

[411: Out But Not Down](#)

God knows how to prepare you workers for your assigned work. There almost always to be an element of suffering, misunderstanding, failure and before there is the breakthrough success that God has for His servants. You are no exception to this timeless rule. The Bible and history itself contain many examples of this truth and we can see this pattern in Daniel's life.

NO LONGER NEEDED

Daniel had distinguished himself in the court of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. His exploits are described in the first four chapters of the book that bears Daniel's name. When Nebuchadnezzar's son Belshazzar took the throne, we have the well-known story from which we get the oft-used phrase "the handwriting's on the wall." I urge you to read all of Daniel 5, for I will now quote from only part of that story:

Then all the king's wise men came in, but they could not read the writing or tell the king what it meant. So King Belshazzar became even more terrified and his face grew more pale. His nobles were baffled. The queen, hearing the voices of the king and his nobles, came into the banquet hall. "O king, live forever!" she said. "Don't be alarmed! Don't look so pale. There is a man in your kingdom who has the spirit of the holy gods in him. In the time of your father he was found to have insight and intelligence and wisdom like that of the gods. King Nebuchadnezzar your father — your father the king, I say — appointed him chief of the magicians, enchanters, astrologers and diviners. This man Daniel, whom the king called Belteshazzar, was found to have a keen mind and knowledge and understanding, and also the ability to interpret dreams, explain riddles and solve difficult problems. Call for Daniel, and he will tell you what the writing means" (Daniel 5:8-12).

Now my question to you is this: if Daniel had been so successful in serving Nebuchadnezzar, why didn't Belshazzar know who he was? Why did the queen have to remind the king that Daniel even existed? The answer is simple: after his long success, Daniel now faced a down time in his life. He was forgotten, retired and rejected by the new leadership! Daniel was famous one day and no longer needed the next.

While man had forgotten Daniel, God had not. And the same is true for you. It may seem like all your doors are closed and that the success you once enjoyed has now evaporated into thin air, never to return. Or you may feel like you are at your end, not able to go on another day. But that isn't necessarily the case. As with Daniel, your best days may yet be ahead. After Daniel gave the king the bad news of what the writing on the wall meant, Daniel was once again restored to prominence:

Then at Belshazzar's command, Daniel was clothed in purple, a gold chain was placed around his neck, and he was proclaimed the third highest ruler in the kingdom (Daniel 5:29).

OUT BUT NOT DOWN

What should you do if you are in a season of "un-use," disfavor or inaction? You can be out, but you don't have to be down! I urge you to do three things if you are discouraged, disillusioned or dismayed. And if you're not, find someone who is—you shouldn't have to look too hard—and encourage them in their dark time.

1. **Renew your faith in God.** – Your success and purpose expression doesn't depend on your faithfulness; it depends on God's. So remind yourself that God can do anything, and then rest in Him. Perhaps Daniel thought it was all over for him. Yet God helped him and He will help you.

2. **Keep preparing for your day of success.** – When Daniel was out of favor, I don't think he went home and stopped seeking God. Keep writing, reading, learning and practicing. When the phone rings or the mail comes with your opportunity, you will be fresh and prepared, having worked in faith for the day of success.

3. **Be generous.** – Daniel, having been snubbed and ignored, could have refused to render his wisdom services for Belshazzar. What can you do for someone else, even though you are down and out?

Enjoy your down time and don't let it define who you are or what you have done. Then have faith that you are out but not down, for God is watching and He is able to restore your lost fortunes in another season. You have succeeded once before, you can and will do it again. Have a great week!

[412: Purpose Faith](#)

Have you ever made a commitment to do something by a certain deadline and had no idea how to do it? How did it turn out? If you're like most, it probably turned out better than you expected. You created the need for the information in faith and then set out to achieve your objective.

We have been looking at Daniel the last few weeks and will do so for a few weeks more. Daniel made a similar commitment to do something he didn't know how he would do, and it saved lives and changed the course of history. Let's look at what he did and see what you and I can learn from what I am calling Purpose Faith.

WHO CARES?

When Israel was conquered by Babylon, the conquerors relocated Daniel and his friends to Babylon to assimilate them into their culture. They changed Daniel's name, forced him learn a new language and culture and made him a eunuch! You can say that Daniel went through a major life transition.

Then the king had his famous dream that troubled him so. He wanted his wise men to interpret the dream, with one catch. The king refused to tell them the dream. He wanted them to tell him the dream and its meaning. That seems pretty unreasonable to me. When they could not, the king threatened to kill them all.

So then Daniel heard about the predicament the king had created. He could have said, "Who cares? I didn't want to be in this heathen place anyway. Let them all die!" Yet that was not his heart and spirit. Rather here is what Daniel did:

[At this, Daniel went in to the king and asked for time, so that he might interpret the dream for him \(Daniel 2:16\).](#)

Daniel had faith that God would show him the dream and the interpretation! What happened next always boggles my mind when I read it. I am sure it will boggle yours, too.

GOD CARES

[Then Daniel returned to his house and explained the matter to his friends Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. He urged them to plead for mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that he and his friends might not be executed with the](#)

rest of the wise men of Babylon. During the night the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision. Then Daniel praised the God of heaven and said: "Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever; wisdom and power are his" (Daniel 2:17-20).

Obviously God cared about the lives of the king's advisers, for He showed Daniel the dream and its meaning. What faith Daniel had to commit to do the impossible! He put high expectations on the Lord and God came through. He was not afraid to draw on God's infinite wisdom.

Which brings us back to you and me. How high are your expectations in the Lord? What are you asking God to do that seems impossible to others? What have you committed yourself to that, if the Lord does not come through, you will look foolish? What need have you created for new information you don't have today so you can do new things tomorrow?

Daniel was a remarkable man with great faith, but he applied that faith to everyday life. It is no wonder that God exalted him to a high place, for Daniel learned how to partner with God to make the impossible ordinary. You and I would do well to imitate his example and then set our expectations high so that God will empower us to do great things for Him in the power of our purpose. Have a great week!

[413: Promoted in Babylon](#)

What is you had to lead a team of people and not one of them was like you in any way? What's more, what if you were in a land that was not your home, with an adopted language, culture and customs? Finally, what if those people were involved in activities that were banned by your God in His book? Sounds like a tough if not impossible job, right?

Wrong! That exactly describes Daniel's situation, yet Daniel went on to prosper in Babylon and serves as a great example of the power of purpose. If you have missed any of our Daniel articles the last few weeks, you may want to go [back](#) and catch up. If you are current, then it's time to move on and learn more about this remarkable man.

A PROMOTION!

When the king had a dream that troubled him, the Bible tells us:

In the second year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; his mind was troubled and he could not sleep. So the king summoned the magicians, enchanters, sorcerers and astrologers to tell him what he had dreamed. When they came in and stood before the king, he said to them, "I have had a dream that troubles me and I want to know what it means " (Daniel 2:1-3).

We saw last week that the king refused to divulge the dream to those so-called wise men, but demanded that they tell him the dream and the interpretation. Only Daniel was willing to see His God for the answers and God graciously revealed the dream and the meaning.

The king rewarded Daniel for his exceptional work, as one might expect:

Then the king placed Daniel in a high position and lavished many gifts on him. He made him ruler over the entire province of Babylon and placed him in charge of all its wise men. Moreover, at Daniel's request the king appointed Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego administrators over the province of Babylon, while Daniel himself remained at the royal court (Daniel 2:48-29).

Who were those wise men over whom Daniel was put in charge? They were the magicians, enchanters, sorcerers and astrologers mentioned earlier. Can you imagine Daniel's business meetings with those men? He had to listen to their occult reports as their chief, and he did so with distinction.

SO WHAT?

Why do I point this out? I do so because you may be called to fulfill your purpose in Babylon, too. You may not feel comfortable with your team or their spiritual values or orientation. Yet God may still direct you to serve and lead them and do so with the same excellence that Daniel employed.

Daniel did not choose to be in Babylon. God sent him there. He did not want to make a life transition that would take him away from his land and people. Yet when it happened, God made Daniel a champion in a foreign culture and He remained true to his God by doing excellent work.

Did you ever wonder how the Magi knew to look for a star and come to Bethlehem when Jesus was born? Some suggest it was Daniel's influence that caused them to search. After Daniel had heard the reports in his meetings from all the soothsayers, astrologers and necromancers, it was his turn and he reported on the hope of Israel. Some were so impressed that they spent the next five centuries searching for evidence of what Daniel had predicted would happen. When they saw the star, they left their homes, just like Daniel did his, to find the Promised One of Israel.

If your purpose takes you to a modern-day Babylon, don't fret. Just do what Daniel did. Look for an opportunity to serve and shine brightly for your God and tell them what you know to be true. Then watch and see what God does, for He never sends His best anywhere without giving them success in the matters at hand. Have a great week!

[414: Insight in Babylon](#)

How would you like to have insight and understanding into your purpose? What's more, how would you like that insight to impact people for generations to come? That may or may not excite you, but one thing is certain: If you are going to do anything meaningful, there is a price to be paid to do so.

We have been studying Daniel and this week we will conclude our studies and move on. I call this week's lesson "Insight in Babylon." We will look not so much at what Daniel saw as what he had to do to see. I know this will help you in your own desire to gain insight into your own world today, including your purpose.

SEEKING THE LORD

As we saw last week, Daniel had been promoted to the head of the wise men in Babylon. Daniel was not only a good administrator, he was a prophet. He was not a prophet in Israel, however, for God moved him to Babylon, put him through all manner of life changes and transitions and then used him to impact the king and culture of Babylon.

We see part of how Daniel received such extraordinary insight in chapter 10:

[At that time I, Daniel, mourned for three weeks. I ate no choice food; no meat or wine touched my lips; and I used no lotions at all until the three weeks were over \(Daniel 10:2-3\).](#)

For Daniel, seeking the Lord wasn't reciting the Lord's prayer. He was serious about pursuing God and God chose to reveal Himself to Daniel. Daniel didn't eat or wash for weeks at a time. What price are you willing to pay to know your purpose? To be used by God? To make a difference in the world?

SEEKING THE LORD ALONE

What's more, Daniel's insight scared everyone else away!

I, Daniel, was the only one who saw the vision; the men with me did not see it, but such terror overwhelmed them that they fled and hid themselves. So I was left alone, gazing at this great vision; I had no strength left, my face turned deathly pale and I was helpless (Daniel 10:7-8).

I am not saying that Daniel was weird or bizarre. Daniel was alone but he was not lonely. He was neither a hermit, nor a John the Baptist figure with a strange diet and outlandish outfit. Daniel did not have a find a holy place from which he could seek God. He sought a holy God from the unholy city to which God had sent Him. Daniel was a productive citizen of the most advanced culture of his day. Yet he was ruthlessly uncompromising when it came to serving his God and God rewarded Daniel again and again with exceptional insight and skill.

Pursuing purpose and the things of God are not to be taken lightly. Yet purpose and the things of God for your life are worth whatever price you pay to find them. I ask again: What price are you willing to pay to find and fulfill purpose? While it may cost you everything, the results are priceless and worth the pursuit. Have a great week!

415: A Big Book and A Sharp Pencil

I have been writing about Daniel the last few months, but now it's time to move on. Let's study a woman of purpose for a change; what do you say? Is that a good thing? I think it is, so Esther, you are the woman for the next few weeks. We will start this week with one of my personal favorites among all Bible stories. This Memo is a little longer than usual, but I promise it is worth the effort.

BAIT AND SWITCH

I'm sorry, but I'm going to pull what's called in the world of retail a "bait and switch." This isn't really about Esther this week, but rather about her cousin Mordecai (I promise to cover Esther next week). Mordecai raised his cousin Esther after her parents died. Because Esther listened to Mordecai's advice, she eventually won a beauty pageant and was chosen to be the new queen. After that happened, we read:

During the time Mordecai was sitting at the king's gate, Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's officers who guarded the doorway, became angry and conspired to assassinate King Xerxes. But Mordecai found out about the plot and told Queen Esther, who in turn reported it to the king, giving credit to Mordecai. And when the report was investigated and found to be true, the two officials were hanged on a gallows. All this was recorded in the book of the annal in the presence of the king (Esther 2:21-23).

You may ask, "Why is this one of your favorite stories?" My answer is that it only represents half of the story, so wait until you read the rest. First, we see that Mordecai had already done the king a favor by directing Esther to become queen. Then Mordecai did the king a second favor: He saved his life by uncovering and reporting the conspiracy to the king through Esther. When the report was investigated and

found to be true, the conspirators were killed and the story was put down in the public record. The story could have ended there, and almost seems like it does.

That is how it may be with you. You have done good things you knew were related to your purpose. You have helped other people, been faithful in every way you knew how, and still it doesn't seem like you have received your promotion or breakthrough. You may even feel like that is your life's story and it will never change. If you feel like that, read on!

THE REWARD ALWAYS COMES

Mordecai had an enemy named Haman, who hated Mordecai because Mordecai was a Jew and would never bow down and pay him honor.

Haman was secretly planning to wipe out Mordecai and the Jews but, before he could hatch his plot, we read the following:

That night the king could not sleep; so he ordered the book of the chronicles, the record of his reign, to be brought in and read to him. It was found recorded there that Mordecai had exposed Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's officers who guarded the doorway, who had conspired to assassinate King Xerxes. "What honor and recognition has Mordecai received for this?" the king asked. "Nothing has been done for him," his attendants answered.

The king said, "Who is in the court?" Now Haman had just entered the outer court of the palace to speak to the king about hanging Mordecai on the gallows he had erected for him. His attendants answered, "Haman is standing in the court." "Bring him in," the king ordered. When Haman entered, the king asked him, "What should be done for the man the king delights to honor?" Now Haman thought to himself, "Who is there that the king would rather honor than me?" So he answered the king, "For the man the king delights to honor, have them bring a royal robe the king has worn and a horse the king has ridden, one with a royal crest placed on its head. Then let the robe and horse be entrusted to one of the king's most noble princes. Let them robe the man the king delights to honor, and lead him on the horse through the city streets, proclaiming before him, 'This is what is done for the man the king delights to honor!'"

"Go at once," the king commanded Haman. "Get the robe and the horse and do just as you have suggested for Mordecai the Jew, who sits at the king's gate. Do not neglect anything you have recommended." So Haman got the robe and the horse. He robed Mordecai, and led him on horseback through the city streets, proclaiming before him, "This is what is done for the man the king delights to honor!" (Esther 6:1-11).

Now you see why I love this story! To me it represents the fact that God never forgets who you are and what you have done for Him. I've written many times that (figuratively speaking) God has a big book and a sharp pencil and He records everything you do for Him. In the fullness of time, often when you least expect it, God rewards and blesses you with honor, meaningful work, and significant purpose opportunities. What's more, Mordecai could not be blessed until Esther became queen and had access to the king. Sometimes fulfilling your purpose is a matter of timing--there isn't a need yet for who you are or what you can do.

So take heart this week. God hasn't forgotten you. He remembers your deeds and preparation. Put your trust in Him. One night, when God can't sleep, He will ask one of His heavenly messengers to read the book of good deeds and He will hear your name mentioned. He will then ask, "What have we done for my son or daughter to reward them?" When the answer comes back, "Nothing!", He will respond, "Then it's time." Who knows, that time may be this week and God may even use one of your enemies to bless you. I

hope it is this week but, if not, you know it is only a matter of time until your week comes. So keep on seeking and doing the good you know you are to do. As you do, I know you will have a great week!