



Today's study is titled "I Will Not Take the Glory from God." In Daniel 4, we'll see Daniel again challenged to interpret a dream of King Nebuchadnezzar's. As the king's son discovers, this isn't good news for him. You've heard it said that we often learn what "to do" or what "not to do" from others. Today, we'll look at King Nebuchadnezzar's mistakes and learn what to avoid in our own lives.

SCRIPTURE: Daniel 4:1-33

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What encouraged you, challenged you, or stood out the most to you from the sermon?
2. The first three verses of Daniel 4 serve as a prelude to what King Nebuchadnezzar would share with the people regarding God's judgment against his pride. How would a typical leader respond to such public humiliation? Why do we often work hard to hide our failures from others? How can failures be a reason to praise God? What failures are you most thankful to God for in your life?

Typically leaders who experience a public humiliation work hard to spin things in their favor or quickly shift focus to something else in hopes of burying the failure in yesterday's news. Much of the same can be said about how we handle disappointment. Understandably we try to move on quickly and hope that the fewest people possible are aware of what happened. At the very least, we're tempted to pack and up and move on as quickly as possible to save face. When the failure is "fresh," we find it difficult to be thankful for it, but often we can look back and be grateful for what came of it. God can use our failures to set us on a new path or keep us from getting deeper into something that may have become even worse.

3. Read Daniel 4:4-8. What similarities do you see between this moment and the first dream King Nebuchadnezzar needed help interpreting? Considering the past failures of his "advisors," why do you think the king turned to them again, as we see in verses 6-7? What can we learn from these verses about turning to the right people when we need guidance? Discuss a time when you turned to the wrong people for advice. How can you know who the right people are?

It seems strange that Nebuchadnezzar again calls his advisors to aid him with a second dream when they were of no help previously. Only after consulting with these same people does the king eventually return to Daniel. The same could be said about people today; they turn to the wrong people for advice repeatedly. We've all likely heard that the definition of insanity is doing the same things constantly, expecting a different result. So, who we turn to for advice matters. See Prov. 12:15, 15:22; Psalm 1:1-6.

4. How does Daniel react to the interpretation of the king's dream (v19)? Why do you think he reacted this way? After telling the king the interpretation, what advice does Daniel give him (v27)? How does Daniel model the kind of friends we need and the kind we should be to others? Have you ever had a "Daniel" who loved you enough to tell you the uncomfortable truth? How can this be done graciously?

Daniel was “dismayed for a while, and his thoughts alarmed him.” It’s evident that this was the case because Nebuchadnezzar could see it on Daniel’s face. Daniel could have held back because the news wasn’t good. Nevertheless, the king leaned in and asked Daniel to give it to him straight, you might say. So, Daniel gave the interpretation to the king. Remember Proverbs 27:6, which says, “Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are insincere.” These are the kinds of people that we need in our lives. We need friends who will tell us the hard truth even when it's uncomfortable. Likewise, we need to be the kind of friend to others who doesn't shy away from telling the truth (in love) to those we care about the most.

5. What comparisons do you see between Daniel 4:4, Daniel 4:30, and Luke 12:19-20? What do these verses teach us about accomplishments and pride? Why is it easier to spot pride in someone else's life than in our own? Where in your life are you most likely to struggle with pride? How does pride steal glory from God? How can we be proud and not prideful?

Daniel 4:4, “I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at ease in my house and prospering in my palace.”

Daniel 4:30, “Is not this great Babylon, which I have built by my mighty power as a royal residence and for the glory of my majesty?”

Luke 12:19-20, “And I will say to my soul, ‘Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.’”<sup>20</sup> But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’”

It doesn’t take a scholar to see that Nebuchadnezzar thought much of himself. After all, in Daniel 3, the king had a gold statue made of himself and demanded that people worship it. These verses in Daniel 4 sum things up nicely, the king was living an easy life in his palace, and he saw himself as the source of all his prosperity – so of course, he should sit back in his royal residence and bask in his glory. This is eerily close to what we see in Luke 12 – ample goods, the easy life, celebrating all that’s been accomplished. God meets this kind of pride with severe judgment in both cases. It’s so easy to begin thinking too highly of ourselves and, by comparison, begin to think less of others. When it comes to pride, it’s important to note that you can be consumed with it while living in a 1,500-square-foot home just as easily as you can while living in a 4,000-square-foot home. It’s not always associated with success; pride can easily be exposed in our lives when we judge the achievements of others.

In our successes and accomplishments, we would be wise to remember that “the Most High rules the kingdom of men and give it to whom he will” (Daniel 4:25). We can be proud of a job well done, but we should be careful to guard our hearts against the sneakiness of pride. It doesn’t take long before our hearts turn to take credit.

6. Read Proverbs 16:5. How do we see this verse play out in King Nebuchadnezzar's life? What does it mean that "God loves us too much to leave us in sin"? What warning(s) should we take from the life of King Nebuchadnezzar?

See Hebrews 12:6.