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DANIEL 9:4-19

CONFESSIONS



THIS WEEK'S focus

Confessing something we have done wrong is never fun. We have all had to come clean about a trick we pulled on a sibling or a rule we broke without our parents knowing. Sometimes we have to be honest about more serious indiscretions—cheating on a test, stealing something from a store, or lying to someone we love. Oftentimes, even for all the ways that we fell short, we are met with grace and forgiveness that we don't deserve. Daniel knew this to be true of God as he pleaded for God's forgiveness and mercy toward the exiled Israelites. Even when we are faithless, God is faithful.



CENTRAL truth

Even when we are faithless, God is faithful.

DAILY devotions

MEMORIZE DANIEL 9:9

7 ARROWS FOR BIBLE READING



What does this passage say?



What does this passage tell us about God?



What did this passage mean to its original audience?



How does this passage change the way I relate to people?



What does this passage tell us about man?



How does this passage prompt me to pray?



What does this passage demand of me?

day 1

DANIEL 9:4-6

DWELL

Confession, repentance, and lament are important spiritual practices. Here we see Daniel begin a prayer of confession and lament on behalf of the Israelites. The years God had ordained for the period of Babylonian exile would be soon coming to an end—had Israel learned its lesson? Daniel had been God’s spokesman to the people, but now he spoke to God on behalf of his fellow Israelites. He confessed that they had not been faithful to God, and that they had not listened to the prophets God had sent to warn them. God knew all this already, of course—confession isn’t about telling God something He doesn’t already know, but acknowledging our wrongs and our desire to change.

← **Why did Daniel need to confess Israel’s sin when he himself had been faithful to God?**

↪ **How could you regularly include confession, repentance, and lament in your own walk with God?**

MEMORIZE

Use a phone or computer to record yourself reading Daniel 9:9 aloud. Listen to this recording throughout the week.

PRAY

Say a prayer of confession and lament for the times you have not been faithful to Him.

day 2

DANIEL

9:7-14

DWELL

Daniel emphasized how wide the gap was between the wicked rebelliousness of Israel and the perfect righteousness of God. His lament wasn't for the judgment that God sent to them—he knew that God's judgments are always just and deserved. After all, they had the words of the Law and the prophets to warn them. They should not have been surprised. No, what Daniel lamented was the sinful disobedience of Israel that had made the judgments necessary. God had shown them favor throughout their history, but they had repaid this love with disloyalty. Even today, many of us say we trust in God, then act in ways that demonstrate the exact opposite.

↑ Why did Daniel emphasize just how disobedient Israel had been and how good God was in contrast?

↓ If God already knows all things, why is it important for you to confess your sin to Him?

MEMORIZE

Write Daniel 9:9 on a note card and place it in a folder or binder where you will see it frequently. Read it to yourself each time you see it this week.

PRAY

Spend some time praising God for His perfect righteousness, justice, and mercy.

day 3

DANIEL

9:15-19

DWELL

↻ What reasons did Daniel give for God to forgive His people? Did he think Israel deserved this forgiveness?

➔ How do your actions and God's work in your life all point to His character and reputation? How could this influence the way you live?

Daniel reminded God of the time when He brought His people out of Egypt, and contrasted this with how faithless the people had been since then. However, he also knew that God is faithful and good, and with words of praise he asked God to turn away His anger and restore Israel for the sake of His name. It wasn't just the people's future that was at stake—it was God's very reputation among the nations. If He left the Israelites in exile forever, He would get a reputation for being a cruel and unjust God. Showing mercy to His people would show the nations that He still cared for His chosen people and would treat them with mercy.

MEMORIZE

Break Daniel 9:9 into 3–5 smaller parts and try to recite a different part to yourself from memory throughout each day.

PRAY

Ask God to guide you with the wisdom to follow Him faithfully as you go about your days

day 4

MATTHEW 3:4-9

DWELL

People were going to John the Baptist to be baptized, confessing and repenting and declaring their faith in God. But then some Sadducees and Pharisees showed up. John knew they weren't there to genuinely confess or support John's ministry. They were arrogantly trusting in their lineage as descendants of Abraham to protect them from God's judgment. They saw themselves as righteous, but John knew their appearance there was just for show. He challenged them to produce fruit—that is, results and behaviors—that showed they were truly repentant. He knew that their lives were characterized by hypocrisy rather than genuine faith.



Why was it not enough that the Pharisees and Sadducees were descendants of Abraham?



How can Christian community help you each to live faithfully and avoid hypocrisy?

MEMORIZE

Draw Daniel 9:9 on a piece of paper using colored pencils or markers, using a different color for the most important words and phrases. Hang it in your room or locker.

PRAY

Ask God to bless your church or study group with unity and faith that produces good fruit.

day 5

MATTHEW 3:10-12

DWELL

John continued to speak forcefully in the hearing of all who were present. By saying that the axe was at the root of the tree, he was adding a sense of urgency to his message—*don't wait!* God knew whose faith was genuine and whose wasn't, and He would judge them all by the quality of the actions and attitudes that their faith produced. John wasn't saying that we earn salvation by good works; he was saying that we demonstrate the sincerity of our faith by how much that faith changes our hearts and our behaviors. Jesus was coming, and His coming would change everything.



How did John's metaphors of the trees and the threshing floor relate to the Pharisees' and Sadducees' hypocrisy?



How can you be sure that your faith is producing good fruit? What part does the Holy Spirit play?

MEMORIZE

Practice reciting Daniel 9:9 aloud from memory with a friend or family member. They can prompt you with the next word if you need help remembering.

PRAY

Thank God that His desire is for His people to have changed hearts, not simply blind obedience.