WORKBOOK STUDY COMPANION · LESSON 4

Learning *the Hard Way*

DANIEL 4

Scripture written out in the NASB95, every question answered in one sentence, cross references, verse-by-verse commentary from three trusted teachers — and for each question, a point of critical thinking and a key question to carry into the week.

Amir Tsarfati
DISCOVERING DANIEL

John MacArthur
GRACE TO YOU

David Guzik
ENDURING WORD

01 CAPTURE THE SCENE

What do I see?

Using my Bible, working through Daniel 4 verse by verse.

1 What does Nebuchadnezzar proclaim in Daniel 4:1–3?

Daniel 4:1-3 NASB95

Nebuchadnezzar the king to all the peoples, nations, and men of every language that live in all the earth: "May your peace abound! It has seemed good to me to declare the signs and wonders which the Most High God has done for me. How great are His signs and how mighty are His wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom and His dominion is from generation to generation."

IN MY WORDS

He issues an empire-wide decree praising the Most High God for the signs and wonders done for him, confessing that God's kingdom is everlasting and His dominion endures from generation to generation.

CROSS REFERENCE **Daniel 2:44** "the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed" — the everlasting kingdom the king now confesses.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

This unique chapter is the testimony of a Gentile king and how God changed his heart; Nebuchadnezzar here is a witness — one who relates what he has seen and experienced — and it is good to declare what God has done for us.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

The head of gold opens his own decree by confessing that God's kingdom is the everlasting one — the very point chapter 2 made with a stone cut without hands; the times of the Gentiles is testifying against itself.

CRITICAL THINKING

The decree opens with the end of the story — praise — before telling the humiliation that produced it. A man only publishes his lowest moment once he has stopped protecting his image.

KEY QUESTION

What has God done for me that I have been reluctant to say out loud?

2 What reaction did Nebuchadnezzar have to a new dream that had come to him (verse 5)?

Daniel 4:5 NASB95

I saw a dream and it made me fearful; and these fantasies as I lay on my bed and the visions in my mind kept alarming me.

IN MY WORDS

The dream terrified him — a powerful king lay on his bed unable to shake the fear and the visions it stirred.

CROSS REFERENCE **Job 33:14-16** God speaks in dreams and visions of the night, "then He opens the ears of men, and seals their instruction."

> **John MacArthur** GRACE TO YOU
>
> Prosperity is the soil pride grows best in; "at ease and flourishing" is exactly when God sent the warning, because a man feels least in need of one then.

> CRITICAL THINKING
>
> All his power could conquer nations but could not quiet one night's fear. What we cannot control at three in the morning tells the truth about how little we actually rule.

KEY QUESTION

What fear surfaces when I am alone that my daytime confidence keeps hidden?

3 What happened when Nebuchadnezzar asked his wise men to interpret the dream (verse 7)?

> Daniel 4:7 NASB95
>
> Then the magicians, the conjurers, the Chaldeans and the diviners came in and I related the dream to them, but they could not make its interpretation known to me.

> IN MY WORDS
>
> His wise men came in, heard the dream, and could not tell him what it meant.

CROSS REFERENCE **Daniel 2:27-28** the wise men cannot declare the mystery, "however, there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries."

> **David Guzik** ENDURING WORD
>
> This is not the dream of chapter 2; the king told them plainly and they still gave no interpretation — probably lacking courage more than insight, since the dream clearly dealt with the humbling of a great king.

> CRITICAL THINKING
>
> The experts failed at the exact task they were kept for. When the message is unwelcome, the ablest counsel often goes quiet — and silence becomes its own kind of flattery.

KEY QUESTION

Whom do I keep close mainly because they will not tell me hard things?

4 Nebuchadnezzar shared the details of the dream with Daniel. What did the king say about the tree that he saw in the dream (verses 10–12)?

> Daniel 4:10-12 NASB95
>
> Now these were the visions in my mind as I lay on my bed: I was looking, and behold, there was a tree in the midst of the earth and its height was great. The tree grew large and became strong and its height reached to the sky, and it was visible to the end of the whole earth. Its foliage was beautiful and its fruit abundant, and in it was food for all. The beasts of the field found shade under it, and the birds of the sky dwelt in its branches, and all living creatures fed themselves from it.

IN MY WORDS

He described an enormous, beautiful tree that reached to the sky and was visible to the ends of the earth, feeding and sheltering every living creature.

CROSS REFERENCE **Ezekiel 31:3-9** Assyria pictured as a towering cedar the nations sheltered under — Scripture's image of a great empire.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

A great tree sheltering the beasts and birds is Scripture's own picture of a world empire; here it is marked for cutting, yet the stump is preserved — Gentile dominion interrupted, not annihilated.

CRITICAL THINKING

The tree's glory was real and God-given; the problem was never the greatness but who claimed to have grown it. A gift becomes an idol the moment the receiver forgets he received it.

KEY QUESTION

What good thing in my life have I quietly started calling my own achievement?

5 What did a "watcher…from heaven" command be done to the tree (verses 14–15)?

Daniel 4:14-15 NASB95

He shouted out and spoke as follows: "Chop down the tree and cut off its branches, strip off its foliage and scatter its fruit; let the beasts flee from under it and the birds from its branches. Yet leave the stump with its roots in the ground, but with a band of iron and bronze around it in the new grass of the field; and let him be drenched with the dew of heaven, and let him share with the beasts in the grass of the earth."

IN MY WORDS

A holy watcher ordered the tree chopped down and stripped, yet commanded that the stump and its roots be left in the ground, banded with iron and bronze.

CROSS REFERENCE **Romans 11:22** "behold then the kindness and severity of God" — both are present in the felled tree and the spared stump.

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

Take the mercy literally — the stump is left; God's discipline of a man He means to restore is measured, bounded, and aimed at repentance.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

The band of iron and bronze was for the stump's confinement and protection; the tree would no longer be free and great, but it would not be destroyed.

CRITICAL THINKING

The same sentence that felled the tree also protected its stump. God's judgments on His own are never merely punitive — the fence around the roots is drawn by the same hand that swung the axe.

KEY QUESTION

Can I read a hard providence as a fence God built to keep me, and not only a blow He struck?

6 What "sentence" did this watcher warn would be imposed upon Nebuchadnezzar (verse 16)?

Daniel 4:16 NASB95

Let his mind be changed from that of a man and let a beast's mind be given to him, and let seven periods of time pass over him.

IN MY WORDS

His human mind would be taken from him and replaced with the mind of a beast, and he would remain that way for seven periods of time.

CROSS REFERENCE **Psalm 49:20** "Man in his pomp, yet without understanding, is like the beasts that perish."

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

A man who refused to acknowledge the God who made him was given the mind of a beast — precisely the creature-accountable-to-no-one he had insisted on being.

CRITICAL THINKING

The punishment simply granted the pride its logical end. A man who will not live under God does not rise above humanity; he sinks below it.

KEY QUESTION

Where does my refusal to submit actually make me less than I was made to be?

7 How did Daniel react upon hearing the details of the dream? And who did Daniel wish the dream could have been about (verse 19)?

Daniel 4:19 NASB95

Then Daniel, whose name is Belteshazzar, was appalled for a while as his thoughts alarmed him. The king responded and said, "Belteshazzar, do not let the dream or its interpretation alarm you." Belteshazzar replied, "My lord, if only the dream applied to those who hate you and its interpretation to your adversaries!"

IN MY WORDS

Daniel was appalled and deeply troubled, and wished aloud that the dream applied to the king's enemies rather than to the king himself.

CROSS REFERENCE **Romans 9:2-3** Paul's "great sorrow and unceasing grief" over those under judgment — the same grieving love.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Daniel genuinely cared for Nebuchadnezzar and was clearly affected by the dream — he did not want it to be true of his friend.

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

A Jewish exile, taken from a burned Jerusalem by this very king, stands before him with heaven's verdict in his mouth — and grieves over it. That is what God's people are to be to the nations.

CRITICAL THINKING

Daniel had every reason to relish this verdict against his captor, and instead mourned it. The measure of a prophet is whether he grieves the judgment he is required to announce.

KEY QUESTION

Do I secretly enjoy the downfall of people who have wronged me?

8 What did Daniel say the tree represented (verses 20–22)?

Daniel 4:20-22 NASB95

"The tree that you saw, which became large and grew strong, whose height reached to the sky and was visible to all the earth… it is you, O king; for you have become great and grown strong, and your majesty has become great and reached to the sky and your dominion to the end of the earth."

IN MY WORDS

Daniel told him plainly that the tree was the king himself — his greatness had grown until it reached the sky and his rule to the ends of the earth.

CROSS REFERENCE **2 Samuel 12:7** Nathan to David: "You are the man!" — the same undiluted naming of the sin.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

Daniel applied the point without ambiguity — not a general "we all could use more humility," but the truth in love, just as Nathan said to David, "you are the man."

CRITICAL THINKING

Naming the sin as "you" rather than "one" is the hardest sentence a counselor ever speaks. Vague truth comforts everyone and changes no one.

KEY QUESTION

Is there a truth I keep phrasing generally because saying "it is you" would cost me?

9 What did Daniel say the dream was foretelling about Nebuchadnezzar (verses 23–26)?

Daniel 4:24-25 NASB95

"This is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the Most High, which has come upon my lord the king: that you be driven away from mankind and your dwelling place be with the beasts of the field, and you be given grass to eat like cattle and be drenched with the dew of heaven; and seven periods of time will pass over you, until you recognize that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind and bestows it on whomever He wishes."

IN MY WORDS

He would be driven from people to live like an animal for seven periods of time, until he recognized that the Most High rules over human kingdoms and gives them to whomever He wills.

CROSS REFERENCE **Daniel 4:17** the purpose stated: "that the living may know that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind."

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

The sentence states its own purpose — that the living may know who really rules the realm of mankind; the times of the Gentiles is a long lesson in whose authority is only on loan.

CRITICAL THINKING

The goal of the judgment was announced in advance — "until you recognize." God's discipline always has a destination; it is aimed at a knowing, not merely at a suffering.

KEY QUESTION

What is God trying to get me to recognize through what I am walking through now?

10 What warning did Daniel then give to the king (verse 27)?

Daniel 4:27 NASB95

"Therefore, O king, may my advice be pleasing to you: break away now from your sins by doing righteousness and from your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor, in case there may be a prolonging of your prosperity."

IN MY WORDS

Daniel urged him to break away from his sins by doing righteousness and showing mercy to the poor, so that his prosperity might be prolonged.

CROSS REFERENCE **Proverbs 28:13** "he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion."

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

Repentance is not regret but a decisive turn that produces righteousness and mercy; even here God holds the door open, and a judgment announced in advance is an invitation before it is a sentence.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

He was counseled not only to stop sinning but to practice righteousness and generosity; the king could have avoided this humiliating fate had he genuinely humbled himself.

CRITICAL THINKING

Twelve months of grace stood between this warning and its execution. Mercy usually arrives as time — and time is the easiest gift to waste.

KEY QUESTION

What warning have I already been given that I am treating as if I have forever to heed it?

11 A year later, what happened to King Nebuchadnezzar after he acted pridefully (verses 31–33)?

Daniel 4:30-33 NASB95

"Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?" While the word was in the king's mouth, a voice came from heaven, saying, "King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is declared: sovereignty has been removed from you..." Immediately the word concerning Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled; and he was driven away from mankind and began eating grass like cattle, and his body was drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair had grown like eagles' feathers and his nails like birds' claws.

IN MY WORDS

While he was boasting on his rooftop that he had built Babylon by his own power, a voice from heaven removed his kingdom, and he was immediately driven out to live like an animal.

CROSS REFERENCE **Proverbs 16:18** "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before stumbling."

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"Babylon the great, which I myself have built" echoes from this rooftop to Revelation 18 — the world system crediting itself with its own glory, which falls in a single hour.

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

Count the pronouns — *I* built, *my* power, *my* majesty. Pride relocates the glory. God let him finish the sentence but not the day.

CRITICAL THINKING

Judgment fell mid-sentence, at the peak of the boast. God's patience is not slowness; it had simply reached the exact word at which mercy had been refused long enough.

KEY QUESTION

If God interrupted my most self-satisfied sentence, what would He hear me saying?

12 After a seven-year punishment, what did Nebuchadnezzar acknowledge about God (verses 34–37)?

Daniel 4:34-35 NASB95

"But at the end of that period, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever; for His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom endures from generation to generation. All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, but He does according to His will in the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of earth; and no one can ward off His hand or say to Him, 'What have You done?'"

IN MY WORDS

He acknowledged that God's dominion is everlasting, that all the earth's inhabitants are as nothing, and that no one can restrain His hand or question what He does.

CROSS REFERENCE **Daniel 4:37** his closing confession: "He is able to humble those who walk in pride."

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

He could see the truth about himself only after he saw the truth about God; he lifted his eyes, praised God's sovereignty, and after that his reason returned.

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

The sequence is exact and worth memorizing: he looked up, and *then* his reason returned. Sanity is a byproduct of worship.

CRITICAL THINKING

Notice what came first — not his healing, but his looking up. Clear thinking followed worship; it did not produce it. The mind is set right by bowing, not by trying harder to think straight.

KEY QUESTION

Where am I trying to reason my way to a peace that will only come when I look up?

02 ANALYZE THE MESSAGE

What does it say and mean?

Using both my Bible and my copy of Discovering Daniel.

1 **Based on what you have read up to this point in *Discovering Daniel*:**

a. In what ways have you seen King Nebuchadnezzar exhibit his pride?

IN MY WORDS

He demanded that the world worship his golden image, threatened the furnace for anyone who defied him, and built Babylon as a monument to "my power" and "my majesty" — treating himself as the source of his own greatness.

CROSS REFERENCE **Daniel 3:15** "what god is there who can deliver you out of my hands?"

b. In what ways have you seen Daniel exhibit humility?

IN MY WORDS

He credited God rather than himself for every interpretation, quietly declined the king's food to honor God, and grieved over the very judgment falling on his captor.

CROSS REFERENCE **Daniel 2:30** "this mystery has not been revealed to me for any wisdom residing in me more than in any other living man."

c. As you look at Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel side by side, what two or three dominant lessons do you think God wants to teach us through their examples?

IN MY WORDS

That God opposes the proud and lifts the humble; that true greatness is received and stewarded, never seized; and that God can use one faithful servant in exile to reach the most powerful and hardened people on earth.

CROSS REFERENCE **1 Peter 5:5** "God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

This is the quiet engine of the whole book: God glorifies His name among the nations through a faithful remnant that will not bow.

CRITICAL THINKING

Pride and humility are not opposite feelings but opposite directions — one pulls glory toward the self, the other passes it on to God. The two men differ not in ability but in where the credit goes.

KEY QUESTION

In the last week, which direction has the credit been flowing in my life?

2 **At the beginning of Daniel 4, Nebuchadnezzar evidently has a brief moment of clarity about "the Most High God." What does he say about God in verses 2–3? And why is this such a stunning admission coming from Nebuchadnezzar?**

> Daniel 4:2-3 NASB95
>
> It has seemed good to me to declare the signs and wonders which the Most High God has done for me. How great are His signs and how mighty are His wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom and His dominion is from generation to generation.

> IN MY WORDS
>
> He calls God's signs great and His wonders mighty and confesses that His kingdom is everlasting — stunning because the proudest, most idolatrous king on earth is publicly crediting the God of his Jewish captives.

CROSS REFERENCE **Psalm 145:13** "Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and Your dominion endures throughout all generations."

> **John MacArthur** GRACE TO YOU
>
> This is admiration moving toward surrender; the possessive "done for me" is the whole distance between knowing about God and knowing Him.

> CRITICAL THINKING
>
> A true statement about God can be made by a heart not yet surrendered to Him. Orthodoxy on the lips is a beginning, not proof — the same king still needed seven years in the grass.

KEY QUESTION

Where might my theology be running ahead of my surrender?

3 **What is significant about the fact the tree would be chopped down, but the stump would remain and not be cut to pieces (see page 85 in *Discovering Daniel*)? What does this tell us about God?**

> Daniel 4:15 NASB95
>
> Yet leave the stump with its roots in the ground, but with a band of iron and bronze around it in the new grass of the field.

> IN MY WORDS
>
> The preserved stump means the judgment was disciplinary, not final — God intended all along to restore Nebuchadnezzar, not destroy him.

CROSS REFERENCE **Lamentations 3:31-32** "For the Lord will not reject forever, for if He causes grief, then He will have compassion."

> **David Guzik** ENDURING WORD
>
> The band was both confinement and protection; the tree would no longer be free and great, but the root of it was kept alive for restoration.

> **Amir Tsarfati** DISCOVERING DANIEL
> The stump preserved pictures Gentile dominion interrupted but not annihilated, running its appointed course until the times of the Gentiles are complete.

> CRITICAL THINKING
> God aims discipline at a future, not just a past. The stump says the goal was never to end the man but to change him — mercy wrote the sentence as surely as justice did.

> KEY QUESTION
> *Am I reading God's correction as the end of something, when He means it as a root left for new growth?*

4 Through Nebuchadnezzar's punishment, we learn that God's patience is great, but is not unending (see page 92 in *Discovering Daniel*). What are some things we can learn when God shows tough-love discipline toward us?

> Hebrews 12:6 NASB95
> For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son whom He receives.

> IN MY WORDS
> We learn that discipline is evidence of God's love, that pride is worth uprooting even at real cost, and that we can grow through any hard season — whether it comes from God's correcting hand or simply from living in a fallen world.

CROSS REFERENCE **James 1:2-4** "the testing of your faith produces endurance… that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing."

> **John MacArthur** GRACE TO YOU
> God's discipline is measured and aimed at repentance — He wounds in order to heal, and He announces the sentence before He executes it.

> CRITICAL THINKING
> The point of tough love is never the pain; it is the turning. If a hard season produces only resentment and not repentance, its intended work has not yet begun.

> KEY QUESTION
> *What is the discipline in my life trying to turn me from — and have I started to turn?*

5 In Daniel 4:34–35, what truths does Nebuchadnezzar affirm about God? What thoughts go through your mind as you consider that these words came from the mouth of the most powerful man on Earth?

> Daniel 4:35 NASB95
> All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, but He does according to His will in the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of earth; and no one can ward off His hand or say to Him, "What have You done?"

IN MY WORDS

He affirms that God lives forever, rules an everlasting kingdom, does as He wills in heaven and on earth, and cannot be resisted or questioned — astonishing words from the man who once thought no god could deliver from his hand and now confesses he himself is nothing before God.

CROSS REFERENCE **Isaiah 40:17** "All the nations are as nothing before Him, they are regarded by Him as less than nothing and meaningless."

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

A Gentile king humbled, restored, and turned into a herald of the God of Israel is the whole arc of the times of the Gentiles compressed into one man's lifetime.

CRITICAL THINKING

The loftiest statement of God's sovereignty in this part of Scripture comes not from a prophet but from a broken pagan king. Sometimes the clearest theology is spoken by the person God has most recently humbled.

KEY QUESTION

What has God had to strip from me before I could say honestly that He does as He wills?

03 COMPARE THIS PASSAGE WITH THE REST OF SCRIPTURE

How is it supported elsewhere in the Bible?

Letting Scripture interpret Scripture.

1 After Nebuchadnezzar had his dream about the tree, he asked his wise men to interpret it — the very men who had failed him in Daniel 2. Why didn't he go immediately to Daniel? In Genesis 12:13 Abraham told Sarah to say she was his sister; what did Abraham do again in Genesis 20:2?

> Genesis 20:2 NASB95
>
> Abraham said of Sarah his wife, "She is my sister." So Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah.

> IN MY WORDS
>
> Just as Abraham repeated with Abimelech the very lie he had told in Egypt, Nebuchadnezzar returned first to the counselors who had already failed him — we default to old, familiar failures instead of the God who has proven faithful.

CROSS REFERENCE **Genesis 12:13** Abraham's first version of the lie: "say that you are my sister."

> **David Guzik** ENDURING WORD
>
> Graceless men run to God only when every other refuge has failed — which is why Daniel came in "at last."

> CRITICAL THINKING
>
> We rarely repeat a sin because we have forgotten it went badly; we repeat it because it is familiar, and familiarity feels safer than surrender. The path of least resistance usually leads back to the last place we were wounded.

> KEY QUESTION
>
> *What failed strategy do I keep returning to simply because it is familiar?*

2 Why do you think we have a tendency to repeat our mistakes or sins instead of going to God first when we need help?

> Romans 7:15 NASB95
>
> For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate.

> IN MY WORDS
>
> Because pride and self-reliance run deep, old habits are worn smooth and easy, and going to God first requires an admission of need that we instinctively resist.

CROSS REFERENCE **Jeremiah 2:13** they forsook the fountain of living waters to hew "for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water."

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

The flesh defaults to self-rule; grace has to be relentless with what it means to change, and it is never in a hurry.

CRITICAL THINKING

Going to God first is not mainly a memory problem but a pride problem — it requires saying "I can't" before we have exhausted "I can." The delay is not forgetfulness; it is the ego buying time.

KEY QUESTION

At what point in a crisis do I actually turn to God — first, or last?

3 God detests pride. Ultimately, pride causes a person to put self before God. What do the following passages have to say about pride?

a. Exodus 20:3

Exodus 20:3 NASB95

You shall have no other gods before Me.

IN MY WORDS

Pride enthrones self as a rival god, breaking the very first commandment.

b. Isaiah 48:11

Isaiah 48:11 NASB95

For My own sake, for My own sake, I will act; for how can My name be profaned? And My glory I will not give to another.

IN MY WORDS

God will not share His glory — pride is theft of what belongs to Him alone.

c. Proverbs 16:5

Proverbs 16:5 NASB95

Everyone who is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord; assuredly, he will not be unpunished.

IN MY WORDS

Pride is not a small flaw but something God calls an abomination that will not go unpunished.

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

A proud look heads the list of what God hates; pride is the root idolatry from which the other sins grow.

CRITICAL THINKING

Each verse frames pride not as poor manners but as rival worship. That reframes every proud thought as a small theft of glory — which is why God treats it so severely.

KEY QUESTION

Whose glory am I quietly competing for?

4 Read Philippians 3:4–6. Before Paul became a Christian, what reasons could he give for boasting about himself?

Philippians 3:5-6 NASB95

circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless.

IN MY WORDS

His pedigree, religious rank, tribal heritage, zeal, and law-keeping — an impressive résumé of self-made righteousness.

CROSS REFERENCE **Philippians 3:4** "If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more."

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

Everything Paul could grasp at was recounted as loss the moment he met Christ; boasting relocates from the self to the cross.

CRITICAL THINKING

Paul's list is not of sins but of achievements — the most dangerous pride is often built out of genuinely good things. Respectable credentials can be a subtler idol than open rebellion.

KEY QUESTION

What good thing about myself am I most tempted to build my worth on?

5 After Paul became a believer, what did he say about his accomplishments (Philippians 3:7–9)?

Philippians 3:7-8 NASB95

But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ.

IN MY WORDS

He counted all his former gains as loss — even rubbish — compared to the surpassing worth of knowing Christ and being found in His righteousness rather than his own.

CROSS REFERENCE **Galatians 6:14** "may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

The remnant serves God for who He is, not for what it can display; Paul emptied his own résumé in order to be filled with Christ.

CRITICAL THINKING

Paul didn't merely re-rank his credentials; he reclassified them as loss. Conversion is not adding Christ to an impressive life but counting the impressiveness as nothing next to Him.

KEY QUESTION

What would it look like to move something from my "gain" column to my "loss" column this week?

6 Galatians 6:7 says, "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap."

Galatians 6:7 NASB95

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.

a. Based on what we have read about Nebuchadnezzar so far, in what ways had he mocked God?

IN MY WORDS

He mocked God by seizing glory that belonged to Him, demanding worship of himself and his image, and ignoring a full year of clear warning.

b. In what ways did he reap what he sowed?

IN MY WORDS

He reaped exactly what he sowed — the man who exalted himself above humanity was reduced below it, to live as a beast in the field.

c. What should we personally take to heart from Galatians 6:7?

IN MY WORDS

That God cannot be fooled, that every sowing has a harvest, and that the time to change the crop is at the sowing, not the reaping.

CROSS REFERENCE **Job 4:8** "those who plow iniquity and those who sow trouble harvest it."

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

God will glorify Himself among the nations; the king who once put the temple treasures in the house of his gods learned at last which God is true.

CRITICAL THINKING

The punishment was not arbitrary; it was the harvest of the exact seed. Sowing feels free because the reaping is delayed — but delay is not the same as escape.

KEY QUESTION

What am I sowing right now whose harvest I have not yet let myself picture?

04 EXECUTE

How does this affect my life?

Bringing Daniel 4 home to my own walk.

1 Proverbs 16:5 says, "Everyone proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord." According to the following passages, what are among the consequences of pride?

a. Proverbs 11:2

> Proverbs 11:2 NASB95
>
> When pride comes, then comes dishonor, but with the humble is wisdom.

> IN MY WORDS
>
> Pride brings dishonor, while wisdom keeps company with the humble.

b. Proverbs 16:18

> Proverbs 16:18 NASB95
>
> Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before stumbling.

> IN MY WORDS
>
> Pride runs out ahead of destruction; a haughty spirit is the last step before a fall.

c. Proverbs 29:23

> Proverbs 29:23 NASB95
>
> A man's pride will bring him low, but a humble spirit will obtain honor.

> IN MY WORDS
>
> Pride brings a person low, and it is humility, not self-promotion, that gains honor.

> **John MacArthur** GRACE TO YOU
>
> God gives grace to the humble; Daniel 4 is that principle with a throne in it.

> CRITICAL THINKING
>
> Scripture consistently pairs pride with a fall and humility with honor — the very reversal we least expect. The world's ladder and God's economy run in opposite directions.

KEY QUESTION

Which am I trusting to lift me — self-promotion, or humility?

2 **Pride isn't always overt. Sometimes it can be subtle. What are some ways that it's possible for us to be prideful without noticing it?**

Romans 12:3 NASB95

For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.

IN MY WORDS

Craving credit, resisting correction, comparing ourselves to others, name-dropping, refusing help, or quietly assuming we deserve better than we have received.

CROSS REFERENCE **Galatians 6:3** "if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself."

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

Pride rarely announces itself as rebellion; it shows up as wanting the credit, the last word, the seat at the center.

CRITICAL THINKING

The most dangerous pride is the kind we cannot feel, because it wears the clothing of standards, discernment, or hurt feelings. What we call "being right" is often just being proud in a respectable disguise.

KEY QUESTION

When was the last time I was corrected — and how did I actually take it?

3 **According to James 4:6, how does God react to the proud? To the humble?**

James 4:6 NASB95

But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, "God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

IN MY WORDS

God actively opposes the proud and pours grace on the humble — pride puts a person in opposition to God Himself.

CROSS REFERENCE **1 Peter 5:5** "clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

David Guzik ENDURING WORD

The same God who resisted Nebuchadnezzar's pride restored him the moment he humbled himself; grace was waiting on the far side of the grass.

CRITICAL THINKING

"Opposed" is a startling word — it means pride does not merely disappoint God, it enlists Him against us. Of all the fights to pick, the proud has chosen the one no one wins.

KEY QUESTION

Is there an area where my pride has effectively set God against me?

4 **What perspective does Psalm 121:1–2 encourage us to cultivate?**

> **Psalm 121:1-2 NASB95**
> I will lift up my eyes to the mountains; from where shall my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

> **IN MY WORDS**
> To lift our eyes off ourselves and our circumstances and locate our help in the Lord who made heaven and earth — the very posture Nebuchadnezzar finally took.

CROSS REFERENCE **Daniel 4:34** "I raised my eyes toward heaven and my reason returned to me."

> **John MacArthur** GRACE TO YOU
> He looked up, and then his reason returned; the humble life begins with a lifted gaze.

> **CRITICAL THINKING**
> Nebuchadnezzar and the psalmist use the same gesture — eyes lifted upward. Humility is not looking down on ourselves; it is looking up to God, and self shrinks to its true size in the comparison.

KEY QUESTION
Where are my eyes fixed by default — on the mountain, on myself, or on the Lord?

5 **Many of us are familiar with Proverbs 3:5–6. Typically we think of this passage in terms of dependence upon God, but it's also an exhortation for us to express humility.**

> **Proverbs 3:5-6 NASB95**
> Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.

a. **To what extent does verse 5 tell us to trust God?**

> **IN MY WORDS**
> With *all* our heart — total, not partial, reliance, refusing to lean on our own understanding.

b. **To what extent does verse 6 urge us to acknowledge Him?**

> **IN MY WORDS**
> In *all* our ways — every area of life, not merely the religious ones.

c. **In light of what verses 5 and 6 say, do you think there are any exceptions? Why or why not?**

> **IN MY WORDS**
> No — the two "all"s leave no corner of life reserved for leaning on ourselves.

CROSS REFERENCE **Jeremiah 17:7** "Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord and whose trust is the Lord."

Amir Tsarfati DISCOVERING DANIEL

Dependence on God is the humility a remnant lives by — trusting who He is rather than what we can manage.

CRITICAL THINKING

The command's force is in the two "all"s — the moment we carve out one area to lean on ourselves, we have quietly named it our own little kingdom. Full trust is measured at the exceptions we try to keep.

KEY QUESTION

What is the one area I still handle as though God's guidance doesn't apply there?

6 The Lord Jesus Christ is entirely deserving of our reverence, worship, and obedience. Yet in Philippians 2:5–8, we read of His humility.

Philippians 2:5-8 NASB95

Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

a. What are some examples of the cost we may pay for being humble?

IN MY WORDS

Humility can cost us status, recognition, our own way, and the comfort of self-defense — the same descent Christ chose.

b. What are some benefits we and others can gain when we're willing to be humble?

IN MY WORDS

It gains reconciled relationships, freedom from the exhausting work of self-promotion, room for God to exalt us in His time, and a witness others cannot argue with.

CROSS REFERENCE **Philippians 2:9** "For this reason also, God highly exalted Him" — the descent came first, then the exaltation.

John MacArthur GRACE TO YOU

Grace flows to the humble; the proof of a changed heart is not a restored kingdom but a willingness to descend.

CRITICAL THINKING

Christ's humility was not weakness but strength under perfect control — He descended on purpose, knowing the exaltation that followed was God's to give. Real humility can afford to go low because it trusts Who lifts up.

KEY QUESTION

What descent am I avoiding because I am still trying to arrange my own exaltation?

CLOSING THOUGHTS

As we read about Nebuchadnezzar, it would be easy to say, "Why did he keep making the same mistake again and again? I wouldn't do that." But with a little thought, most of us can name ways we have grieved God repeatedly. Even the apostle Paul, decades into following Christ, wrote, "I do not understand my own actions… I do the very thing I hate" (Romans 7:15). That describes all of us.

It is for this reason we can be grateful for a patient God. "The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness" (Psalm 103:8). And yet we dare not presume upon that patience — Paul asks whether we think lightly of "the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads… to repentance" (Romans 2:4). The intent of God's patience is always that we would take corrective action.

Lesson 3 ended with the king blessing "the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego" — real admiration, but not yet surrender. Daniel 4 is where that gap finally closes. The furnace had impressed him; the grass changed him. By the end, the proudest man alive is no longer merely praising the God of other men — he calls Him his own and warns the whole earth that God humbles the proud.

"Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, exalt and honor the King of heaven, for all His works are true and His ways just, and He is able to humble those who walk in pride."

DANIEL 4:37

Most of us will never eat grass in a field. But we will face the quieter humbling — the correction we resent, the credit we crave, the warning we quietly file away for later. The lesson of Daniel 4 is that pride is not broken at the bottom of the fall; it is surrendered before it. Look up now. The God who humbles those who walk in pride is the same God who restores them the moment they do.

Teaching the Word. Watching the Times. — Smith For Christ

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