verses say about the importance of obedience? What does God promise to those who trust and obey?

2 Corinthians 4:16–19 & 11:23–29: Why is perspective so valued in the kingdom of God? What specifically helps us endure hardship? How does having an eternal perspective put trials in their proper place? How does reading about Paul's extreme trials help you change your perspective on your own?

Romans 5:3–5 & James 1:2–4: According to the Romans passage, what does suffering cause? How have you learned to endure? According to the James passage, trials produce perseverance and endurance. What is the ultimate goal of trials testing our faith?

Hebrews 12:11–12: What role does courage have in the life of a person of faith? Why is it courageous to endure a trial? How does this inspire others? What do you think the author of Hebrews means when he encourages believers to strengthen our feeble arms and weak knees? Why does that take courage?

Mark 10:17–27: Was the rich, young ruler obedient? Why or why not? What prevented him from pursuing the Kingdom of God? What holds you back from giving Jesus everything?

What was your greatest spiritual boot camp experience? And what boot camp are you currently walking through?

Where does God want you to do each of these in your life?

Act justly:

Love mercy:

Walk humbly with your God:

DEEPER WALK

Select at least one activity below to complete during the next week.

- **Personal Action:** Place your sticky note from Micah 6:8 in a prominent place. Pray about obeying God in that specific area. Then determine to obey, no matter how strange or difficult it may be. Come prepared to share how that little exercise changed your perspective.
- **Mentoring:** Remember the two stories you watched during this lesson (Sergei, Christele). Who in your life right now demonstrates the kind of endurance those two shared? Schedule a time to talk via phone or face-to-face. Ask: how did your trial change the landscape of your relationship to Jesus? What valuable spiritual lessons did you learn as a result of your trial? What advice would you give me as I face a new trial?
- **Conversation:** Share your sticky note with a close friend or accountability partner. Ask them to pray specifically for your obedience.
- **Memorization:** Type Micah 6:8 onto your phone (in the notes section), or create a Pin (Pinterest) with that verse. Schedule to text or email it to yourself daily as a reminder. Each time you see it, strive to memorize it.
- **Pray:** Ask God to help you thrive in your current spiritual boot camp. Ask that He would graciously supply obedience, perspective, endurance, confidence, and courage. Thank Him ahead of time for providing.
- **Read:** For deeper study on the topics we talked about this week, read chapters 5–7 in *Thriving in Babylon: Why Hope, Humility, and Wisdom Matter in a Godless Culture*.

REVIEW

Larry described spiritual myopia as “when I am so focused on the evil in front of me I can’t see anything else.” When was the last time you suffered from spiritual myopia? What happened? Why do you think it’s easier to have spiritual myopia than faith and trust?

Larry also talks about spiritual amnesia as forgetting all the blessings from the past. Why is it so easy to forget the big things God has done? How can you actively recount the amazing things God has done in your life? Who in your life does a terrific job at counting blessings?

What does it mean to despair? When was a time in your life where you were tempted to give in to despair? What helped you find hope again?

BIBLE EXPLORATION

Romans 8:28: How has your view of Romans 8:28 changed over the years, or has it? How exactly does this verse bring hope?

Titus 2:11–13: What does Paul say is our instructor, teaching us to turn from godless living and sinful pleasures? Have you ever considered this as a “teacher”? What are we instructed to do instead do? What, according to this passage, should we hope for?

Romans 8:31–39: According to this, what can separate us from God’s love? How does knowing this truth affect your confidence? How does it inform your gratitude?

Philippians 4:8–9: In the video, Larry Osborne shared about GIGO (garbage in, garbage out). How does this verse address this important command? What, in this world, is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent or praiseworthy? How different is that list from the social media you participate in? Why does it seem easier to dwell on negative, scary news?

Psalms 73: Asaph, the author of the psalm, begins by demonstrating faith in God’s provision and blessing, but then despairs as the wicked increase. In the end, what does he ultimately choose? How do verses 25–28 encourage you today? How does knowing that God is ultimately all we need bring deep comfort?

Ephesians 1:15–23: What do these verses reveal about hope? Which verse is the most encouraging to you today?

What is one trial you're facing where you're finding it hard to rejoice?

After each of the following adjectives from Philippians 4:8–9 write down one or two things that exemplify each word:

True:

Noble:

Right:

Pure:

Lovely:

Admirable:

Excellent:

Praiseworthy:

DEEPER WALK

Select at least one activity below to complete during the next week.

- **Personal Action:** Re-visit the media fast from week one. Choose a different avenue of fasting. (If you fasted TV, consider fasting social media). Be sure to tell a friend or a group member what you'll be fasting.
- **Mentoring:** Ask one person who is older than you and one who is younger this question: What keeps you hopeful in this crazy world? Note if their responses are different. Bring their responses to share with the group the next time you meet.
- **Conversation:** We often learn about the faithfulness of God and the hope he provides when we hear someone's story. Ask someone you know (or if you're bold, a stranger) about a time in their lives when they learned that God is bigger than any trial we face.
- **Memorization:** Write down Philippians 4:8–9 on a post-it note, and fix it to your television as a reminder. Every time you turn on the TV, work on memorizing the verse.
- **Pray:** Ask God to help you concentrate on His goodness rather than the bleak aspects of this world. Ask Him to empower you to become a person of gratitude instead of someone who gives into despair.
- **Read:** For deeper study on the topics we talked about this week, read chapters 8–12 in *Thriving in Babylon: Why Hope, Humility, and Wisdom Matter in a Godless Culture*.

REVIEW

When you watched the story of Lana, the makeup artist, what struck you about how she interacted with her co-workers? What did she learn from the interaction with her agent? What principle can we take away from that story?

Why do quarrels turn people off from the gospel? What tends to be a better approach? Why?

What are the negative connotations of humility? What is false humility? What is the difference between a prideful person and a humble person? How did Jesus demonstrate humility when He walked the earth?

BIBLE EXPLORATION

Romans 12:3 and Galatians 6:3–4: What is humility *not*? What does it mean to have a sound idea of who you are, neither stuck up nor being worm-like? What is the difference between healthy self-esteem versus arrogant pride?

Matthew 11:29–30: Why is Jesus's yoke light? What does He do in your life today that brings rest to your soul? How does knowing Jesus carries your burdens produce a humble dependence on Him (humility)?

Daniel 2:48–49: How did Daniel and his friends demonstrate that humility is merely a lack of ambition? What position did the king bestow on him?

Matthew 20:20–28: What is the path to greatness in the kingdom of God? How did the disciples' mother posture for position, and how did Jesus respond to their desire to be recognized? What does it mean to be a servant or slave?

Philippians 2:3–11: How did Jesus demonstrate the pathway He wants His disciples to walk? What do you learn in this passage about the humility of Christ? In light of that, how are we to live? Define selfish ambition. What is it? Define conceit. Who do you know who demonstrates conceit? How are these in opposition to the way Jesus lived His life?

Daniel 6:25–28: How did God reward Daniel for his humble service? What does this teach us about the character of God?

1 Corinthians 5:9–13: What does this passage teach us about engaging the world we live in? How does Paul say we should act toward those who are in the church, but are practicing sin? How does knowing God will judge those outside the church help you to love them?

Luke 6:27–36: How should we interact with those we perceive as our enemies? How did Jesus exemplify His own teaching here?

2 Timothy 2:24–26: We live in a quarrelsome world. But what does this passage tell us to do instead? How is this sometimes the opposite of how the church acts toward outsiders? Why do you think this is? What role does fear play in the way we treat those who don't yet know Jesus?

Jeremiah 29:4–7: What is our mandate as exiles on this earth? How does this encouragement help you to love your unbelieving neighbors? How does it changed the way you are to view your neighborhood, your city?

Who are three people in your life who don't yet know Jesus?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

DEEPER WALK

Select at least one activity below to complete during the next week.

- **Personal Action:** Keep your list of three people in a prominent place this week. Pray for them every time you eat, when you shower, and when you go to sleep.
- **Mentoring:** We forget that God can work through anyone. If it's possible, approach an unbelieving friend and ask them what they know about humility. Ask how you can become more humble.
- **Conversation:** Instead of talking, this week show your heart for service and watch and see what happens. Open doors. Pay for the person behind you in line. Let someone cut you off in traffic. Then notice the reactions. Sometimes the loudest conversation for the gospel is servant-inspired action.
- **Memorization:** Write James 4:10 on a small piece of paper. Place it on your mirror so you're reminded about humility and God's role in your life as you start your day.
- **Pray:** Ask God to intervene in the lives of those who are far from Him. Pray that He would give you the humility to be more understanding, to serve others, and pray for those who persecute you. Ask for an extra dose of kindness this week.
- **Read:** For deeper study on the topics we talked about this week, read chapters 13–15 in *Thriving in Babylon: Why Hope, Humility, and Wisdom Matter in a Godless Culture*.

REVIEW

In what areas should we never compromise our beliefs? Which battles should we be willing to step back from?

What are you most afraid of? How does God intersect that fear? How much power does Satan really have?

Who is the wisest person you know? How does that person engage with people who are not yet believers? What have you learned from their interactions?

BIBLE EXPLORATION

Proverbs 9:10: According to this verse, what is the true source of wisdom? Is this the first place you go for wise counsel? Why or why not? What are some of our cultural substitutes for true wisdom and understanding?

John 8:44: What does it tell us about the nature of Satan, our adversary? What is his primary language? Why do you think it's sometimes easier to believe a lie than to believe the truth?

Matthew 15:2–9 & Mark 7:13: What does Jesus say about legalism in these verses? Why do you think people prefer rules to relationship with Jesus? What about legalism shrinks our relationship with Him? What is the connection between personal control and legalism?

Colossians 2:20–23: Why does Paul rail against rules like “Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!”? How are these kinds of “commands” tied to our need to control? What does Paul mean by self-imposed worship? False humility? Harsh treatment of the body? What are some modern day equivalents to these man-made commands?

Jude 9–10 & James 4:7: What happens when Christians resist the devil? How does this encourage you today?

Romans 14:1–15:7: In this passage, what are the characteristics of the weaker believer? What are the characteristics of the mature believer? How is the mature believer supposed to treat the immature believer? How does the law of love influence those who are stronger in the faith?

Exodus 1:15–22: In this poignant story, how did the Hebrew midwives obey God more than man? What was their higher purpose? Why did they do what they did?

Ezekiel 22:30–31 & 33:11: What does this say about God’s heart toward the wicked? In this passage we see God looking for someone to stand in the gap. What does that look like in today’s culture? What are specific ways you can stand in the gap today?

What are 10 places in our neighborhood and in our city where Christ is not proclaimed?

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 6. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 7. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 8. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 9. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 10. _____ |

DEEPER WALK

Select at least one activity below to complete during the next week.

- **Personal Action:** Look over the list of ten venues. Find one way this week to support a ministry working in these dark areas. (Prayer, finances, volunteering)
- **Mentoring:** Who do you know who best exemplifies the kind of wisdom shared in this lesson? Write them a thank-you email, detailing the ways you appreciate the way they serve Jesus and others.
- **Conversation:** Take a chance this week to approach someone you don’t know. Ask lots of questions. Find out about their story, their life. Practice mercy and wisdom during the conversation.
- **Memorization:** Text Matthew 9:13 to yourself. Whenever you see someone acting mercifully, forward that text to them and thank them for their example (if you have their phone number!).
- **Pray:** Ask God to explode your idea of ministry boundaries. Dare to pray that He would lead you into scary places for the sake of His name and the rescue of others.
- **Read:** For deeper study on the topics we talked about this week, read chapters 16–19 in *Thriving in Babylon: Why Hope, Humility, and Wisdom Matter in a Godless Culture*.