TRACK FOUR

Bible Study & Small Group

A complete session for small groups, classes, and Bible studies, with leader preparation and notes. Plan on 45 to 60 minutes.

Leader Preparation

THE BIG IDEA

Daniel's faithfulness in the crisis grew out of faithfulness on ordinary days: honest work, and prayer with thanksgiving "as he did before." The living God is able to deliver, and He is worth trusting whether He rescues us from trouble or carries us through it.

> *"When Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house (now his windows were open in his room toward Jerusalem) and he kneeled on his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did before."*
>
> DANIEL 6:10, WEB

BACKGROUND

- **Setting.** Just after Babylon fell to the Medes and Persians in 539 BC. Chapter 6 follows straight on from 5:31.
- **The king.** Scripture calls him Darius the Mede. Who he was in other records is debated; see the Deep Dive track.
- **Daniel.** Taken to Babylon around 605 BC, so likely in his eighties *(an estimate; the Bible gives no age)*.
- **The law.** Daniel 6 and Esther both present a decree "of the Medes and Persians" as unchangeable (6:8, 12, 15; Esther 8:8).
- **Toward Jerusalem.** Solomon asked God to hear exiles who prayed toward the land, the city, and the temple (1 Kings 8:46-49). The temple had been destroyed in 586 BC.
- **The series.** Part One: the fiery furnace (Daniel 3). Part Two: the writing on the wall (Daniel 5). Next: *A Queen in Persia*, the first story of Esther.

SESSION PLAN

	45 MIN	60 MIN
Welcome and opener	5	8
Watch the film	10	10
Read Daniel 6:1-28	6	6
Discussion (choose 4-5)	16	24
Application and prayer	8	12

BEFORE YOU MEET

Read Daniel 6 and Daniel 3; the two chapters mirror each other. Preview the film: the narration of 6:24 is sober, and no attack is shown. Read the leader notes on page 3.

The Session

1. **Open.** What is one habit you've kept for years? What has kept it going?

2. **Watch.** Play *Daniel in the Lions' Den* (phillacolla.com/biblestories, about 10 minutes). Ask the group to notice what Daniel does, and what he doesn't do, once the law is signed.

3. **Read.** Read Daniel 6:1-28 aloud together. Verse 24 reports the king's punishment of the accusers; it doesn't say God commanded it.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What image or moment from the film stayed with you?

2. Daniel's rivals "could find no occasion or fault, because he was faithful" (6:4). What does that kind of faithfulness look like at work today?

3. The only charge they could bring concerned "the law of his God" (6:5). What does it say about Daniel that his faith, not a failure, was the target?

4. Look closely at 6:10. What did Daniel do, and what didn't he do? Why does the phrase "as he did before" matter?

5. Daniel gave thanks under a death sentence (6:10). Read Philippians 4:6. How is thanksgiving possible in a crisis?

6. King Darius ruled over 120 local governors (6:1), yet he was bound by his own decree (6:14-15). What does this show about human power compared with God's?

7. Daniel says the lions did not hurt him "because innocence was found in me before him" (6:22), and the narrator adds that no harm was found on him "because he had trusted in his God." (6:23) How do integrity and trust fit together?

8. Darius ends by praising "the living God" whose kingdom "will not be destroyed" (6:26). Read Hebrews 11:32-38. How do these passages help us trust God whether He rescues us from trouble or carries us through it?

APPLICATION

- **Keep your windows open.** Choose set times this week to pray and give thanks, and keep them, not to impress anyone, but to stay close to God.
- **Work faithfully.** Do your ordinary work this week honestly and well, not out of fear of being checked, but "as for the Lord and not for men..." (Colossians 3:23).
- **Give thanks first.** Before you bring your requests to God this week, name one thing you are thankful for.

PRAYER

Pray together through Philippians 4:6: bring your worries to God with thanksgiving. Close by thanking Him that He is the living God, "steadfast forever" (Daniel 6:26), and that in Jesus nothing can separate us from His love (Romans 8:38-39).

Leader Notes on the Questions

Q2, FAITHFUL AT WORK. The investigation was about Daniel's conduct "as touching the kingdom" (6:4), his work for the state. Even in an earlier reign Daniel did "the king's business" (8:27). His integrity was public before his faith was tested.

Q4, WHAT HE DID AND DIDN'T DO. He didn't change his practice, hide, protest, or insult the king. The open windows were already his custom, and the text stresses continuity. Interpreters differ on whether to read 6:10 as a deliberate public witness or simply as unchanged faithfulness. See the Deep Dive track.

Q6, A LAW THAT COULDN'T CHANGE. Compare Esther 1:19 and 8:8, where a Persian king's sealed decree could not be reversed. Darius "set his heart on Daniel to deliver him" (6:14), but his own word bound him. God's word is unchanging too, but He is never trapped by it: He is faithful and merciful at once.

Q7, INNOCENCE AND TRUST. The word for Daniel's being "faithful" in 6:4 and the word for his having "trusted" in his God in 6:23 come from the same Aramaic root (see the Deep Dive key words). The man men could trust was the man who trusted God.

Q8, RESCUE AND PROMISE. Hebrews 11:33 recalls those who "stopped the mouths of lions", but 11:35-38 recalls faithful people who were not delivered. Guard against promising that faith always brings escape. The promise is God's presence and final resurrection.

IF SOMEONE ASKS ABOUT 6:24. The text reports the king's command to cast in the accusers with their wives and children. It doesn't say God commanded or approved it, and God's law forbade punishing children for their parents' sins (Deuteronomy 24:16). Answer honestly and briefly. Don't let the group dwell on graphic details or speculate; gently bring the focus back to God's rescue of Daniel and what the text actually teaches.