**1. Motivate**

What is your favorite place to hide or go to when you want to be left alone?

* the bathroom

A video introduction to the Bible study is available. To view go to <https://tinyurl.com/3x6km86m> If you have no wi-fi where you teach, it is best to download to your computer from <https://tinyurl.com/5e4e3vc9>

* the woods
* a deserted beach
* my office with the door locked
* the stacks in the library
* the church sanctuary during the middle of the week
* my workshop
* a table in the back corner of a restaurant
* a drive on a country road

**2. Transition**

We might want to get away from people, but we want to stay close to God.

* Today we look at Daniel’s prayer of confession.
* Confession and repentance keep us close to God.

**3. Bible Study**

3.1 Confession Is Necessary

Listen for Daniel’s attitude.

Daniel 9:3-6 (NIV) So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes. 4 I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed: "O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with all who love him and obey his commands, 5 we have sinned and done wrong. We have been wicked and have rebelled; we have turned away from your commands and laws. 6 We have not listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes and our fathers, and to all the people of the land.

What words describe Daniel’s attitude in prayer?

* confession
* pleading
* prayer and petition
* fasting
* sackcloth and ashes

What do those words say about what the attitude should be of any petitioner who comes before the Lord?

* we see and admit the contrast between God’s righteousness and our sinfulness
* we don’t deserve God’s blessings
* we need to confess and repent
* we are totally dependent on God’s mercy and grace
* Mercy – God withholds the response we really deserve
* Grace – God gives us blessings we do *not* deserve

What is the significance of fasting, sackcloth, and ashes?

* set aside everything else (food, normal activities) for the purpose of focusing on God
* demonstrate one’s humiliation before both God and man
* display sorrow for spiritual failure
* physical display of confession – “I am not righteous, I don’t normal blessings”

Where did Daniel get his understanding and motivation for his prayer?

* the scriptures
* for him, the writings of the prophets

What words and phrases did Daniel use to describe the characteristics of God?

* He is *Lord* (note the lower case letters, this is not the name Jehovah)
* great
* awesome
* keeps His covenant of love with those who love and obey Him

Why do you think Daniel would begin his prayer with these words?

* wanted to praise God, worship Him
* he was declaring his submission to God
* admitting that he and his people’s did not deserve God's help
* acknowledgement that God is who He is in contrast to who we are
* if God helped them it would be only because of God's mercy and grace, not because of anything His people had done to earn God's blessing

How does our attitude toward God affect our belief that He will answer prayer?

* we focus on God, not on our merits nor on our deservedness
* it helps our faith to review or rehearse God's attributes, God's character
* we can claim His promises
* when we remember God's power, authority, and love we are encouraged to believe Him for great things

3.2 Confession Draws Focus to God

Listen for a contrast between good and bad.

Daniel 9:7-10 (NIV) "Lord, you are righteous, but this day we are covered with shame--the men of Judah and people of Jerusalem and all Israel, both near and far, in all the countries where you have scattered us because of our unfaithfulness to you. 8 O LORD, we and our kings, our princes and our fathers are covered with shame because we have sinned against you. 9 The Lord our God is merciful and forgiving, even though we have rebelled against him; 10 we have not obeyed the LORD our God or kept the laws he gave us through his servants the prophets.

What characteristics of the people do you see in contrast to God's character? You may also see some additional characteristics of God.

Additional characteristics of God?

* merciful
* forgiving
* mighty
* enduring name
* does righteous acts
* we have sinned and done wrong
* we have been wicked, rebelled
* turned away from commands and laws
* not listened to prophets
* we are covered with shame
* we have not obeyed

Why is it hard to say, “I have sinned”?

* we know that sin deserves punishment, don’t want to leave ourselves open to that
* we like to think of ourselves as “good” when we really aren’t
* we like to rate our goodness/badness by contrasting ourselves to someone worse than us
* we don’t like an absolute rating (“sinful” vs. “righteous”) – we prefer a “not so bad” or a “pretty good”

We see no blaming, no making excuses – why is it important to take responsibility for our lives and admit we are wrong?

* because that is reality – *I am the sinner* … not someone else
* it is a tendency of our culture to find someone or something else to blame – this is a lie perpetrated by Satan
* until we confess our sin (agree with God that it is sin), we cannot experience God's forgiveness

What kinds of sins do we struggle with that we need to confess to God?

* refusing or negligence to tithe
* substance abuse (tobacco, alcohol, casseroles, fancy desserts, etc.)
* anger, bitterness, hatefulness
* lack of concern for the lost around us
* neglecting God's Word, lack of reverence for God
* dabbling with pornography, bad choice of entertainment (movies, TV, magazines)
* materialism – our stuff is more important to us than God

⇒ When we approach God in prayer we would do well to begin as Daniel did

adoration of God

confession of our own faults

⇒ We need to focus on who God is … not launch right into our list of “gimme’s”

3.3 Trust in God’s Mercy and Grace

Listen for Daniel’s prayer requests.

Daniel 9:17-19 (NIV) "Now, our God, hear the prayers and petitions of your servant. For your sake, O Lord, look with favor on your desolate sanctuary. 18 Give ear, O God, and hear; open your eyes and see the desolation of the city that bears your Name. We do not make requests of you because we are righteous, but because of your great mercy. 19 O Lord, listen! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, hear and act! For your sake, O my God, do not delay, because your city and your people bear your Name."

As Daniel closed his prayer, what are various appeals he made to the Lord?

* hear my prayers give ear, hear, listen
* look with favor on your desolate sanctuary
* open your eyes
* see the desolation of the city that bears your Name
* because of your great mercy (don’t give us what we deserve)
* forgive, hear, act
* don’t delay

According to Daniel, for whose sake was he raising this prayer?

* for the sake of God
* for the sake of His Name and reputation
* not for Daniel’s own sake

What's the relationship between trust, confession, and forgiveness?

* similar to steps of our salvation
* confession – I agree with God that I have sinned – as Daniel was declaring
* repentance – turn away from my sins
* trust/faith – turn to God, believing His promise of forgiveness, His work of redemption

How does the truths of Gods mercy and grace help us to pray for ourselves, our families, our nation?

* we know we deserve the opposite of what we are asking for
* yet the Bible tells us that God is merciful – *full of mercy*
* based on Jesus substitutionary death, we will not receive the punishment we deserve … Jesus took it upon Himself

⇒ Thus we have every reason to believe that God wants to hear and answer our prayers.

Consider the sequence we see in Daniel’s prayer

* adoration, confession
* and only then do we see requests, petitions

⇒ We must come before God in prayer focusing on *who He is* … not on what we want!

Use the last page as a handout so your learners can take home the application points of this week’s lesson.

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Rejoice.

* As you spend time with God this week, compile a written list of attributes that show Him to be great and awe inspiring.
* Add to your list daily.
* Then affirm these attributes to Him in prayer.
* Let this be your offering of praise.

Repent.

* Ask God to show you where sin has crept into your life, where you have “fallen short” of what you ought to be or do.
* Confess those to Him and ask for His forgiveness.

Restore.

* If there are areas in which your sin has negatively affected your relationship with others, confess those sins to them and ask for their forgiveness.
* Explain that God is at work in you, and as a result, you want to make things right between you.

Crossword Puzzle  
Words and Clues taken from Daniel 9:3 – 10, 17 – 19 (NIV)

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Peace, dudes … for help and other groovy stuff go to <https://tinyurl.com/5e4e3vc9>

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