

Week #4: The Priority of Power and Love

Series Goal: We want to learn how to _____ and _____ in a culture of compromise.

Darius the Mede decided to divide the kingdom into 120 provinces, and he appointed a high officer to rule over each province. The king also chose Daniel and two others as administrators to supervise the high officers and protect the king's interests. Daniel soon proved himself more capable than all the other administrators and high officers. Because of Daniel's great ability, the king made plans to place him over the entire empire. Then the other administrators and high officers began searching for some fault in the way Daniel was handling government affairs, but they couldn't find anything to criticize or condemn. He was faithful, always responsible, and completely trustworthy. So they concluded, "Our only chance of finding grounds for accusing Daniel will be in connection with the rules of his religion."

Daniel 6:1-5 (NLT)

- We cannot _____ and _____ at the same time.

When you're joined to the Anointed One, ...religious obligations can benefit you nothing. All that matters now is living in the faith that works and expresses itself through love.

Galatians 5:6 (TPT)

Without love:

- All I _____ is ineffective.

If I could speak all the languages of earth and of angels, but didn't love others, I would only be a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

1 Corinthians 13:1 (NLT)

- All I _____ is insignificant.

If I had the gift of prophecy, and if I understood all of God's secret plans and possessed all knowledge,

1 Corinthians 13:2a (NLT)

- All I _____ is insufficient.

...and if I had such faith that I could move mountains, but didn't love others, I would be nothing.

1 Corinthians 13:2b (NLT)

- All I _____ or _____ is inadequate.

If I gave everything I have to the poor and even sacrificed my body, I could boast about it; but if I didn't love others, I would have gained nothing.

1 Corinthians 13:3 (NLT)

Scripture tells us what love is:

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 (NIV)

So at last the king gave orders for Daniel to be arrested and thrown into the den of lions. The king said to him, "May your God, whom you serve so faithfully, rescue you." A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den. The king sealed the stone with his own royal seal and the seals of his nobles, so that no one could rescue Daniel. Then the king returned to his palace and spent the night fasting. He refused his usual entertainment and couldn't sleep at all that night. Very early the next morning, the king got up and hurried out to the lions' den. When he got there, he called out in anguish, "Daniel, servant of the living God! Was your God, whom you serve so faithfully, able to rescue you from the lions?" Daniel answered, "Long live the king! My God sent his angel to shut the lions' mouths so that they would not hurt me, for I have been found innocent in his sight. And I have not wronged you, Your Majesty." The king was overjoyed and ordered that Daniel be lifted from the den. Not a scratch was found on him, for he had trusted in his God.

Daniel 6:16-23 (NLT)



Week #4: The Priority of Power and Love (cont.)

"I decree that everyone throughout my kingdom should tremble with fear before the God of Daniel.

*For he is the living God,
and he will endure forever.*

*His kingdom will never be destroyed,
and his rule will never end.*

*He rescues and saves his people;
he performs miraculous signs and wonders
in the heavens and on earth.*

He has rescued Daniel from the power of the lions."

So Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

Daniel 6:26-28 (NLT)

Discussion Question

- Will I love others well the way love is defined in Scripture? (Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7.)

Recommended Resources

- *The Daniel Dilemma*, by Chris Hodges
- *Thriving in Babylon*, by Larry Osborne
- *Awake, Not Woke*, by Noelle Mering
- *Counter Culture*, by David Platt

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SESSION 4 | The Priority of Power and Love

Connect

In your small group, take 5 to 7 mins to connect.

- What are you thankful for this week? Where did you see God move in your life this week?
- This week's talk centered on what it means to love well. When you think of people who love well, what sorts of qualities or habits do they have?
- Have you ever been surprised by the love someone showed you at a specific moment of time? Tell us about that incident.

Opening Prayer

Have the facilitator pray for the study.

[Sample prayer: "God, thank you for inviting us into this community of faith to hear what your Spirit has to say as we study your Word. May we be attuned to the Holy Spirit that teaches and guides, and may we be empowered to follow through on such things as we might be invited to reflect on, or to do. May we be continually reformed into your image by your work in each of us. Amen."]

Read the Passage

Have someone read the following passages aloud.

1 John 4:7-21 (NIV)

7 Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. **8** Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. **9** This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. **10** This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. **11** Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. **12** No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

13 This is how we know that we live in him and he in us: He has given us of his Spirit. **14** And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. **15** If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in them and they in God. **16** And so we know and rely on the love God has for us.

God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. **17** This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus. **18**

Compromise Culture



There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

19 We love because he first loved us. **20** Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. **21** And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister.

Discover God's Word | Reflection

- What in this passage stood out to you?
- What does this passage tell us about God?
- What are some of the invitations or instructions shared in this passage?

Moving Forward | Application

- Share a time when you have been called upon to have challenging conversations perhaps with a co-worker, a friend, or family. How did you approach the conversation? With grace and love, or perhaps with less grace and love than you have hoped for? What were the consequences, either positive or negative?
- When loving others is hard, how can we stay committed to loving others well?
 - What is a next step we might take to help us grow in love?
- Jesus is always inviting us to love people well, even if it means to lose an argument, not getting our way, and so on. What would loving others well look like for you in your circles of influence - at work, home, and in your neighborhoods?

Closing Prayer

Have someone close in prayer.

[Sample prayer: *“Jesus, thank you for your word that graciously speaks truth to each of us. May we continue to abide in and obey your word. May we continually be reformed in your image not just for our own sake, but for the sake of others and the world. Amen.”*]