

XXXIX

THE OLD TESTAMENT

Leader Conversation Guide – XXXIX: Daniel

Main Idea

Standing firm in faith has never been easy—especially in a culture that constantly pressures us to elevate self and diminish God. The book of Daniel shows us what it looks like to live faithfully in the middle of an ungodly culture without withdrawing from it or being shaped by it. Daniel and his friends were immersed in Babylon, yet they refused to let Babylon live in them. They stood firm in their devotion to God while still influencing the world around them for His glory.

This week’s message reminded us that we will either shape the culture or be shaped by it. Babylon’s mindset says, “I am, and there is none besides me,” but God calls His people to live differently—choosing humility, acknowledging His sovereignty, and exalting Him above all else. Like King Nebuchadnezzar ultimately learned, true strength and restoration come when we recognize that Heaven rules. As we begin our discussion, let’s ask God to help us stand strong in a pride-inflated world, to live facedown before Him, and to let our lives shine in a way that points others to the King of Heaven.

**Your kingdom will be restored to you
when you acknowledge that Heaven rules.**

DANIEL 4:26

Make it Practical:

1. God calls His people to stand firm in faith while living in a broken culture
 - Daniel and the Hebrew captives lived in Babylon without becoming Babylon.
 - We are not called to withdraw from the world, but to influence it for God’s glory.
 - We will either shape the culture or reflect it.
 - Matthew 5:16; John 17:15–16
2. Pride is the defining spirit of Babylon, but humility is the way of God’s Kingdom
 - Babylon elevates self and lowers God: “I am, and there is none besides me.”
 - Pride blinds us to God’s sovereignty and leads to self-dependence.
 - God lovingly humbles those who walk in pride in order to restore them.
 - Isaiah 47:8–10; Daniel 4:24–26
3. Standing strong begins with humbling ourselves before God
 - Exalting God, acknowledging Him, and humbling ourselves are intentional choices.
 - Everything we have comes from God, and all glory belongs to Him alone.
 - When we humble ourselves, God lifts us up and displays His rule through our lives.
 - Psalm 145:1; 1 Corinthians 4:7; James 4:10

Talk About It

Daniel and his friends lived fully immersed in Babylonian culture, yet their identity and loyalty remained rooted in God. What are some subtle ways culture pressures us to compromise our faith today, and how can we remain faithful without isolating ourselves from the people around us?

King Nebuchadnezzar didn't recognize God's authority until his pride was confronted and humbled. Why do you think pride is often so difficult to identify in our own lives, and what practices or relationships help keep your heart surrendered to God?

The sermon emphasized that exalting God, acknowledging Him, and humbling ourselves are choices—not feelings. What is one practical way you can live out “Heaven rules” in your daily decisions, attitudes, or responses this week?

Standing strong in a pride-inflated culture begins facedown.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, we thank You that You are sovereign over all things and that Your ways are right and just. Help us to humble ourselves before You, to acknowledge that everything we have comes from You, and to live in a way that exalts Your name. Give us the strength to stand firm in our faith and the courage to reflect Your light in a world that often pulls us in the opposite direction. May our lives declare that Heaven rules. In Jesus' name, amen.

Next Steps

1. Practice daily humility before God. (James 4:10).

Begin each day by acknowledging God's sovereignty through prayer and Scripture, intentionally placing your heart in a posture that says, “Heaven rules,” before making decisions or responding to challenges.

2. Identify and confront subtle pride. (1 Corinthians 4:7).

Ask God to reveal areas where self-reliance, self-promotion, or independence from Him may be shaping your thoughts or actions. Invite accountability from a trusted believer to help keep your heart aligned with humility.

3. Live as a light within your culture. (Matthew 5:16).

Choose one intentional way this week to reflect God's character—through integrity, compassion, or obedience—so others see His goodness through your life rather than the values of the culture around you.