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The prayer of Daniel began with adoration (v.4).
The prayer of Daniel continues with confession (vv.5-8). In that confession Daniel admits the people have resisted, neglected, we might even say spurned God’s mercy; rebelled against God, disobeyed God; broken God’s laws and commandments (vv.8-10).

The prayer of Daniel includes acknowledging God’s righteousness and justice (vv.11-14). By acknowledging God’s righteousness and justice; Daniel is in effect offering thanksgiving. Throughout the prayer Daniel is thankful for God’s power, God’s majesty, God’s mercy, God’s faithfulness, and God’s holiness.

The prayer of Daniel ends in petition (vv.15-19). Daniel begs God to listen, and respond. Daniel pleads with the Lord to turn from His anger and wrath towards the holy city of Jerusalem; to look with favor on the destroyed sanctuary (v.16). Daniel lists two reasons why God should consider turning from his anger and wrath; because showing mercy was in the very nature of God; and the justice of God had been satisfied; because the people had suffered for their sins. Their homeland had been destroyed; their families torn apart; and they had spent 70 years in the place of captivity. The people were exiles in a foreign place; which meant they were the object of ridicule and scorn.

Prayer Prompted By Sinfulness

Daniel 9:5; we have sinned and committed iniquity, we have done wickedly and rebelled, even by departing from Your precepts and Your judgments.

We are sinners by nature and by choice. Joseph and Daniel in the Bible are painted with broad brush strokes of impeccable character. Nothing really bad is ever spoken about them. Yet both had a keen sense of the sinfulness and wickedness of the people around them.

Daniel uses four separate Hebrew terms to describe sin; “we have sinned” which means to fall short; to miss the mark; and committed iniquity which means to distort, twist, pervert, with a special emphasis on acts or actions which are perverse; we have done wickedly which covers premeditated evil; and rebelled which means to defy authority.
**Life Changing Prayer**  
**Daniel 9:5-19**

Daniel 9:6; Neither have we heeded Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings and our princes, to our fathers and all the people of the land.

Daniel admits the people have refused to hear God’s prophets; the people who speak for God;

Daniel 9:7; O Lord, righteousness belongs to You, but to us shame of face, as it is this day”to the men of Judah, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and all Israel, those near and those far off in all the countries to which You have driven them, because of the unfaithfulness which they have committed against You.

Disobedience has brought shame.

Daniel 9:8; O Lord, to us belongs shame of face, to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, because we have sinned against You.

Daniel 9:9; To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against Him.

Daniel 9:10; We have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in His laws, which He set before us by His servants the prophets.

Daniel adds the sin of disobedience to God.

Daniel confesses his sin and the sin of his people.

1 John 1:9; If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

The word “confess” means to “say the same thing”; in a Biblical sense it means to agree with God; in this sense it means to agree with God about our sinful heart condition. We are prone to use euphemisms to describe our rebellion.

We call it an accident; God calls it an abomination.  
We call it a blunder; God calls it blindness.  
We call it a defect; God calls it disaster.  
We call it a chance; God calls it a choice.  
We call it an error; God calls it enmity.  
We call it a fascination; God calls it a fatality.  
We call it an infirmity; God calls it iniquity.  
We call it a luxury; God calls it leprosy.  
We call it a liberty; God calls it lawlessness.  
We call it a trifle; God calls it a tragedy.  
We call it a mistake; God calls it madness.
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We call it a weakness; God calls it willfulness.
(Adopted from Moody Monthly; quoted in Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations; #5702; p.1283).

They say that confession is good for the soul; but confession hurts. Why is confession so painful? I suspect one reason is with confession comes the expectation of change; we have a responsibility to change our behavior. With the recognition “we have sinned” comes the expectation “go and sin no more”. When are you least likely to confess your sin? When you don’t want to give up the sin. Ian Blaklok wrote; “The period of our devotions must contain a moment of pain. It is not God’s intention that we should writhe under it, or linger in it, but specific and sincere confession of our own sin is no joyous exercise”. Amen.

Why is it so hard to say “I was wrong”?

Do you remember when the leaders tried to conspire against Daniel, to find some inconsistency, some hypocrisy, some character flaw, they could find nothing? In chapter six verse four it says; “they could find no charge or fault, because he was faithful; nor was there any error or fault found in him”.

Daniel cries out to God; “We have sinned”. Daniel identifies himself with his people and their sin. Life changing prayer includes a willingness to identify and confess your sins; and a willingness to identify with the sins of your people.

The prayer of Daniel reminds us that we cannot detach my sins and your sins from each other. Paul wrote; “we being many are one body, joined and fitted together”. Sin is never an isolated incident. When there is sin anywhere in the body; it is everywhere in the body.

Daniel is a holy man; a humble man, a righteous man. Yet repentance and confession are a part of Daniel’s prayer life.

If its been a while since you have brought personal sin before a holy God; it isn’t because you have been doing pretty well in the sinless department. Its because you are deceived about the condition of your heart. Its because you have grown insensitive to sin.

Prayer Amplified By Worship

Daniel’s prayer proceeds through a series of stages; Daniel reads the word of God; he is motivated to pray; Daniel discovers the will of God; and then he repeats the revelation; the prays fervently and frequently. Daniel confesses his sin, and the sin of his people--because Daniel knows something. Daniel knows that sin separates us from God, sin impedes and retards, sin interferes with what God wants to do in our lives.

When the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray he said; “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name”. Jesus taught us to begin in worship. We end in worship; “for yours is the
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kingdom and the power and the glory forever”. The ultimate reason to pray is to worship God; the result of prayer should be that we come to the place where we worship and magnify (that means to enlarge) God. The Greek word for “magnify” means to make great.

**Prayer Energized By The Power Of God**

At the beginning of Daniel’s prayer he prays; “O Lord, great and awesome God” (v.4). The word “awesome” is connected to the concept of God’s majesty. Daniel magnifies the power of God.

Daniel 9:4; And I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments;

Dreadful is a word that has fallen out of favor in our current speech. It is connected to the concept of fearing the Lord. God banished Adam and Eve from the Garden. God washed the world in a global flood. God struck Pharaoh and Pharaoh’s household with plagues of judgment. Today Pharaoh is a curious display in a British museum; and God continues to reign supreme. When Saul turned a deaf ear to God; the dreadful God exercised judgment. When Nebuchadnezzar’s wicked heart elevated itself; the dreadful God caused the king to eat grass until he realized Jehovah rules in the world of men. When Belshazzar’s cup was full, the dreadful God wrote on the wall he was weighed in the balance and found wanting. When Herod killed John the Baptist; the dreadful God--took something as simple as a microscopic organism to eat the kings intestines while he was still alive. When Ananias and his selfish wife Sapphira decided to lie to the Holy Spirit; the dreadful God killed them in the place of meeting.

When Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome, Egypt, Nineveh and Jerusalem turned from the righteousness of God; the dreadful God turned them into rotting, decaying, dissolution and then death. Neither men nor nations can ignore the “AWESOME” DREADFUL GOD.

**Prayer Expanded By The Majesty Of God**

Daniel 9:11; Yes, all Israel has transgressed Your law, and has departed so as not to obey Your voice; therefore the curse and the oath written in the Law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out on us, because we have sinned against Him.

Daniel 9:12; And He has confirmed His words, which He spoke against us and against our judges who judged us, by bringing upon us a great disaster; for under the whole heaven such has never been done as what has been done to Jerusalem.

Daniel 9:13; As it is written in the Law of Moses, all this disaster has come upon us; yet we have not made our prayer before the Lord our God, that we might turn from our iniquities and understand Your truth.
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Daniel 9:14: Therefore the Lord has kept the disaster in mind, and brought it upon us; for the Lord our God is righteous in all the works which He does, though we have not obeyed His voice.

Daniel 9:15: And now, O Lord our God, who brought Your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and made Yourself a name, as it is this day we have sinned, we have done wickedly!

God had warned the people over and over again concerning the consequences of rebellion and disobedience. The Lord warned them that judgment was about to fall. The people were presently in captivity, suffering because of that rebellion and disobedience. The nation had sinned against the Lord. They had ignored God’s Word, rejected God’s mercy, and continued in their sin. God keeps His promises. Remember the people had not repented from their sin; and refused to obey the truth. The Lord is righteous and just when He exercises and executes justice upon all those who disobey Him.

Prayer Magnified By The Mercy Of God

Daniel 9:16; O Lord, according to all Your righteousness, I pray, let Your anger and Your fury be turned away from Your city Jerusalem, Your holy mountain; because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and Your people are a reproach to all those around us.

Daniel 9:17; Now therefore, our God, hear the prayer of Your servant, and his supplications, and for the Lord’s sake cause Your face to shine on Your sanctuary, which is desolate.

Daniel 9:18: O my God, incline Your ear and hear; open Your eyes and see our desolations, and the city which is called by Your name; for we do not present our supplications before You because of our righteous deeds, but because of Your great mercies.

Daniel knows the people are not righteous. Daniel pleadings are based on God’s great mercies.

“God in His grace gives us what we don’t deserve, and God in His mercy doesn’t give us what we do deserve. Daniel asked the Lord to turn away His anger from Jerusalem and the holy temple. He admits that the sins of Israel (including Daniel) were the cause of that great catastrophe, but that God had promised to forgive if His people would repent and confess their sins. “We do not make requests of you because we are righteous, but because of your great mercy” (v.18 NIV)” (see Wiersbe Be Resolute; Determining to Go God’s Direction; p.112).

Prayer Focused On The Faithfulness Of God

Prayer Informed By The Holiness Of God

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Daniel 9:19: O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and act! Do not delay for Your own sake, my God, for Your city and Your people are called by Your name.

Daniel wants this more than anything else. Lord forgive, Lord listen, Lord do not postpone or put off your plans. Act now--do not postpone or delay. Can’t you hear the passion in his voice?

Daniel asks, seeks, knocks. Daniel is begging and pleading! He wants the Lord to answer, and he wants the Lord to answer quickly. Do not delay for Your own sake. Do this because it honors you. Your honor and your reputation are at stake. Every day the city lay in ruins, every day the Temple was destroyed; every day the people remained in bondage; brought shame to the name of the living God; the true Savior of Israel and the world. For the sake of God’s own reputation, Daniel pleaded for the Lord to hear his prayer.

When all is said and done, why is Daniel praying? Because Daniel is man of God? Because Daniel cares about his own safety?

Daniel is praying because the people must--leave their captivity--return to the city--restore the people to their city, to their sanctuary, to their heritage and to their culture. But there is something else; the people must begin to cooperate with God in God’s plan.

Conclusion

Daniel prays for the people of Israel in captivity.

We can pray. We can seek God’s face. We can allow Bible study to drive us into the arms of God. We can pray; we can praise; we can offer thanksgiving; pleadings and supplications.

What do your prayers reflect? Are you focused on selfishness or selflessness? Do your prayers reflect conceit or concern? Do they focus on what you value or on what God values? Are you praying for the leaders in your nation, your community and your church? Do you ask the Lord to use you and to glorify Himself in your home, in your neighborhood and the world? Are you deeply concerned with both upholding God’s character; God’s justice and at the same time reflecting God’s character in your own speech and conduct? Has your family already begun to reap the benefits of your prayer life?

“Daniel now knew God’s immediate plans for the nation of Israel, but what about the distant future? He had already learned from the visions God gave him that difficult days lay ahead for God’s people, with a kingdom to appear that would crush everything good and promote everything evil. Would God’s people survive? Would the promised Messiah finally appear? Would the kingdom of God be established on the earth? Daniel is about to receive the answers to those questions” (Wiersbe; BE RESOLUTE; Determining to Go God’s Direction; p.113).