

**God in My Everything**  
Daniel 6  
Small Group Discussion

**Opening question:**

- Perhaps the greatest compliment that you could receive would be for someone to look at you and say to themselves, “The only way I can explain her is by saying the Spirit of the Living God must live inside her.” Or someone looks at a man and says, “The only way I can explain this guy is to say that the Spirit of the divine, living Creator must live in this guy.” **Who do you know that has developed such a personal connection with God that it seems to shine through in everything they do and say?**

**Note to leaders:** This week’s material corresponds to the following portions of Ken’s Shigematsu’s book, *God in my Everything*: **front matter and chapters 1-2**. If your group is working through the book, you can discuss these chapters in conjunction with the material below.

**TAKE TURNS READING THE FOLLOWING BACKGROUND AND SCRIPTURE:**

Daniel is one of the first people in Scripture that we know of that lived by an intentional rhythm... When Daniel was an adolescent, his homeland of Judah was besieged by King Nebuchadnezzar’s Babylonian army. Daniel’s people fell in battle. Daniel and a number of his talented contemporaries were deported to Babylon and enrolled in a leadership development Institute as emerging leaders in Babylonia. Much later a new king, Darius, came into power in Babylonia. He picked 120 top leaders (satraps) and 3 administrators to oversee them, one of whom was Daniel. Scripture says,

Now Daniel so distinguished himself among the administrators and the satraps by his exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom. At this, the administrators and the satraps tried to find grounds for charges against Daniel in his conduct of government affairs, but they were unable to do so. They could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent. (6:3-4)

These 120 leaders and 2 administrators became jealous and devised a plan. They knew Daniel prayed daily. So, some of their representatives went to Darius and got him to make a decree that no one could pray to anyone but him, upon penalty of death. Daniel’s response?

Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, *just as he had done before*. (6:10, emphasis added)

We know how the story ends. For breaking the new law, Daniel is thrown into a lion’s den overnight, but God saves him. As a result, the king then makes a new decree that all the land “must fear and reverence the God of Daniel. For he is the living God and he endures forever; his kingdom will not be destroyed, his dominion will never end.” (6:26)

1. Related to our theme of Sept. 13, Daniel was faced with an “impossible task.” If he prayed to anyone but Darius, he would be thrown into a den of lions.

- a. How did Daniel respond? What do you learn from Daniel's approach (think of the elements of it: a) window open, b) 3x per day, c) on his knees, d) gave thanks to God, and e) just as he had done before). *It seems that this spiritual rhythm was the source of Daniel's ability to remain faithful to God as everything around him was seeking to "re-program" him spiritually.*
- b. What practices are in your life now that connect you to Jesus, and which would give you the strength to obey God instead of human rulers, as in Daniel's situation?

## 2. Let's review some questions from Ken's sermon, "God in My Everything"

- a. What do **you** think of the image of a trellis (a bunch of wood slats tied together that support the growth and weight of grape vines)?
- b. What do you think about the image of sailing and its relationship to our spiritual life? (For example, in thinking of this image, what does the boat, the sail, the wind, the water, the sun, and moving forward through the water represent in your spiritual life?)
- c. How do certain practices create space for us to enjoy company with Jesus?
- d. How do certain practices give us the strength to stand up under impossible challenges as Daniel did?
- e. Ken says, "God is with us all the time, and so every part of our day could be considered a period of prayer. We are just not aware of that most of the time. A simple rhythm can make us more aware of God throughout our day." **A daily time set aside for prayer is important, but also how well do you bring God with you throughout your day? Describe.**
- f. Ken stated, "In the same way, I don't see my trellis, a rhythm that supports my friendship with Jesus as something I ought to do, but a gift that exposes me, as sailing does, to the sunshine and the wind of God's Spirit. It is life-giving. It helps to produce more love, joy and peace in me which I desperately need." **Are your ways of connecting with God (your trellis) more of a gift or duty right now? Explain.**
- g. Ken also states, "If your trellis seems to feel heavy and burdensome you probably have a rhythm that has been created by you, not by the Holy Spirit." **How do you think you could your ways of connecting with God so it is more of a gift, more of something you look forward to before all else during your day?**
- h. **As you think about the various practices that Ken referenced as part of a rule/rhythm of life, what is one area that you think would make a helpful addition to your life?**

### Share and Pray

- Among our usual prayer requests, let's pray for God's leading as we develop a "trellis," a rhythm of practices such as the Sabbath, exercise, prayer, Bible reading, small group community, etc.