

OCTOBER 17/18, 2020
LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
DISTANCE LEARNING | InteGRITY
DANIEL 6
FALL QUARTER WEEK 6 of 12

EFCC's definition of a disciple: Someone who is learning to live in the way of Jesus with the heart of Jesus.

EFCC's discipleship values: Pursuit, Obedience, Journey, Wholeness, Togetherness, Mission.

EFCC's discipleship model: being WITH (upward focus), becoming LIKE (inward focus), doing As (outward focus).

EFCC's discipleship methodology: focus on what we need to learn, what we need to practice and who we need to be in relationship with.

As I thought and prayed about which value seems most prevalent in this text, the one that stands out the most to me is *wholeness*. It presents itself quite obviously in the life of Daniel, don't you think. As Ryan taught us, Daniel has integrity, and integrity is all about wholeness. (Definition number two from Oxford is "the state of being whole and undivided.")

As we look at where this value of *wholeness* fits in the Discipleship Model, it is *becoming LIKE* Jesus for obvious reasons. So this week we are going to discuss integrity and learn from Daniel about how to continue growing in integrity, even as we live in the integrity we now possess. And we'll discuss some practices that can help us along the way.

But first, another random question!

Engaging with Each Other

1. What's your weirdest habit?

So I've been told that one of them is that I like to eat a Reese's Peanut Butter Cup each night before I go to sleep. As I'm winding down my day, I'll relax and watch some TV and enjoy those two pieces of deliciousness that come wrapped in the orange plastic! But I don't always have them in stock because I only buy them if they're on sale at the grocery store. Of course, when they are on sale, I buy like a ba-jillion in order to stock up. One thing I've started doing lately is cutting them up and putting them in vanilla yogurt. Hey, who needs Menchie's!

What's yours?

Engaging with the Scriptures (Read the passage here, if you want to.)

- 2. Pastor Ryan identified three things Daniel did which can help us develop the grit that leads to integrity. First, what are they? Second, discuss how each one helped Daniel and how each one can help you. Third, share about which of the three seemed to land most significantly on you and talk a little about why that is.**

The three things Daniel does which help him develop the grit needed for integrity are:

- a. He expects opposition (v. 7).
- b. He develops practices ahead of time (vv. 10-11).
- c. He engages/faces his trials (vv. 16-17).

Now we want to discuss and learn from each other how doing “a,” “b,” and “c” would have helped Daniel and can help us.

For HE EXPECTS OPPOSITION, here are some additional questions to consider asking -

- How does expecting opposition help Daniel develop integrity, and how does it help us?
- How might unexpected opposition threaten a person’s integrity?
- Here are some thoughts from Ryan’s teaching notes.
 - If we are going to develop grit that leads to integrity, we must expect opposition. There were people who wanted to take Daniel down because of the way he lived. They might have been jealous of his upcoming promotion. They might have been frustrated that he cost them money. They might have looked down on him because of his ethnicity (as v. 13 suggests). Faithfulness to God may cost us the favor of people.
 - What if we assumed that we would face opposition too?
 - Matthew 10.16, “16 “Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves.” (NASB)
 - If you’re living faithfully, you’ll face adversity.
- In what ways is God allowing your integrity to be tested?
- In what ways is God growing your integrity?
- What is the most important thing you learn about integrity from this point that we are to expect opposition.

For HE DEVELOPS PRACTICES AHEAD OF TIME, here are some additional questions to consider asking -

- How does developing practices ahead of time help Daniel develop integrity, and how does it help us?
 - I think of Jesus’ words at the end of the Sermon on the Mount:
24 “Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. 26 Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. 27 The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell—and great was its fall.”
Matthew 7:24-27 (NASB)
 - The best time to develop practices is ahead of time.
 - I have a friend who used to say that the worst time to be laying a foundation is in the middle of a storm.
 - The best practice of all is a consistent obedience to the Scriptures.
- What kinds of practices do you already have built into your life to help you live with integrity? (They can pick an area of their life that they would like to share about. For instance, I have a secure folder on my phone where I keep confidential information and I

have given the password to that folder to Darica because I don't want there to be any areas of my life where I am storing information or images that I would not want her to see. She is free to grab my phone at any time and look through whatever she wants. Another example is that I always tell her where I'm going and when I expect to be home. And, I've shared my location with her on Google Maps. She can always track me down, if she ever wants to. No secrets. No deceptions.)

- Are there any new practices that you've been thinking about adding? What are they, and how will they help?
 - Does your group have any ideas about the Fixed Hour of Prayer that Ryan mentioned? Maybe some in your group do this already? If they do, they could share about it. Or maybe some would like to try it for a week and report back next week about how it went?
- Here are some thoughts from Ryan's teaching notes. You may want to spend some time on these.
 - We all have practices, we call them habits.
 - To live with integrity, we must cultivate habits intentionally. If you grab your phone first thing in the morning or scroll right before bed, that's a practice. If you eat too much or shop when you're stressed, that's a habit. The question isn't whether or not you have practices, it's whether or not those habits are creating the kind of life you long for.
 - When people think of spiritual practices, they tend to have a pattern of past experience in their mind. Try harder → Fatigue → Quit → Guilt (Source: John Orberg)
 - Daniel is showing us a better way. Growth happens through small consistent acts of obedience that build on themselves. Grit and integrity (discipleship) is developed through training, not trying.
 - Daniel has a different approach: Practice → Growth → Confidence → Freedom (adapted from Jon Tyson at Church of the City, New York)
 - Over the years, Daniel was faithful in prayer, which grew his character and confidence in God, so he had faith and freedom when the trials came.
 - Start small but be consistent - but start with a vision for the kind of person you want to become.
- What is the most important thing you learn about integrity from this point that we are to develop practices ahead of time?

For HE ENGAGES/FACES HIS TRIALS, here are some additional questions to consider asking -

- How does engaging trials help Daniel develop integrity, and how does it help us?
 - What is it about facing our trials head on that helps develop integrity in us?
 - I guess the negative version of the above question would be, "How does not engaging trials hurt our ability to develop integrity?"
- A few thoughts from Ryan's teaching notes.
 - Integrity doesn't prevent all problems, but it creates a clear pathway to walk through them faithfully.
 - "The integrity of the upright will guide them, But the crookedness of the treacherous will destroy them." Proverbs 11.3 (NASB)
 - With his integrity guiding him, Daniel knows the punishment that awaits his disobedience to the king's order. But he also knows that he has no choice but to remain faithful to God. So, he doesn't fight back, he doesn't get offended, he

doesn't get defensive, he doesn't retaliate, and he isn't a jerk. He goes to the den and entrusts God with his fate. He sticks with his convictions even when it's costly.

- What is the most important thing you learn about integrity from this point that we are to engage our trials?

Lastly, which of the three seems to land most significantly on you and why?

Here is the three-fold goal for this week - (1) For your group to have a discussion about what it is that they learn from each of the three points (which is obviously why I highlighted the questions I did) about maintaining and further developing a life of integrity. (2) To share about which of the three is most important considering where they are in life right now. (3) To pick a practice (may be something they are already doing) that will help them live and grow in integrity.

Engaging the Scriptures with Life

3. **There are three things Pastor Ryan challenged us to do with this teaching. What are they and how would you like your group to pray for you in regards to them?**

They are:

- Honestly assess your integrity.
- Rely wholly on God's grace.
- Intentionally grow spiritual practices.

It would be really nice if people would identify a practice or two that they will continue to do or start to do. Then you all can pray for them and check back next week to hear how things went. If people aren't there yet, then you can certainly pray that they would seek God's guidance for how to apply the message.

Peace,

Scott