

Life: Pray fervently

October 9, 2015

• *The Bible Studies for Life lesson for Oct. 25 focuses on Daniel 2:13-21, 26-28.*

How would you react if someone accused you of something you didn't do? How would you react if you were going to be punished for something you didn't do and did not have a chance to defend yourself? Perhaps you've lost a job as a consequence of something someone else did, but everyone thought you were the culprit. Maybe you've lost a friendship over a misunderstanding you weren't given a chance to fix.

Certainly, life can be unfair. Daniel was in a situation where he faced capital punishment for something he knew nothing about. Daniel found his way through this lethal situation by utilizing prayer and highlighting God's greatness.

When problems arise, take time to seek God (Daniel 2:13-16)

Frequently, we cause our own problems in life. Sometimes, others step in to cause problems for us. Daniel found himself in a situation where others caused problems that threatened his life.

King Nebuchadnezzar dreamed a disturbing dream one night and wanted his closest advisers and wise men to interpret the dream for him. These advisers are described as magicians, enchanters, sorcerers and astrologers. Each of the terms has an etymology from different countries. This fact may suggest these religious gurus may have been from all over the ancient Near East. All of them had their unique perspectives and were eager to comply with the king's request, so they asked him to describe his dream.

The king refused their request. He wanted these so-called experts in the

magical arts to tell him his dream and then interpret it. They never had heard such a request. No one would be able to tell the king his dream and interpret it.

Pray persistently while awaiting God's response (Daniel 2:17-21)

The king's religious advisers repeated their request for the king to describe his dream. Again, the king refused to comply in relating his dream, and this time, he became angry at their request. He accused them of stalling and demanded they tell him his dream and its interpretation or face execution.

Of course, they could not describe the dream the king had, nor could they give the interpretation. The infuriated monarch immediately ordered the execution of not only the astrologers in his presence, but also all of the wise men in Babylon. This decree included Daniel and his friends.

When the commander of the king's guard came for Daniel, he wanted to know why the king had issued such a harsh decree. Daniel believed the death sentence was rash, but he didn't think the king's demand of the astrologers to know his dream was unrealistic. He saw an opportunity for God to display his majesty.

So, Daniel went to the king. No mention is made of an intermediary. Daniel just went directly to the king in order to be given time to interpret the dream. Note the irony that the king thought the astrologers were stalling for more time to interpret the king's dream, and more time was exactly what Daniel requested.

Simply by going to the king, Daniel challenged the decree and even the king himself. He showed the courage needed to spare his life and the lives of his friends. The king, evidently, allowed the additional time, because Daniel returned home and joined his friends in prayer. God, not the king, controlled the situation.

Daniel and his friends prayed for the solution to the mystery the king presented to them. This real-life predicament needed all of the spiritual resources Daniel could muster, and his friends' prayers were just what were required. During the night, God revealed what Daniel needed to know, so he and his friends would not face death.

After receiving the answer to his prayer, Daniel praised God. Deliverance was granted. Grace was received. Life was rescued from the clutches of death.

Acknowledge God as the source of the answer (Daniel 2:26-28)

Daniel returned to the king who asked him if he could describe his dream and give its proper interpretation. In reply, Daniel stated no human, no astrologer, not even he himself could give the king what he wanted to know. Only the God of heaven could know such information.

How easy it would have been for Daniel simply to tell the king he knew the solution to the mystery. He could have even added a simple, "God told me the answer." Daniel didn't do that. Instead, he emphasized to the king how God alone could know the answer, and he revealed that answer to Daniel.

Daniel did not associate himself with world's wisdom of his day. He acknowledged its limitations. Today, rationalism holds the upper hand in understanding the world in which we live. Rationalism contains many truths and has much to teach our world, but it has its limitations. Daniel acknowledged God as the source of his wisdom. We, too, must acknowledge the work of God in our world wherever we see it.

God is one who reveals mysteries, and Daniel didn't wish to promote himself. He wanted to show King Nebuchadnezzar the existence of God and proof of his existence in the fact he revealed the king's dream. For Christians, we, too, proclaim God's existence. We proclaim the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We testify of how the resurrected Jesus gives life to the

full.