

Basic Training Bible Ministries

presents

The Daniel Project



“ ... but the people who know their God shall be strong, and take action. And those of the people who understand shall instruct many ... and some of those of understanding shall fall, to refine them, purify them, and make them white, until the time of the end ... ” Dan 11:32b–25

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“ ... *but the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits* [take action, NASB]. *And those of the people who understand shall instruct many ... And some of those of understanding shall fall, to refine them, purify them, and make them white, until the time of the end ...* ” Dan 11:32b–33, 35

In the above passage, we see five great undertakings of faithful believers in the end times. To be accurate, this passage is speaking specifically of Jewish believers during the Tribulation Period (see Dan 11:36–39). However, we have every reason to adapt it to these closing moments of the Church Age.

Five Great Undertakings

1. **To know God**—much different from just knowing about Him
“He made known His ways to Moses, His acts to the children of Israel.” Psa 103:7
2. **To gain strength**—the power of faith, gained by study and experience
“Be diligent [study] to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” 2Ti 2:15
3. **To take action**—application of the truth to our times
“And having shod your feet with ... the gospel of peace ...” Eph 6:15
4. **To instruct others**—a leader worthy to be followed
“Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.” 1Ti 4:16
5. **To endure suffering**—following in our Lord’s footsteps
“For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow in His steps.” 1Pe 2:21

What we have here are:

Five Stages of Spiritual Development for the Spiritual Warrior

This path is not for the weak of heart, nor for the complacent Christian. We are organizing “The Daniel Project” in the hopes of challenging a generation of young men and women to follow this course in our own perilous time of history.

1. To Know God

The word translated “*know*” in Dan 11:32 is from the Hebrew *yada*, meaning “to perceive, understand, comprehend.” However, it is often used for the most intimate and

deep personal relation to another (Gen 4:1). The form of the verb implies the attainment of significant spiritual maturity—a state of knowledge that characterizes one’s life.

Example: Dan 1:8–20, Daniel leads the way.

Daniel and his friends had been under the teaching of the prophet Jeremiah. He told them, by the Word of God, to submit to the king of Babylon (Jer 29:4–10, 38:2, 17). But they knew this did not include defiling themselves (Dan 1:8). Therefore, they made a request for a special diet (Dan 1:12), and trusted in God to vindicate their faith (Dan 1:13–16). In this, Daniel was the leader, the strongest of the four, leading the others to greater spiritual stature.

Illustration:

Richard Wurmbrand speaks of parents who were given the choice of denouncing Christ and keeping their children, or of holding to Christ and being sent to prison. *“Nadia Sloboda left her house for four years of prison. Her children were taken from her, but she left her house singing. The children, for whom the police waited with a truck to take them as she left, told their singing mother, ‘Don’t worry about us. Wherever they put us, we will not give up our faith’”* (from *Preparing for the Underground Church*).

People learn verses, and think by this that they know God. How many times have we heard of people who say, “I claimed such and such a verse, but in my time of suffering it didn’t work”? Listen to Pastor Wurmbrand, who spent 14 years in prison for his faith.

“I have since been asked, ‘Which Bible verse helped and strengthened you in those circumstances?’ My answer is: ‘No Bible verse was of any help ... Psalm 23, The Lord is my Shepherd ... it was never meant by God to strengthen you. It is the Lord who can strengthen you, not the Psalm, which speaks of Him so doing.’”

This is the difference between knowing about God, and knowing God!

Principles:

a. The knowledge of God begins with personal faith in Jesus Christ.

“Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.’” Joh 14:6

“And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.” Joh 17:3

b. All true spiritual growth is increasing in the knowledge of Him.

“But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ ...” 2Pe 3:18

c. Such growth is not merely academic, but is rather experiential, and it is costly.

“But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord ... that I may know Him ...” Phi 3:7–8, 10

d. This principle of “loss for gain” is inherent in choosing to follow Him.

“Then He said to them all, ‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let Him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.’” Luk 9:23

e. There is a biblical term for this way of life, and it is called discipleship.

“If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.” Luk 14:26–27

f. Only those who have been in the “School of Christ,” practically, are able to claim the promise of Phi 4:13:

“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

But note Phi 4:11–12, first came learning, then came practice!

“Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.” Mat 11:29

“But you have not so learned Christ, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus; that you put off ... the old man ... and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.” Eph 4:20–24

Application: How can I truly know God?

Many young people desire to know God, but question how this can be done. Two simple things (not easy—simple) must come together: your desire to learn His Word, combined with the courage to apply it in all your circumstances. Trust that God has placed you where He wants you; this is your arena for action. Take three simple steps:

- a. Receive His Word with the desire to do it (Joh 7:17),
- b. Become a living example of faith in action (1Th 1:6–8), and

- c. Pray for, and take advantage of, opportunities for witness (Rev 3:8). When God opens the door, you know it will be effective.

Point: The smallest steps, made consistently over time, bring the greatest results!

2. To Gain Strength

The word “*strong*” comes from *chazak*, which means, “to seize, bind fast, gain strength, steadiness, constancy, intrepidity—the opposite of faint-hearted.” The causative form of the verb (*hiphil*, imperfect) suggests a determined decision made consistently over a period of time.

Example: Dan 2:14–23, Daniel’s friends engage in prayer.

In Chapter 1, Daniel set the example, and his friends joined with him. Now they are actively engaged in the spiritual struggle. Again, Daniel is the leader, or “mentor,” but he gets his friends involved in effective prayer. God is faithful and reveals the king’s dream, and Daniel and his friends are delivered.

Note:

Effective prayer involves four things:

- a. It is a prayer of faith, trusting in God’s Word/promises;
- b. It is specific, asking for mercy, revelation, and deliverance;
- c. It is persistent. We do not know how long the “*time*” mentioned in Dan 2:16 was, but they prayed through it until the prayer was answered; and
- d. It includes praise and thanksgiving (Dan 2:20–23).

Illustration:

Oswald Chambers said “*Prayer does not fit us for the greater works; prayer is the greater work*” (*My Utmost for His Highest*). The Apostle Paul declares effective prayer to be the key to putting on the full armor of God, and of waging effective spiritual warfare (Eph 6:18).

Principles:

- a. In the spiritual life, strength comes from consistent spiritual growth in the study and application of the Word of God (Rom 12:1–2; 2Ti 2:15).
- b. Strength does not originate in the individual believer, but comes from the indwelling Spirit of God to the submissive soul (Eph 3:16, 6:10).
- c. Knowledge alone can come from study, but strength can only be gained as truth is applied with a reliance on the grace of God (2Ti 1:6–7, 2:1–3).
- d. To attain spiritual strength, the believer must have a consistent habit of not relying on self, but on God who gives strength to the weak (2Co 12:9–10; Heb 11:34).

- e. The goal of having attained a measure of strength is to undertake on behalf of those who are weak (Rom 15:1).
- f. Divine strength makes possible supernatural accomplishments by those who are enabled by it (Isa 40:31, 41:10; Heb 11:11).

3. To Take Action

The common word for taking action is *asah*, generally meaning “to make, to do, to work, labor.” It is seen here as the outcome of biblical knowledge and spiritual strength, finding obedient outlet in heroic service in a time of great persecution.

- a. Because of the adverse conditions implied in the context, this is translated “*carry out great exploits*” in the NKJV. These believers are the future spiritual descendants of Daniel and his friends.
- b. It is critical to grasp here that genuine spiritual maturity cannot coincide with spiritual apathy and inactivity (Jam 1:22, 2:17, 22).
- c. It is vital that we, in this generation, echo the wake-up call of the Holy Spirit as expressed by Paul in Eph 5:14.
- d. Believers who dare to be like Daniel must learn to live, not on the basis of the day’s headlines, but on the basis of the promises of God (Rom 4:21; Heb 13:5–6; 2Pe 1:4).

Example: Dan 3:13–25

Now, we see the three friends of Daniel standing on their own. Having been mentored by Daniel, they can now “*take action*” (NASB) by their own initiative. It is important to see that they are willing to stand firm, whether they are delivered or not (Dan 3:17–18). By being willing to suffer for their faith, they are brought, in the midst of the fire, into a greater revelation and fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ—the fourth man in the fire (Dan 3:24–25).

Point: We need to awaken a generation that knows all **about** Christ, to begin to actually **know** Him, by entering into His life, and thus His sufferings.

“*That I may know Him ... and the fellowship of His sufferings ...*” Phi 3:10

“*If we endure [suffer with Him], we shall also reign with Him.*” 2Ti 2:12 (see also Rom 8:17)

Illustration:

Only foolish and untaught believers assume God will take away all pain and suffering in life. The willingness to endure in faith, regardless of the consequences, is the key to victory. As Esther said, “*If I perish, I perish!*” (Est 4:16).

Principles:

- a. Biblical faith is the spiritual engine that produces dynamic and obedient action in the life of the believer (2Co 4:13; Phi 1:29; Jam 1:21–22, 2:17, 24; Heb 11:1, 6).
- b. The inherent power of the Word of God is like a mighty wind; the soul of the believer is the sail that catches and is moved by that force (Joh 3:8; Heb 4:12; Jam 3:4).
- c. The “*great exploits*” of God’s people are often unseen or overlooked by this world. Faith by its nature is humble and, therefore, never self-seeking. But seemingly small deeds, done by faith, ultimately shape a generation and change history (Heb 11:7–40).
- d. The dominating factor in the actions of faith is that of “overcoming” apathy, inertia, and opposition (Rev 2:7, 11, 17, 3:5, 12, 21; 1Jo 5:4–5).
- e. The book of Acts is a textbook on “*great exploits*” done by faith.

4. To Instruct Others

Two words are significant here. First, those doing the instruction are believers who “*understand*.” The Hebrew word *shaqal* implies “wisdom, understanding, success.” They have a proven spiritual record. Second, out of their experience in proving God’s Word, they “*instruct many*” others. The Hebrew word for instruct is *biyn* and suggests “to impart understanding, to give insight.”

Example: Dan 4:1–5:31

In times of historical crisis, many people’s eyes are opened to the true priorities of life, and their souls are humbled by circumstances, to give truth a hearing.

The narrative in these two chapters returns the focus to Daniel—obviously the most spiritually advanced of the four. In Chapter 4, he instructs Nebuchadnezzar, based on the interpretation of his dream. The indications are that King “Neb” became a believer (cf., Dan 4:1–3, 34–36). Then, in Chapter 5, Daniel instructs Belshazzar, who did not humble himself (Dan 5:22–23) and died violently that very night (Dan 5:30).

There is no guarantee that wise instruction will always be heeded!

Illustration:

In the story, *The Pastors Wife* (pgs. 22–23, by Sabina Wurmbrand), Mrs. Wurmbrand tells how the courageous stand of her husband Richard against Communist leaders and propaganda breathed life into many who were cowering and compromising.

Principles:

- a. Those most qualified to be teachers in times of calamity are those who were examples of wise conduct prior to the calamity (1Th 1:3, 6–8, 2:13–14).
- b. It is an observable fact of history that, in the time leading up to great national and world crises (think of time just prior to WWI, the Roaring Twenties, the Great Depression, and WWII), society as a whole seemed to “live as if there is no tomorrow.” Today is no different. Those who give in to this madness have no credibility to teach others when the calamity strikes.
- c. Beware of “big talkers.” Pastor Wurmbrand records how many of the loudest talkers about “liberty or death” (i.e., fellow pastors) prior to the communist takeover, were some of the first to sell out and betray other Christians (Read *Tortured for Christ*).
- d. As the character Sam Spade (Humphrey Bogart) said, in *The Maltese Falcon*, “*The cheaper the punk, the gaudier the patter.*”

5. To Endure Suffering

Three times in Dan 11:33–35, we have a reference to the “*fall*” of many believers. The critical question is, to whom does this refer? To the wise instructors, or to their newly awakened students?

The word *cashal* means simply “to stumble or fall down,” the implication is usually “*through weakness or want of strength*” (*Wilson’s Old Testament Word Studies*), but not always.

Note that in Dan 11:33–34, the reference “*they*” seems to speak of the “*many*” who are receiving instruction. In these struggles, “*they shall be aided with a little help.*” This divine intervention, which may seem small, will be sufficient to see them through if they avail themselves of it.

The fact that “*many shall join with them by intrigue*” indicates that the primary challenge is that of “*discern[ing] ... good and evil*” (Heb 5:14), or the ability to distinguish truth from error.

But the group in Dan 11:35 specifically refers to “*those of understanding.*” They will not escape the trials of the time, and will also “*fall,*” but for a higher, eternal purpose. That purpose is to “*refine ... purify ... and make them white*” (dazzling, reflected glory). These, due to their faithfulness, will be the ones spoken of in Dan 12:3:

“Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the Firmament [the heavens], and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever.”

Example: Dan 6:1–28

It is clear that Daniel is the chief example of wise leadership and instruction in the book. As he led, mentored, and helped his friends learn to face their trials (Dan 1:1–3:30), he also led others to righteousness by faith (Dan 4:1–37).

Yet, Daniel was not spared from the trials, and neither will we be! Even though he had distinguished himself from all others in the kingdom (Dan 6:3), he also had to suffer for refining purposes (1Pe 1:6–9).

*“Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus
will suffer persecution.” 2Ti 3:12*

The persecutions of Daniel in this chapter follow a predictable pattern. First, he excels above all his contemporaries (Dan 6:3). This results in igniting the envy of his peers (Dan 6:4). The resulting persecution is cloaked in the guise of a “good” law, specifically designed to target him for his unfailing faithfulness (Dan 6:6–9). These same tactics are used today by so-called “progressive” God-haters, against men and women of true faith.

Daniel’s response can be summarized in two words—“no compromise.” His obedience to God demanded civil disobedience. Never allow anyone to deceive or mislead you, by a false rendering of Romans 13, into thinking we are to obey all laws and all lawmakers. Such teaching is false to the core. We are always and at all times to “*obey God rather than men*” (Act 4:19; 5:29).

Illustration:

All stories of great believers in times of persecution demonstrate that they stood apart from the crowd because their devotion to God would not allow them to compromise with unjust “laws” passed by evil men. Read the story of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who gave his life fighting the evils of Adolph Hitler and the Nazis.

When Communists took over Romania, the pastors, by and large, compromised with them. At a meeting where all the pastors had been called to either “join or suffer,” one pastor after another stood up and sang the glories of Communism.

Richard and Sabina Wurmbrand were outraged. She said to him “*Will you not wash this shame from the face of Christ?*” He said, “*If I speak, you will lose a husband.*” To which she boldly replied, “*I don’t need a coward for a husband.*” He rose and spoke with conviction, glorifying Jesus Christ. As a result, he spent 14 years in torture and confinement. And Sabina also suffered greatly (*The Pastors Wife*, pg. 22).

Principles:

- a. All sufferings and afflictions in the life of the Christian are designed to purify the faith, glorify Jesus Christ, and gain eternal reward (Rom 5:1–5; 2Ti 3:12; Jam 1:2, 12).
- b. We have the promise that no trial will be beyond our capacity to endure (1Co 10:13).
- c. It is in the very fires of trial that Jesus Christ draws near and makes His presence and power known (Isa 43:1–3, 51:12, 54:17, 61:1–3, 63:9; Dan 3:25).
- d. All sufferings are confined to time, but the rewards of faithfulness will last throughout eternity (2Ti 2:11–12; 1Pe 5:10–11; Rev 22:12–13).
- e. The key to overcoming the fear of persecutions is to develop the greater “*fear of the Lord*” (Pro 9:10–11). Only faith can conquer fear! (Rev 1:17, 2:10, 15:3–4, 19:5).

Conclusion:

The book of Daniel is a textbook for the younger generation—when the world they know is gone—on how to stand by faith and overcome persecutions.

Suggested Reading List

Don’t just read, but implement these vital lessons into your lives! These are only a few suggestions; there are many other valuable books available.

The Crook in the Lot, Boston, Thomas (valuable old Puritan favorite)

Guide to Spiritual Warfare, Bounds, E. M.

Triumphing Over Sinful Fear, Flavel, John.

Preparation for Suffering, Flavel, John

Unbroken, Laura Hillenbrand.

Last Words of Saints and Sinners, Lockyer, Herbert.

Born for Battle, Mathews, R. Arthur (valuable 31–day devotional).

Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy, Metaxas, Eric.

The Making of a Man of God, Redpath, Alan (studies on David).

Spiritual Warfare, Stedman, Ray C.

A Vietnam Experience, Stockdale, James B. (reflections of a P.O.W.).

Alone with God, Wurmbrand, Richard.

If Prison Walls Could Speak, Wurmbrand, Richard.

The Overcomers, Wurmbrand, Richard.

Tortured for Christ, Wurmbrand, Richard.

Underground Saints, Wurmbrand, Richard.

Victorious Faith, Wurmbrand, Richard.

With God in Solitary Confinement, Wurmbrand, Richard.

The Pastor’s Wife, Wurmbrand, Sabina.