

Daniel Six and Summary

Dangerous Convictions: When Worship and Work Collide



EXPLORE THE SCRIPTURES

Read chapter six regarding Daniel’s encounter with the lions. Consider Daniel’s responses to God and to King Darius. What convictions do you see Daniel living out?

Discuss: Daniel’s World

1. What did you observe about Daniel, his convictions and how he responded to the king and to his accusers?
2. As Daniel’s work context changed from the Babylonian to the Persian kingdom, his convictions stayed the same. What convictions do you see in Daniel that transcend his workplace context from one “boss” to the next?
3. Daniel was committed to praying to God. Why do you think he chose to commit to three times of daily prayer? (See vv. 10–11.) How do you think his convictions and commitment were linked?
4. What do you think were the motives behind the accusation against Daniel (v. 13)?
5. Daniel’s personal story was a small part of God’s greater story. Why do you think Daniel, as a non–Persian, rose to such a high position within the Persian empire? What do you think God had in mind for Daniel’s ascent?

SUMMARY: THRIVING AS AN EXILE

My Dangerous Convictions

Throughout this study, you have considered your convictions in light of Daniel and his friends. Our convictions can be dangerous to the status quo of the workplace culture and, at times, living out our convictions can become dangerous to our own security and safety at work.

As we form convictions, it is important to go beyond opinions, preferences and even beliefs. Consider the following:

Bias – A bias (or biased opinion) is something you are inclined to think is true even though you have not studied it thoroughly. Quickly share with the group an example of one of your biases or opinions related to a sports team, movie, work, other cultures, etc.

Personal Preference – A personal preference is something you have examined a little and prefer compared to other options. Quickly share with the group an example of one of your preferences related to food, types of books to read, travel locations, friendship circles, etc.

Stated Belief – A stated belief is something you have studied and feel strongly about and usually act on. Share with the group one example of one of your beliefs related to life, spirituality, economic principles, race relations, etc.

Deep Conviction – A deeply held conviction is...

- More than an agreeable statement—it is an active choice, an act of the will.
- Well thought through—considers the pros, the cons and the whys.
- Worthy of committed action, to the point of suffering, if necessary.
- Held tightly even as our contexts change at work or in life.
- A trustworthy commitment based on the only Trustworthy Person—the Triune God Most High.

1. Write down the 2–4 convictions God has been building in you through this study of Daniel. These convictions may not be as strong today as you hope they will be in the future, but they are things you sense God is inviting you to believe more deeply.

2. How dangerous do you think your convictions and commitments are to your career advancement in your current context or your expected future workplace?

3. Can you see ways your commitments might need to change even as your convictions remain the same as your workplace context varies over time?

4. As followers of Jesus, we need each other. We need friends with similar convictions as we journey through life and the workplace. As you make changes over time (types of work, marriage and family, location, etc.), how might your current group of friends support each other? What will it take to find new friends?

Longing

5. We all have God-given longings. Perhaps this study has stirred up some new ones for you. Think about the example of Daniel's life. Which of the longings below relate to your own vocational desires? (Add to this list as necessary.) When you have finished identifying any that relate your desires, jump to the next question below.

To Belong

Intimacy

Romance

Status (Glory)

Protection

Provide

Acquisition

Power

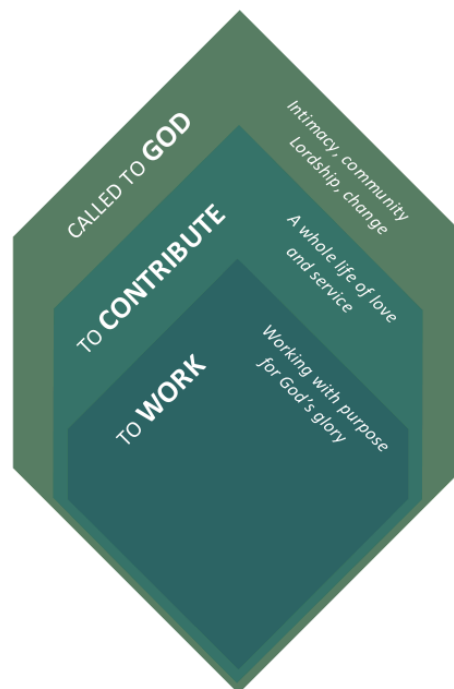
To Build

<i>Order</i>	<i>Nurture</i>	<i>To Sustain</i>
<i>Change</i>	<i>Movement</i>	<i>Justice</i>
<i>Mercy</i>	<i>Replication</i>	<i>Success</i>
<i>Significance</i>	<i>To Explore</i>	<i>To Know</i>
<i>To Create</i>	<i>Transcendence</i>	<i>Perfection</i>
<i>Meaning</i>	<i>Other?</i>	

Calling, Contribution, Work

6. God calls us first to himself and then to a whole life of love and service to others. Work is just one part of our lives, and yet, we can often expect more of work than it can deliver.

Discuss how the longings you circled might or might not be fulfilled within your work context. Which of them, if any, might be better fulfilled within the larger sphere of God’s “whole life” call to doing good, and which might only be fulfilled within God’s personal call on you to Himself?



Life Purpose

7. Finally, review the life purpose statement you wrote at the very beginning of this study, in the Introduction section (pp. 5–7). What has changed? What has stayed the same? Rewrite your sense of calling here and discuss. At this point, you may want to write a two-part statement, with one part that reflects God’s purpose within your

occupation and another that you feel strongly about no matter what setting you are in. For example...

“At work, I hope to build and restore communities in the light of the Kingdom of God through the design and service of city infrastructure. In all of life, I want to ‘love the person in front of me’ through acts of kindness and ‘going the extra mile.’”

“As a teacher, I want to educate and inspire disadvantaged children in my community. I also want to rescue and restore women who have been sexually exploited through sex trafficking and abuse.”

SCRIPTURE MEMORY AND REVIEW

Look back over the suggested memory verses in each session. Which have been most meaningful, challenging and/or encouraging to you as you consider your vocation?

Consider reviewing the verse(s) you selected on a regular basis as a way to fortify your convictions.

PAUSE TO PRAY

Take time alone to pray. Listen to God. Do you find yourself wrestling, disquieted, frustrated or peaceful? Expectant or hopeful? Talk to Him about it. When it seems right, ask Him for courage and His presence as you seek to live out your convictions as a *Kingdom Citizen* and an exile. When you are finished, if you are in a group, pray together as a group. Please do not rush this time before God.

GOING DEEPER (OPTIONAL)

How do you feel about being a small part of God's great story throughout creation and the broad history of human work? Is your small role meaningful to you? Explain.

Download and read the short essay, "Success, Significance and Meaning," (available in Book FOUR of the *Wharf and Bearings* series at www.ralphennis.com/wharf-and-bearings-series.html). How meaningful is your daily work to you? What is the basis of that meaning? Explain.