

Seven Keys to SUCCESS

Lesson 2—Unite with God Everyday

Series: “Seven Keys to Success: Habits for Christian Living”

Surrender it all to God

Unite with God Every Day

Confess Your Sins

Continually Study God’s Word

Encourage Others to Know Christ

Stay the Course

Share Your Resources

OVERVIEW

Background Bible Passage: Daniel 6:10, Jeremiah, 29:10-14, Daniel 9:1-3, 9-11, 18-23

Key Verse: Jeremiah 29:11—“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

BEFORE CLASS

Preparation: *Your preparation will determine the direction your class will go.*

- What priority does daily prayer and Bible study have in your life?
- How earnestly do you seek God?
- Study and prepare your lesson so that you are familiar with the teaching outline.
- Pray for each student by name.

CONTACT 1-2-3 SYSTEM

CONTACT 1--The first time a student is absent, give him a call.

CONTACT 2--Following the second absence, send him a postcard.

CONTACT 3-- The third week they are absent, pay him a visit.

THINK ABOUT IT: What does it say to a student when they miss multiple weeks in a row and are never contacted? It says, “It really doesn’t matter if you’re here or not.” Small things communicate great messages. Let the three “small” things above communicate that you care and miss your students when they are absent.

OPENING ACTIVITY

Illustration—Hold Your Breath

Time your class to see who can hold their breath the longest.

- *Have you ever been in a situation where you couldn't breathe? (Perhaps while swimming or during an asthma attack.)*
 - *How did you feel? (Desperate)*
 - *Have you ever been desperate to meet with God?*

SAY: Many people wait until bad things happen to pray. Others wait until they've done everything they can and they realize that everything is out of their control before they get "desperate" for God.

BIBLE LESSON

SAY: Today we're going to take a look at a man who was desperate to meet with God, but he wasn't just praying a "desperate prayer." He was a godly man who spent time with God everyday. Listen to what the Bible says about his habit of spending time with God everyday. The king had signed a decree that no one could pray to anyone but him, but listen to what Daniel *continued* to do.

Choose a volunteer to read—Daniel 6:10

Daniel was committed to Prayer

SAY: Daniel prayed three times each day. He was completely devoted to following God and uniting with Him every day, regardless of the cost—He was even thrown in a lion's den for it...but that's another story.

- *This past week how much time did you spend in prayer? Is this more or less time than you spent brushing your teeth? Getting ready in the morning? Watching TV?*
- *What impact do you think this has on your life? What impact will it have on your future?*

Daniel was committed to the Scriptures

SAY: Not only was Daniel committed to prayer, he also read and studied God's Word.

- *This past week how much time did you spend reading your Bible? Is this more or less time than you spent brushing your hair? Reading a magazine? Playing video games?*
- *How much time do you think it takes to read the Bible through in a year?*

SAY: At a moderate rate it takes about 90 hours. That's an average of 15 minutes each day to read the Bible through in a year. It takes 20 hours to read the New Testament through. That's only three minutes each day. Even though it only takes such a small percentage of time, most believers in America won't read the Bible through in a lifetime. ¹

**Ask one student to turn to Jeremiah 29.
Have everyone else turn to Daniel 9.**

SAY: One day Daniel read something in the Scriptures that made him determined to seek the Lord by all means necessary—By prayer, fasting, and brokenness. But before you listen to what he read, let's get familiar with the background of the story.

BACKGROUND: The people of God had turned away from Him. They had followed idols and sin had invaded their lives. After many years of sending prophets and messages to them for them to repent and return and fully surrender and follow Him, God finally sent a strong judgment against them. God appointed the nation of Babylon, a very cruel and wicked nation, to invade them, to destroy their cities and many of their people—both young and old, men and women, and to take most everyone else away as captives. As a young man Daniel was taken as a captive. The temple and Jerusalem were destroyed and everything the Israelites had held to for regular life was taken from them.

(TEACHING NOTE: For a clear background of what happened and how to explain it, you might want to review 2 Chronicles 36:14-21.)

• A minute ago we talked about desperate prayers. *As soldiers descended upon their city and destroyed it and the temple and many people died, what kind of desperate prayers do you think these people prayed?*

SAY: Many times people find themselves in situations because sin has put them in a place where they don't want to be and they don't know what to do to get out of it. Or sin has led them down a path and now they are facing the consequences of their sin and they don't want to deal with it.

Many times they're not even repentant; they just don't want to face the consequences of their own actions.

For example:

Let's say that Frank works at a store. One day he needs some extra money so he slips a couple of dollars out of his register. He doesn't get caught. A few weeks later he does it again but this time he takes some more money. Again, he doesn't get caught. A couple of months later he takes out a couple of twenties. His sin has led him down a path to more and more sin and since he hasn't been caught, he's feeling confident and comfortable with it. The next morning he shows up to work and an assistant manager tells him to go see the boss in his office. On the way there, Frank begins regretting what he has done and begins to pray, "Oh, God, please help me. I need this job.

I can't afford to lose it. Please don't let me lose my job." He's praying a desperate prayer because he doesn't want to face the consequences of his actions, not because he is repentant.

He's sorry he might get caught; not sorry that he sinned.

• *Have you every prayed a "desperate" prayer?*

- *Is there anything wrong with praying in desperation?* (No, but it's a contradiction if you pray *only* when you are in desperation. Daniel spent daily time with the Lord as should each of us.)
- *The nation of Israel had fallen away from God. How do you think most people today begin to fall away from God?* (Even before a person turns to outward sin, falling away from God usually begins when they stop spending daily time with Him.)

SAY: But let's get back to the story: In the midst of God's judgment against Israel He gave them a message of hope—The captivity wouldn't last forever. After 70 years the people would be restored to their homeland. Listen to what God told them:

Choose a volunteer to read—Jeremiah 29:10-14
(Have your volunteer mark this place—you'll come back to it later.)

- *How would you have felt if you were Daniel and you had just read the promise that Jeremiah gave? What would you have done?*

Choose a volunteer to read—Read Daniel 9:1-3

- *How did reading God's Word affect Daniel?* (When Daniel read this promise, possibly the same verses we just read in Jeremiah, saying that after 70 years Israel would turn to God, Daniel "turned his attention to seek the Lord.")
- Jeremiah's prophecy both inspired Daniel and guided him in how to pray—*How can Scripture guide you in how to pray?*

SAY: Since Scripture tells you God's plan, you can many times pray God's promises back to Him.

- *Can anyone think of an example of how someone could pray Scripture?*

For example:

(1) Say that you are in a situation and you don't know what to do, you could pray James 1:5 and say, "*Lord, you said that 'if any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.' So, Lord, please give me wisdom.*"

(2) Say that you are in a situation where you are being tempted, you could pray 1 Corinthians 10:13 and say, "*Lord, you said that 'No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.' So, Lord, please show me the way out and give me the strength to stand up under this temptation.*"

SAY: Listen to what Daniel prayed:

Choose a volunteer to read—Read Daniel 9:9-11

Choose a volunteer to read—Read Daniel 9:18-19

SAY: Daniel prayed a prayer of confession and repentance.

- *Is there anything in your life that you need to confess and turn from?*

Choose a volunteer to read—Read Daniel 9:20-23

- *How did God answer Daniel's prayer?* (He sent the angel Gabriel to him to give him "insight and understanding.")
- *When did God answer Daniel's prayer?* (Immediately. Gabriel says, "As soon as you began to pray, an answer was given...")
- *Why did God answer using an angel (Gabriel) to carry His message and why don't we see God using angels this way a lot today?* (As a Christian you have something that people, like Daniel, in the Old Testament would have longed for and stood in awe of—As a Christian God has given you His Holy Spirit to dwell in your heart, to be a counselor, comforter and guide. In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit came upon people, but He did not indwell them because Christ had not yet died and rose again. So, why would God send an angel to speak His message to you when He Himself dwells in your heart already and can speak directly within you. That would be like someone going from the inside to the outside to yell at you through the window instead of just speaking in the room. This is also one reason that you find angels used greatly as messengers in the Old Testament, but not so much in the New Testament after the Holy Spirit came in Acts 2 to indwell believers.)

KEY VERSE

Choose a volunteer to read—Jeremiah 29:11

SAY: God has great plans for you. His plan for you is to give your life to Christ and then to follow Him every day. This includes all the seven of the keys we are studying in this series:

Surrender it all to God
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Encourage Others to Know Christ
Stay the Course
Share Your Resources

- *Do you feel that you are on the right path in following God's plan for your life?*

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- *On a scale of 1 to 10, how committed are you to spending time with God every day? Do you think this makes a difference in your daily life?*
- *How desperate are you to be with Jesus—If you missed a day, would you feel like you did when you were holding your breath, like there's nothing else in life you'd rather do, or is it something you don't even miss? What might this say about your walk with Christ? What might need to change?*
- *Daniel prayed and longed for God to move in his life and his nation: On a scale of 1 to 10, how desperate are you for God to move in your life? In your school? In our nation?*
- *If true revival came to our nation and your school, how do you think things would be different? (In the late 1700s a revival swept our nation and Benjamin Franklin wrote of people singing songs to God on the street corners—imagine that!)*

WRAP IT UP

Prayer Time

Pray specifically today that your students will follow God's plan for their lives and that they will spend time with Him every day.

List prayer requests below and on the back of this page and pray for your students throughout the week. *Ask if any of your students want to pray today.*

Prayer Requests

¹*Stories for Life*, (Fort Worth, TX: Student Discipleship Ministries, 2000), Story #526.