

Learnings from those who stood out in dark
times

Shining Your Light



'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.' Matthew 5:16

We are called to be light. So when the world around us seems to be dark, confused and corrupt, it's not a time for believers to hide away or join the voices complaining about what is going on. Rather the darkness around us should act as a backdrop for us to shine by bringing light, wisdom, righteousness and much more to the end that the Lord is glorified.

The Bible tells us that there is nothing new under the sun, which means there will be others who have experienced darkness, yet their light shone brightly and we can learn from them. This series we are looking at some examples of such people who used the darkness around them as a platform to shine and trust that the Holy Spirit will lead us so that we also gain understanding of how the Lord wants each of us specifically to shine based on our circumstances and assignment.



Day 1

Daniel: Excellence and Diligence

“Then this Daniel distinguished himself above the governors and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him ...nor was there any error or fault found in him.” Daniel 6:3-4

Daniel didn't have a pulpit but his life preached a message that still resonates thousands of years after his death. His journey didn't start off easy as he arrived in Babylon as a slave forcefully enlisted into the king's service. Yet in spite of all these, Daniel stood out, bringing glory to God in a foreign culture.

“...he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days.” Daniel 6:10

Daniel was a man who valued his relationship with God, studied the word of God, praying and fasting often (Daniel 2:17-18; 10:3). He was concerned about the things that mattered to God and prioritised this above everything else. Even when occasions arose where he could have claimed personal glory based on the answers God gave him, Daniel always gave the glory to God. To the extent that kings Nebuchadnezzar and Darius issued decrees that God was to be honoured above all other gods. Daniel's life teaches us that our lives preach a message to others daily and what we do at work is a powerful platform for giving God glory.

“Inasmuch as an excellent spirit, knowledge, understanding, interpreting dreams, solving riddles, and explaining enigmas were found in this Daniel...” Daniel 5:12

Daniel was a man of integrity, disciplined and diligent. His light shone to the extent that leaders over a period of about 70 years sought for him whenever there was a problem to solve. He was a solution provider who made such a difference in the marketplace that he caught the attention of men and brought glory to God.

“The king answered Daniel, and said, “Truly your God is the God of gods, the Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, since you could reveal this secret.” Daniel 2:47

“I make a decree that in every dominion of my kingdom men must tremble and fear before the God of Daniel...” Daniel 6:26

Prayer: Lord help me be a solution provider who lives in a way that constantly brings you glory

Day 2

Joseph: Trustworthy Leader

'So Joseph found favor in his sight, and served him. Then he made him overseer of his house, and all that he had he put under his authority... Thus he left all that he had in Joseph's hand, and he did not know what he had except for the bread which he ate...' Genesis 39:4,6

Joseph was one his father's favourite sons, but because of his brothers' jealousy he ended up being sold to Potiphar the Egyptian as a slave. Joseph could have ended up bitter and unwilling to serve but we see that even in slavery, he excelled to the extent that Potiphar left everything in his household for Joseph to manage. Joseph did not abuse his authority in any way and served diligently.

'And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners who were in the prison; whatever they did there, it was his doing.' Genesis 39:22

Even when he was wrongfully imprisoned, Joseph still shone as a leader who could be trusted. For the prison guard to trust him and his fellow jailers to cooperate with him, there must have been something about the way Joseph led people. As a leader he had the ability to carry people along so they could come together to achieve a common purpose. We know this because there is no record in the Bible of other slaves at Potiphar's house or other jailers in prison contending his leadership.

'So he asked Pharaoh's officers who were with him in the custody of his lord's house, saying, "Why do you look so sad today?" And they said to him, "We each have had a dream, and there is no interpreter of it." So Joseph said to them, "Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell them to me, please.'" Genesis 40:7-8

For Joseph to have noticed their countenance and offered to help means he paid attention to people, had interest in their wellbeing and was willing to help others – all the while giving glory to God. Imagine if Joseph had dealt harshly with his fellow prisoners, not knowing that the Lord was using these experiences to build capacity in Him and create a platform for his promotion?

'And Pharaoh said to Joseph... I have heard it said of you that you can understand a dream, to interpret it." So Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, "It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace.'" Genesis 41:15-16

When he stood before Pharaoh, Joseph pointed Pharaoh to God as the ultimate solution provider so it was clear who should receive the glory. As a result, God gave Joseph the insight to the dream, the solution and the capacity to successfully execute the solution. When we return glory to God, He takes charge of the process so our success isn't limited to our capacity alone.

Prayer: Lord grant me favour before all those I work with and give me the wisdom, insight and understanding that can only come from you.



Day 3

Esther: Wisdom and Courage

“...Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?” Esther 4:14

Esther was an orphan who became a queen who used her office to deliver her people from annihilation. One of the first things we observe about Esther was her wisdom. Whether it was counsel from her uncle or the eunuch in whose care she was before becoming queen (Esther 2:10, 5), Esther always followed wise counsel and acted wisely herself. When Haman decided to wipe out the Jews, Esther understood that what she was dealing with in Haman wasn't just an angry palace official. Rather it was a strategy sponsored by something deeper and darker than Haman alone, so she knew extended fasting was required to gain victory in the spirit.

“Go, gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast for me; neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will fast likewise. And so I will go to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish!” Esther 4:16

Esther also understood that victory rested not just in seeing the king, but approaching the issue in a manner that would get the desired results (Esther 5:4, 7). She understood the norms and laws of the land and was able to successfully execute the supernatural strategy that made everything align perfectly.

“So the decree of Esther confirmed these matters of Purim, and it was written in the book.” Esther 9:32

We see in Esther an interplay of a person who had wisdom, honoured others, understood spiritual principles and political strategy. She could have shut her ears to Mordecai after all no one knew she was a Jew, but she had a heart for others. For her to have recommended the fast means fasting is something she was familiar with suggesting that in spite of the splendour she lived in as queen, she didn't neglect her spiritual background. Nothing happens by chance and perhaps like Esther we are positioned in our families, businesses, careers, etc. for such a time as this.

Prayer: Lord help me understand the role You would have me play where I have been positioned. Grant me the supernatural wisdom, strategy and courage I need to fulfil my assignment.

Day 4

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego Taking a Stand

'Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego replied, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God whom we serve is able to save us. He will rescue us from your power, Your Majesty. But even if he doesn't, we want to make it clear to you, Your Majesty, that we will never serve your gods or worship the gold statue you have set up.' Daniel 3:16-18

Daniel wasn't the only Hebrew boy taken into slavery and trained to serve the king of Babylon. His friends Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were also exiled and faced the same challenges of loss of identity (they were renamed Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego) and forced to adopt another language and culture, however in spite of this, they didn't stop serving God. When they entered the king's training program they also abstained from eating the food assigned by the king (Daniel 1:15) and joined Daniel in prayer to know Nebuchadnezzar's dream and its interpretation and God answered their prayer (Daniel 2:17-18). So even though they were in Babylon, it didn't change them.

'...Whenever the king consulted them in any matter requiring wisdom and balanced judgment, he found them ten times more capable than any of the magicians and enchanters in his entire kingdom.' Daniel 1:19-20

Because they took a stand for God He gave them a capacity for learning, wisdom and balanced judgment, that stood them out amongst their peers and they continued to stand out and deliver excellent results. In spite of their high positions in government which could have swayed them to absorb Babylon's culture and religion, they didn't stop serving the Lord, even when it could potentially cost them their lives.

'But there are some Jews—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego...They refuse to serve your gods and do not worship the gold statue you have set up.' Daniel 3:12

'Therefore, I make this decree: If any people, whatever their race or nation or language, speak a word against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, they will be torn limb from limb, and their houses will be turned into heaps of rubble. There is no other god who can rescue like this!' Daniel 3:29

The Babylonians had observed these Hebrew men and were quick to report them to the king because they knew Disobeying the king's decree meant instant death by fire. The Hebrews also knew this, but they still refused to bow. There will be times when we must take a stand for what we believe in and there may be significant consequences for taking that stand. However, like Daniel's friends we stand because we understand that the Lord is the final authority we are accountable to.

Prayer: Lord help me surround myself with the right company and give me the courage to take a stand for You



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