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Prayer & Spiritual Conflict
Daniel
Daniel 10

Christians often react in one of two extreme ways to spiritual conflict: they either assume everything stems from it (and so become unhealthily preoccupied with it) or effectively ignore it. Seeing spiritual conflict in the way the Bible sees it is essential both for wise Christian living and specifically for thoughtful prayer.

GROUP DISCUSSION. My father—in-law once said to me, “People’s prayers have made a real difference.” Discuss ways in which you have experienced prayer making a real difference to people or situations.

PERSONAL REFLECTION. Try to recall a time you have felt close to God. What has been the impact of that experience?

This passage gives us a rare insight into how prayer affects what happens in the (usually invisible) arena of spiritual warfare: *Read Daniel 10.*

1. What does this passage tell you about Daniel’s character?

2. When God spoke to him, Daniel refused to eat certain foods and mourned for a period of three weeks (vv.2-3). Why do you think Daniel did this?

3. How did Daniel’s encounter with the heavenly messenger affect him?

4. What do verses 8-9, 15-17 teach us about the way God deals with us?

5. The description of the man Daniel saw in verses 5-6 is very similar to John’s description of Christ in Revelation 1:13-15; alternatively, the “man” may have been an angel. Even though Daniel had received a visit from a heavenly being before, this was still a very unusual occurrence. Why do you think God went to this length to communicate with Daniel?

6. God speaks to us because he wants us to know him and serve him. But when God speaks we don't always respond with the urgency or seriousness that Daniel did. Why might we be reluctant to respond to God?

7. We often interpret world events on a purely humanly level. But God reveals to Daniel that there is a spiritual battle going on behind the scenes for his people (vv.13, 20-21). What evidence is there in the passage about the effect of Daniels's prayer on this unseen spiritual battle?

8. Note that Daniel does not directly fight with the satanic forces referred to ("the prince of the Persian kingdom" (v.13), "the prince of Persia the prince of Greece" (v20)). How does this reassure us when we think about spiritual warfare?

9. Sometime we find it hard to see how God can be at work in world events. How does what the man (or angel) says in the passage help us to understand God's role in human history?

10. Whatever Daniel prayed about, in some mysterious ways it influenced both what happened in the spiritual realm and in history. When do you struggle over what to pray?

11. While we will not always understand what to pray for, how can we try to align our prayers with God's desires

Ask God to help you pray more and more in ways that reflect what he wants-that his will would be done and his kingdom would come

Now or Later

Decide on two or three world situations that you can pray about. Try to pray about them regularly, especially for the people at the heart of them.