

Series - Living for God

Date/s - 1 Jan 2017

Topic - Resolving To Honour God (Daniel 1:1-21)

Speaker/s - Pastor Lionel Goh

Welcome [15 min]

You may want to look up the following websites for *icebreakers* suitable for your cell.

www.thesource4ym.com/games/

www.christianitytoday.com/smallgroups/articles/icebreakersbeyond.html < go to LEAD, click on ICEBREAKERS >

Worship [15 min]

You may select songs like 'You'll come' , 'Jesus The Same' and 'I will Love' (all from Hillsong)

Spiritual Objectives

At the end of the cell discussion, cell members will:

1. Be intentional about growing closer to God and to one another
2. Choose to honour God in their lifestyle choices

Word [45 min]

Pastor began by giving two major goals for 2017. They are 1) growing closer to God and 2) growing closer to one another.

In the Gallup Poll on US Evangelical Christians some years back, there were 75% of Christians who believed in the basic doctrines of their faith, 74% believed that God was actively involved in their lives and 67% desired Jesus to be first in their lives. However, only 49% polled thought the Bible was the decisive authority in daily living, 42% were willing to take an unpopular stand for their faith, 35% had inner contentment when things went wrong and only 28% studied the Bible regularly for life's direction. Additionally, only 22% were only able to control their tongues in their speeches.

In our RiverLife survey done in 2016, it revealed the following results: 63% of the youth never read the Bible with parents, 50% never pray with their parents. 91% recognized that the Bible provides moral direction. For adults, only 49% read the bible and 22% never pray with their spouses. 83% indicated that premarital sex is unacceptable, 30% of youth would go on holiday alone with their girlfriend or boyfriend while for single adults, it is 38%. 83% recognized that pornography is bad with 73%, having viewed it whilst 19% struggle with it.

After giving this report, Pastor gave the historical context of Daniel. In 605 BC, Daniel and friends were captured by the Babylonians after the first and second sieges respectively in 597 BC and 587 BC. The temple was looted and total deportation was in 587 BC. King Nebuchadnezzar was a strong leader who subdued nations by capturing the sons of noble or royal blood and kept them as hostage whilst brainwashing them so they will serve the Babylonian government. These sons were young, handsome, wise and abled and they received Babylonian education. Their names were changed and they lived a beholden lifestyle. However, in the midst of this, Daniel resolved not to defile himself as he was well taught by his parents, having God's Word to guide him (Leviticus 11:42-44). The law was to keep God's people separate and holy. If you were Daniel, given all these things, will you compromise? Daniel ran the risk of being punished but he stood up for what he believed in. God honoured Daniel by granting him favour with Ashpenaz who was the chief of eunuchs. Daniel was well respected by people.

In closing, Pastor Lionel mentioned that God desires His people to always honour Him (Malachi 1:6-14). We should give our best time to the Lord and not be half-hearted and lukewarm. Do we have fear and reverence for God? If we have fear of men, how can we honour Him? We should give Him our very best and obey His Word in every situation – also in our tithes and offerings (Malachi 1:11 and 3:6-12). God promises to honour and reward those who honour Him (1 Samuel 2:30). Pastor gave the example of Eric Liddell. A challenge was given to the congregation to live a life like Liddell by consecrating our lives and surrendering it totally to God in all aspects.

Discussion Questions

- 1. What are the two major goals that the Pastor shared for 2017? How are these two goals related to each other?** [15 min]

Leader's Notes: *This is a recap question to lead people into the discussion proper. In addressing these goals, pastor related this to the book of Daniel in chapter 1. First, it begins with our relationship with God. Daniel feared God more than man. He had reverence of who God is. His decisions were made based on his convictions and resolve. His lifestyle reflected his belief and faith in God. Second, he was with his three friends. Although we wished more was said about his friends, one thing we know about them was that they were there with Daniel in the lion's den. Daniel was not alone whilst facing the challenges. We should be supporting one another in our faith and exhort one another in love and good deeds (Hebrews 10:23-24). In the midst of facing these challenges, God honoured and blessed him with favour from men in their offices and through them (Ashpenaz and King Nebuchadnezzar – Daniel 2:47-49), they encountered God and His power.*

- 2. Daniel faced many challenges that went against his beliefs and lifestyle when he was in Babylon. What would you consider are challenges you face at your work place or in your life?** [10 min]

Leader's Notes: *This is a relate/reflect question. Jesus says we live in this world but we are not of it. What does that exactly mean? 1 John 5:18-21 is about the things we must know about the world and John 17 is about the prayer of Jesus for us who are His disciples. In fact, there are many warnings about the world we live in right now. Have we taken these warnings seriously? Do we allow our pragmatism to influence our obedience thinking that some instructions given in the Bible are just not do-able? How have we lived life with a resolve for God?*

- 3. According to the RiverLife survey, results show reading the Bible and praying with spouse or even as a family are not satisfactory. And for singles who are dating, it seems acceptable for them to go on a holiday together.** [10 min each]
 - a. What could be possible reasons contributing to such lifestyle choices?**

b. What is one step forward or change to make so that we can be a God-honouring 24x7 Christian?

Leader's Notes: *This is a response question. Get cell members to share about their opinions and struggles. Perhaps, one way we can encourage one another is by making suggestions together and working through them as a cell. For example, our Riverside Resource provides many family devotional materials we can use. Also, for families with older children, you can encourage families to attend the equipping courses in church or elsewhere for a start.*

Works [10 min]

Let's pray:

1. Every RiverLifer will resolve to always honour God & be intentional about growing closer to God & His people.

Announcements**1. Getting God's Manna**

Sat, 7 Jan | 2.30pm – 5.30pm | Victory Chapel

This course aims to get you started on the essentials of learning God's Word inductively and be familiar with Observation, Interpretation & Application (OIA). It presents a systematic approach of learning God's Truth and prepares you for an experience with the Holy Spirit through the Word.

2. Precept Bible Study Classes (Tuesdays, 8pm | Victory Chapel)*40 Minute Bible Study* (17 Jan, 24 Jan, 7 Feb, 14 Feb, 21 Feb & 28 Feb)

Jesus: Understanding His Death And Resurrection (A Study on Mark 14-16)

Precept Upon Precept (For those who have attended Precept Bible Study)

17 Jan (Orientation), 24 Jan, 14 Feb & 28 Feb

Titus: Developing Character & Integrity In The Midst Of A Society Which Has Lost Respect For God

Register at the Information Counter or online at www.riverlife.org.sg by Sun, 15 Jan. For more information, please contact Karen Koh at 65114142, or email her at karenkoh@riverlife.org.sg.

3. Water Baptism Class

Sat, 4 Feb | 9.30am-3.30pm | Faith Chapel

Register at the Information Counter by Sun, 29 Jan. For enquiries, please contact Clara Tan at 65114160 or email her at claratan@riverlife.org.sg. Our next baptism service will be on Sun, 12 Mar.