

CORE COMPETENCIES

Core Beliefs

- Trinity
- Salvation by Grace
- Authority of Bible
- Personal God
- Identity in Christ
- Church
- Humanity
- Compassion
- Eternity
- Stewardship

Core Practices

- Worship
- Prayer
- Bible Study
- **Single-Mindedness**
"I focus on God and His priorities for my life."
- Biblical Community
- Spiritual Gifts
- Giving Away My Time
- Giving Away My Money
- Giving Away My Faith
- Giving Away My Life

Core Virtues

- Love
- Joy
- Peace
- Patience
- Kindness/Goodness
- Faithfulness
- Gentleness
- Self-Control
- Hope
- Humility

This week we begin a new series aimed at men called MI:III. But don't worry, there's plenty of insight here for all of us—men and women alike. This week we delve into the life of one of the people in Scripture who experienced incredible adventure and drama in his life. But we want to look at more than simply the great stories. We also want to see what they reveal to us about this man. In particular, how do we see his life purposes shaping his actions and reactions, his decisions and daily practices of life. I pray that we'll be more than just inspired, but also challenged and helped to consider our own lives. Are you living "on purpose"? What purpose are you living?

In Him,

Richard Gotthardt, Pastor of Spiritual Formation

Monday

As you enter into this week's study, take a few minutes to talk to God. Ask Him to direct your time with Him and to give you insight into His Word and into your life.

Read Daniel 1. Read it through first for familiarity, then read it again, paying attention to these questions:

Who are the main people in this account? If this was a play, who would the main characters be?

The "hero," Daniel, does several things in this chapter. What are Daniel's actions (the verbs) in verses 8-11?

What are God's actions? (see verses 9, 15, 17)

What does this tell you about the connection between our decisions and God's power?

Tuesday

Today prayerfully read through Daniel 1 again, asking God to show you truth about Himself and your own life.

In this chapter, we see a young man with deep convictions and purpose already in place in his heart and mind. From this chapter, how would you describe Daniel's "purpose statement"?

Do you have a purpose statement for your own life? What is it? Where did that purpose come from?

As you consider your life currently, how much of your life is in alignment with that purpose?

If you find yourself without a clearly defined purpose currently, what insights can you take from Daniel's life that would help you in forming one?

Spend some time today asking God to give you a greater sense of clarity around your purpose in life.

Wednesday

Today we move to another scene in the life of Daniel, found in Daniel 2. As you read the chapter today, invite God to reveal Himself—His power and His divine purposes.

What was the dilemma that King Nebuchadnezzar confronted his advisors with? Why do you think he did this?

Daniel and his friends are suddenly faced with a crisis. What is their initial response—verses 14-18? Make note of each of their actions and reactions.

When you are faced with challenges and crisis, what is your typical response? What might you learn from the example of Daniel?

How does the response of Daniel in verses 14-28 conform to the purposes of his life that we saw in chapter 1? What further insight is given about Daniel's "purpose statement"? How can that help you with your own?

Thursday

Today we jump forward in Daniel's life story to chapter 6 where we find a new king, Darius, as well as other new "characters" in this drama. Pray today for renewed clarity and resolve to engage with God at a heart level in His Word.

As you look at chapter 6, who are the new characters in this story? What might have provoked their hostility towards Daniel? Are there people in your life that dislike you because of your convictions? Why do you think that is?

Reflect for a bit on King Darius. Why do you think that he agreed to this decree? What does it say about his heart? From this chapter, how would you write Darius' purpose statement?

Now look at the life of Daniel, particularly noting verse 10. What did Daniel's pattern of life look like? How would you connect these practices with what you've already seen about his life's purposes?

Again we see Daniel faced with a threat or challenge. How does he respond to the challenge? *(Note verses 10, 19-24)*

What challenges in your life seem overwhelming right now?

How does God want to encourage and inspire you from this true biblical account?

Friday

Take a few minutes today to reflect back on what you've been learning and contemplating this week. What has God been teaching you? How is He challenging the way that you're currently "doing life"?

Today, read Daniel 6 once more, paying particular attention to Darius' decree in verses 25-27. What truths about God had Darius become convinced of? List them out below. Now as you look at that list, ask yourself how deeply you are convinced in your own heart of them. Ask God to show you whether they are truths that you simply affirm intellectually or they are convictions that shape your life.

Consider your devotional life as well. How do your current practices around prayer, reading and meditating on God's Word reveal your life purposes? Is there anything that God is inviting you to change in this area?

Spend time thanking and praising God today for who He is and for what He has done in your life.