

Community Group Guide

No Matter What – Part 2

The Gathering

Paul Jenkins

June 3, 2012

Daniel 6

Community Groups are the primary vehicle for discipleship at The Gathering. It is through the interaction that takes place in each of these groups around our area that will enable people to begin to move from being drawn to God to a life that is being deepened by God. Use it as a resource to lead your group in discovering, owning, and applying the truths of God's Word. There may be aspects you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on an aspect of their relationship with God. Your role is to help facilitate this encounter with God in His Word through His Body, not just to complete the guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid group task list.

HEY!

Begin your group time by engaging in relational conversations and prayer that may include the following elements:

Greet each other—a simple, brief time to greet one another (especially new friends), enjoy refreshments, and make announcements.

Week in review—a time to review the truths discussed last week and report on how members have had success or frustrations in applying those truths during the week. The leader will want to provide encouragement and shepherding during this time. Periodically, the leader will also want to review the gospel and allow members to share reports about opportunities they've had to share the gospel. Occasionally, the leader will want to revisit the vision for the group and discuss ways to accomplish that vision better.

Opening prayer—a time of general prayer with the whole group praying for struggles regarding the application of truths, for those with whom the group is sharing the gospel, and for understanding of today's truths.

SAY!

Use the following summary and questions to review this week's message and reflect on its implications in our lives:

Message Summary

Week 2 in our "No Matter What" series dealt with the story of Daniel and the stand he took that landed him in a den of lions. We know that when we follow Jesus He will lead us to the right places (like we learned in Week 1), but sometimes it means we still pass through hard places, and in those moments we've got to fight the temptation to pull the blinds and try to ride out the storm. But Daniel's life revealed that **being full of the right power frees us from the fear of going public.**

1. **Daniel was full of the right power...** Daniel 6:3 is a packed verse: it reveals that Daniel was "distinguished" from the others around him, and it goes on to say that what set him apart was the extraordinary spirit in him. Not surprisingly, we find that being distinguished made him a target for promotion by one and persecution by many. Often, being full of the Holy Spirit places us in areas of persecution just like Daniel and we shouldn't be surprised when that happens (John 15:18-20).
2. **Daniel wasn't afraid to go public...** When so many of us would be tempted to withdraw, Daniel's response to persecution was exactly the opposite. The rest of Daniel 6 goes on to show a man who not only made sure he didn't deviate from his daily spiritual disciplines, but also went a step further: he intentionally made sure his windows remained open as he prayed. Both the king and God saw his consistency, and it set the stage for his deliverance from the den of lions and also for the Lord to be praised by the very one who had persecuted Daniel.

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Discuss

Use the following questions to review and apply the points learned in the message.

- Pastor Paul talked about Daniel having a spirit of excellence and how we have that same spirit – the Holy Spirit – in us. How should that challenge us to make excellence a goal in everything we do? Why does excellence matter? (Read Colossians 3:17 for more insight)
- Daniel experienced persecution and responded by being more public about his faith. How do you respond to persecution, and more specifically, unjust persecution like Daniel experienced?
- Read Matthew 28:18-20, Matthew 5:15, and Acts 1:8. Discuss how these passages challenge the widely accepted view that faith is to be private.
- How do you react to the truth in these Scriptures about going public with our faith? Does being more open about your faith excite you or scare you?
- What does going public look like in the life of an introverted (shy) person?
- Who is one person that you could invite to The Gathering this week?
- Take a moment to pray for the people that your group just named.

PRAY!

Encourage your group to break out into smaller, same-gender groups where they will respond to the truths of the message. These groups will share with one another based on the following questions and then close in prayer:

- What are some of the main truths that God wants you to know from the message?
- According to the truths from the message, what does God want you to desire/value?
- How do your desires/values need to change to align with His desires/values?
- What actions does God want you to take according to the truths of this message?
- What is an action that you can start to implement today or tomorrow?

Close this time by praying for each other, specifically for strength in the application of these truths and for the lost people with whom you are seeking to share the gospel.