

DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

Daniel 9:1-19
Stand Strong Series
June 2/3, 2018

Main Idea:

God's grace is limitless, but He still cares about how you live.

Discovery Questions

1. What is the most reliable car you have ever owned? What was the least?

As we mentioned last week, we're taking chapter 9 in our series on Daniel, in two parts. Last week we studied the second half of Daniel 9, specifically 9:24-27. This week, we'll look at the first half.

In this first section of Daniel 9 we see Daniel examining in Scripture the word of the Lord through the prophet Jeremiah. In these writings he perceived that the desolation of Jerusalem would last 70 years. In response, Daniel confesses and prays to God on behalf of the Israelites. In his prayer Daniel repeatedly affirms God's reliability and his promises that are based in his character.

2. Read Daniel 9:1-19 and answering the following questions.

- a. What do we learn about God's character in this passage?
- b. What do we learn about the heart of the Israelites in this passage?
- c. How does Daniel approach God? What are some of the consistent words or phrases he uses?

3. In this world, it sometimes seems that God is not watching - or if He is watching, He doesn't care or participate.

- a. How have you seen this attitude played out around you?
- b. Have you seen this attitude in your church community? What have been the effects of an attitude that disregards God?
- c. Can you think of a time when you have seen someone take advantage of God's grace? What was the outcome?

4. Let's look at our own lives today.

- a. What are some ways that you minimize the presence of God in your life? What is the result?
- b. How could the fact that God cares about how you live impact your actions? Share a specific situation where this understanding could change your actions.

5. Confession is something that we do not often do together. Take some time now to confess some of the areas in your life that you have not given over to God. As a group, spend time praying for one another, asking God for forgiveness and for a renewed vision of what life with Christ can look like.

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DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

Leader Guide

1. What is the most reliable car you have ever owned? What was the least?

This is a lighter question designed to get the conversation going. Spend about 5-7 minutes on this question.

As we mentioned last week, we're taking chapter 9 in our series on Daniel, in two parts. Last week we studied the second half of Daniel 9, specifically 9:24-27. This week, we'll look at the first half.

In this first section of Daniel 9 we see Daniel examining in Scripture the word of the Lord through the prophet Jeremiah. In these writings he perceived that the desolation of Jerusalem would last 70 years. In response, Daniel confesses and prays to God on behalf of the Israelites. In his prayer Daniel repeatedly affirms God's reliability and his promises that are based in his character.

2. Read Daniel 9:1-19 and answering the following questions.

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For part a) we see:

- He is Great and Awesome (v.4)
- He keeps His covenants and promises (v.4)
- He is righteous (perfect/just) (v.7)
- He is merciful (v.9)
- He can have anger (v.16)
- He has great mercy (v.18)
- He cares about His name (v.19)

For part b) we see: They have turned from God, they have forgotten Him, they are not repentant.

For part c) we see: God is merciful, the Israelites have sinned against God, and that God is righteous.

Spend 10-12 minutes on this question.

3. In this world, it sometimes seems that God is not watching - or if He is watching, He doesn't care or participate.

- d. How have you seen this attitude played out around you?
- e. Have you seen this attitude in your church community? What have been the effects of an attitude that disregards God?
- f. Can you think of a time when you have seen someone take advantage of God's grace? What was the outcome?

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For these questions, help the group understand that it is possible to live with the knowledge that God exists, yet completely ignore Him. Take time to look at the world around you, as well as the church and other Christians in your lives - those who should be living radically different lives, but are potentially living just like everyone else.

For part c) the term "taking advantage of God's grace" means to know that God offers grace, and so it causes you to think you get a free pass to do whatever you want. "If God gives me grace no matter what, then why not sin more so that God's grace might be shown more?" This is exactly what Paul talks about in Romans 6:1-2. His statement is that "we are those who are dead to sin; how can we live in it any longer?" Encourage the group to really unpack how easy it is to slip into this mindset of taking God's grace for granted.

Spend 7-10 minutes on this question in its entirety.

4. Let's look at our own lives today.

- a. **What are some ways that you minimize the presence of God in your life? What is the result?**
- b. **How could the fact that God cares about how you live impact your actions? Share a specific situation where this understanding could change your actions.**

There are many things that draw our attention away from God: money, comfort, fear, busyness, worry, etc. Additionally, it is not always easy to follow God. As Daniel's example shows throughout the book of Daniel, it often requires sacrifice and self-denial. Yet, minimizing God's presence and disregarding our relationship with Him ends up costing us more than we can imagine. We miss out on His joy and peace. We miss out on the adventure of living life with Him. Ultimately, we miss out on receiving what we are looking for most deeply - His unconditional and transformational love.

Spend about 10-12 minutes on this question in its entirety.

5. Confession is something that we do not often do together. Take some time now to confess some of the areas in your life that you have not given over to God. As a group, spend time praying for one another, asking God for forgiveness and for a renewed vision of what life with Christ can look like.

It may be best to break up into groups of 3-4 for this section (separating men and women). It's important to give everyone an opportunity to share if they are willing, but certainly don't force anyone to share. In your prayer time, remember that Jesus has explicitly given his followers the authority to forgive - "If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven" (John 20:23). So speak forgiveness boldly over each other.

The following questions can be used to help bring awareness of our sin. One way to do this would be to read off all of these questions and ask each person to answer one or two of them.

1. *How has your anger, fear, anxiety, or addiction shown up this week? How does that reveal what you're trusting in besides God?*
2. *How have you wasted time?*
3. *How have you felt yourself resist obeying God this week: in your mission to the lost? In your sacrificial love for community?*

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4. *In light of God's love toward you, do you need to reconcile with somebody? Are you subconsciously holding a grudge?*
5. *How have you battled sexual or intimacy temptation and how are you preparing to deal with it next week?*
6. *How has the Holy Spirit been testing and growing you this week? Did you respond in faith or in grumbling?*
7. *Is anything (school, work, technology, etc.) isolating you from important relationships?*

Spend 7-10 minutes on this question.