



The Book of Daniel: No Compromise

Daniel 4

Pastor Brad Wood

Daniel chapter 4 presents us with one of Scripture's most dramatic transformations: the humbling of King Nebuchadnezzar. This powerful ruler, who had conquered nations and built magnificent Babylon, received a divine warning through a dream that shook him to his core.

Despite having a full year to repent after Daniel interpreted the dream, Nebuchadnezzar stood surveying his kingdom and declared that all of it was the work of his own hands. In that moment, judgment fell, and for seven years he lived as a beast in the fields, stripped of reason and royal dignity.

Yet this wasn't divine cruelty—it was divine mercy. God's purpose wasn't merely to humiliate a proud king but to bring him to genuine repentance and relationship. When Nebuchadnezzar finally lifted his eyes to heaven and acknowledged God's sovereignty, his reason returned, his kingdom was restored, and most importantly, his heart was transformed.

Archaeological evidence remarkably confirms this account, with a seven-year gap in historical records matching the biblical timeline. The central lesson resonates powerfully with us today: pride sets us in opposition to God, while humility positions us to receive His grace. We learn that God will do whatever it takes to break through our hard hearts, not to destroy us but to free us. When we truly grasp how much God cares for us—that we are His fixation, the apple of His eye—we find the freedom to cast all our anxieties upon Him and walk in genuine humility.

Key Takeaways:

1. **God's sovereignty over all kingdoms and rulers** - God places leaders in power and removes them according to His will.
2. **Pride leads to downfall** - God actively resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.
3. **God's discipline is redemptive, not punitive** - God humbled Nebuchadnezzar for his good, not just to punish him.
4. **True humility recognizes our complete dependence on God** - Everything we have comes from Him.
5. **Casting our cares on God requires both prayer and faith** - We must actively throw our burdens on Jesus.

5-Day Devotional and Small Group Guide

Day 1: The God Who Humbles the Proud

Reading: Daniel 4:28-37

Devotional: Nebuchadnezzar stood atop his palace surveying Babylon, declaring his own greatness—and in that moment, heaven responded. God's resistance to pride is not cruelty but mercy. He humbled this mighty king not to destroy him, but to save him. For seven years, Nebuchadnezzar lived as a beast until he finally looked up to heaven and acknowledged God's sovereignty. Only then did reason return. Pride blinds us to reality and separates us from the One who truly cares for us. When we exalt ourselves, we position ourselves against God. But when we humble ourselves, we discover His grace waiting to restore us. What areas of pride might God be calling you to surrender today?

Day 2: Recognizing God's Sovereignty

Reading: Proverbs 16:1-9; 18-19

Devotional: "God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble." These words echo through Scripture because they reveal a fundamental truth about how God relates to His creation. Nebuchadnezzar learned that every kingdom, every achievement, every moment of success comes not by our might but by God's sovereign will. He sets up kings and removes them. He gives power and takes it away. Our accomplishments are gifts from His hand, not trophies of our own strength. When we recognize this truth, gratitude replaces arrogance. Worship replaces self-promotion. We stop demanding God bless our plans and start asking Him to reveal His purposes. True humility acknowledges that without God, we can do nothing of lasting value.

Day 3: Casting Your Cares Upon Him

Reading: 1 Peter 5:5-11

Devotional: Humility and trust are inseparable companions. Peter instructs us to cast all our anxieties on God because He cares for us. The word "cast" is energetic—throw them away with both hands! Yet this requires faith to believe Jesus truly cares for you—and that because you are a precious concern for Him, the weights that you bear are of concern to Him as well. Many of us clutch our burdens tightly, convinced we must manage them ourselves. This is pride disguised as responsibility. True humility recognizes our complete inability to carry what weighs us down and our Savior's infinite capacity to bear it all. He doesn't offer to lighten your load—He offers to exchange it for His easy yoke. What burdens are you still carrying that Jesus has invited you to release?

Day 4: The Heart of a Servant

Reading: Philippians 2:1-11; John 13:1-17

Devotional: On the night before His crucifixion, Jesus wrapped a towel around His waist and washed His disciples' feet—the task of the lowest servant. This is the portrait of biblical humility: not thinking less of yourself, but thinking of yourself less. Not self-deprecation, but self-forgetfulness in service to others. Jesus, though equal with God, emptied Himself and took the form of a servant. Peter remembered this when he wrote about clothing ourselves with humility like a servant's apron. Humility isn't weakness; it's the strength to perform the lowest service for Jesus' sake. It's willingness to be overlooked, to serve without recognition, to prioritize others' needs above your own comfort. Who is God calling you to serve today?

Day 5: The Pathway to Exaltation

Reading: James 4:6-10; Micah 6:6-8

Devotional: God's mathematics are backwards from the world's. The way up is down. The first shall be last. Those who humble themselves will be exalted. Nebuchadnezzar discovered this truth—only after being brought to the lowest place did God restore his kingdom with even greater majesty. What does the Lord require? To do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God. This is the essence of the Christian life. Not religious performance or prideful achievement, but humble dependence. When we submit to God's mighty hand, acknowledging our spiritual bankruptcy and complete need for Him, we position ourselves to receive grace upon grace. The freedom found in humility surpasses anything pride promises. Will you choose today to walk humbly before the God who cares deeply for you?

Practical Applications:

This Week's Practice: The Humility Assessment

Each day this week, take time to honestly assess your heart in these areas:

Monday: Review your day. Where did you take credit for something God did?

Tuesday: Notice when you compared yourself to others (either thinking you're better or worse). Ask God to help you see yourself and others through His eyes.

Wednesday: Practice doing something helpful for someone without anyone knowing about it. Resist the urge to mention it.

Thursday: Write down all your current worries and anxieties. Physically tear up the paper as an act of casting them on Jesus.

Friday: Ask someone you trust: "Is there any area where you see pride in my life?" Be willing to receive their answer with humility.

Weekend: Spend time in worship, focusing specifically on God's sovereignty and your complete dependence on Him.

Small Group Guide: The Humbling of Nebuchadnezzar

Discussion Questions:

- How does Daniel's compassion toward King Nebuchadnezzar, despite being taken captive by him, challenge the way we view and treat those who have hurt or wronged us?
- In what ways might we be like Nebuchadnezzar, taking credit for accomplishments or positions that God has actually orchestrated in our lives?
- What does it mean practically to 'cast all your cares upon Him' using both the hand of prayer and the hand of faith, and what prevents us from doing this fully?

- How can pride disguise itself even in our spiritual activities and good works, and what are the warning signs that we're becoming proud of our own humility?
- Why do you think God gave Nebuchadnezzar twelve months to repent after the dream, and what does this reveal about God's character and patience with us?
- What is the difference between self-deprecation and true biblical humility, and why is it important to understand our worth in Christ while recognizing our sin?
- How does the archaeological evidence supporting the historical accuracy of Daniel chapter 4 strengthen your faith or approach to Scripture?
- In what areas of your life might you need to lift your eyes to heaven like Nebuchadnezzar did, so that reason and right perspective can return?
- What does it mean that God 'sets Himself in battle array against the proud,' and how should this reality shape the way we examine our own hearts?
- How does understanding that Jesus is 'fixated on us' and that we are His biggest concern change the way we approach surrendering our burdens and walking in humility?

Further Discussion Questions:

- What was Nebuchadnezzar's dream about, and what did it symbolize? Why do you think God gave him a full year to repent before bringing judgment?
- How did Daniel respond when he understood the dream's meaning? What does this reveal about his character and his relationship with the king?
- What specific act of pride triggered God's immediate judgment on Nebuchadnezzar (verses 29-30)? Why was this particular moment significant?
- Pastor Brad mentioned that "grace and pride are mortal enemies in our heart." Where do you see this battle playing out in your own life right now?

- Nebuchadnezzar said, "Is not this great Babylon that I have built...by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty?" In what areas of your life are you tempted to take credit for what God has done?
- In his sermon, Pastor Brad defined humility as "thinking of yourself less" rather than "thinking less of yourself." How does this distinction change your understanding of what it means to be humble?
- Read James 4:6 and 1 Peter 5:5-7. Why do you think both James and Peter emphasized that "God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble"? What does it mean that God "sets Himself in battle array against the proud"?
- Daniel advised Nebuchadnezzar to "break off your sins by being righteous, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor" (v. 27). How does showing mercy to others relate to humility before God?
- Pastor Brad said that sometimes God gives us instructions through other people, and that can be hard to receive. When has God spoken to you through someone else? How did you respond?
- What "cares" (anxieties, burdens, distractions) are you currently holding onto instead of casting on Jesus? What would it look like to actively "throw them away" and place them on Him this week?
- In his teaching, Pastor Brad listed several traits of true humility:
 - Willingness to perform the lowest services for Jesus' sake
 - Consciousness of your inability apart from God
 - Willingness to be ignored by others
 - Being truly others-centered
 - Having a gentle, teachable spirit

Which of these is most challenging for you? Which one is God calling you to work on this week?

- Nebuchadnezzar had to spend seven years as an animal before he humbled himself. What "lesser disciplines" might God be using in your life right now to get your attention before things get worse?

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