

A MAN OF HIGH ESTEEM

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Daniel 9:20-23, 10:10-11, 10:18-19

1. Our usefulness to God depends on a number of things, one of which is our reputation.
2. Our reputation may differ depending on how consistent our life is or on who you ask.
3. For instance, how we are viewed at church may differ from how we are viewed at home, at work, at play, or in heaven.

NOTE: Over the years I have learned that a person's reputation can be quite different depending on where they are, who they are with, and what they are doing.

4. How we are viewed by others should be of concern to us because it is of concern to God.

- a. When it came time to select men to serve the early church the church was told to, "select...seven men of good reputation." Acts 6:3
- b. God is also concerned with how we are viewed by the world according to 1 Peter 2:11-12.

Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul. 12 Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation.

5. Our reputation on earth is important, but, in the end, what really matters is not what men think about us but what God knows about us.

6. When all is said and done man's approval will mean nothing when we stand before God because man's evaluation can be wrong.

7. According to 1 Corinthians 4:1-5 Paul did not even trust his own self-evaluation.

Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. 2 In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy. 3 But to me it is a very small thing that I may be examined by you, or by any human court; in fact, I do not even examine myself. 4 For I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted; but the one who examines me is the Lord. 5 Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God.

8. There is nothing that can be known about us that God does not know.

- a. Proverbs 15:3

The eyes of the LORD are in every place, watching the evil and the good.

- b. 1 Sam 16:6-7

When they entered, he looked at Eliab and thought, "Surely the Lord's anointed is before Him." 7 But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."

9. The question is what do the eyes of the Lord see when they examine our lives and our hearts? 2 Chron 16:9

For the eyes of the LORD move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His.

10. When the eyes of the Lord examined Daniel's heart and life God liked what He saw.
 - a. Gabriel was sent to Daniel from heaven in answer to Daniel's prayer for understanding of the vision recorded in chapter 8.
 - b. Gabriel told Daniel, "You are highly esteemed (greatly loved, desirable, precious)." 9:23
 - c. In chapter 10:11 a great angelic being touched Daniel and said, "O Daniel, man of high esteem (greatly beloved)."
 - d. Again in chapter 10:19 the same angel touched and strengthened Daniel and said, "O man of high esteem, do not be afraid. Peace be with you; take courage and be courageous!"
11. What are some of the reasons why Daniel was greatly beloved or highly esteemed in heaven?

I. Daniel was unwavering in his devotion to God.

- A. Daniel was faithful to God in the midst of unfaithful people.
NOTE: He was exiled to Babylon because the Jews were experiencing God's judgment.
- B. Daniel was faithful to God in the midst of pagan people. 1:8
- C. When presented with an opportunity that would require him to ignore Jewish dietary laws he, "made up his mind (purposed in his heart) that he would not defile himself." 1:8
- D. Daniel possessed virtue or moral excellence. 2 Peter 1:5
"Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence (virtue)."
- E. He manifested the spiritual quality of self-control. Galatians 5:22-23
- F. Others knew that he was devoted to God.
 1. His enemies tried to use his devotion against him. Dan 6:1-5
It seemed good to Darius to appoint 120 satraps over the kingdom, that they would be in charge of the whole kingdom, 2 and over them three commissioners (of whom Daniel was one), that these satraps might be accountable to them, and that the king might not suffer loss. 3 Then this Daniel began distinguishing himself among the commissioners and satraps because he possessed an extraordinary spirit, and the king planned to appoint him over the entire kingdom. 4 Then the commissioners and satraps began trying to find a ground of accusation against Daniel in regard to government affairs; but they could find no ground of accusation or evidence of corruption, inasmuch as he was faithful, and no negligence or corruption was to be found in him. 5 Then these men said, "We will not find any ground of accusation against this Daniel unless we find it against him with regard to the law of his God."
 2. His friends knew of his devotion.
 - a. Dan 6:16
Then the king gave orders, and Daniel was brought in and cast into the lions' den. The king spoke and said to Daniel, "Your God whom you constantly serve will Himself deliver you."

b. Dan 6:19-21

Then the king arose at dawn, at the break of day, and went in haste to the lions' den. 20 When he had come near the den to Daniel, he cried out with a troubled voice. The king spoke and said to Daniel, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, **whom you constantly serve**, been able to deliver you from the lions?"

II. Daniel was unwavering in his confidence in God.

A. Daniel's devotion was based on God's faithfulness and power.

B. Daniel knew that those who were faithful to God could count on God's faithfulness.

NOTE: "Now God granted Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the officials that he might not defile himself." 1:9

1. Dan 1:11-13

But Daniel said to the overseer whom the commander of the officials had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, 12 "Please test your servants for ten days, and let us be given some vegetables to eat and water to drink. 13 "Then let our appearance be observed in your presence and the appearance of the youths who are eating the king's choice food; and deal with your servants according to what you see."

2. Dan 6:21-23

Then Daniel spoke to the king, "O king, live forever! 22 "My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths and they have not harmed me, inasmuch as I was found innocent before Him; and also toward you, O king, I have committed no crime."

III. Daniel was unwavering in his commitment to spiritual discipline.

A. Daniel's enemies knew that he prayed three times a day.

B. Daniel would not let anything, including the possibility of being eaten alive by lions, keep him from his normal prayer routine. Dan 6:10

Now when Daniel knew that the document was signed, he entered his house (now in his roof chamber he had windows open toward Jerusalem); and he continued kneeling on his knees three times a day, praying and giving thanks before his God, as he had been doing previously.

C. Compare Daniel's commitment to our commitment in the areas of Bible study, prayer, church attendance, holy living, ministry, and witnessing.

IV. Daniel was unwavering in his faith in God's word.

A. Daniel knew that God would fulfill and keep His word.

B. Daniel's prayer life was based on God's Word.

1. Daniel prayed towards Jerusalem because of a prayer Solomon prayed years previously. 1 Kings 8:46-53

"When they sin against You (for there is no man who does not sin) and You are angry with them and deliver them to an enemy, so that they take them away captive to the land of the enemy, far off or near; 47 if they take thought in the land where they have been taken captive, and repent and make supplication to You in the land of those who have taken them captive, saying, 'We have sinned and have committed iniquity, we have acted wickedly'; 48 if they return to You with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their enemies who have taken them captive, and pray to You toward their land which You have given to

their fathers, the city which You have chosen, and the house which I have built for Your name; 49 then hear their prayer and their supplication in heaven Your dwelling place, and maintain their cause, 50 and forgive Your people who have sinned against You and all their transgressions which they have transgressed against You, and make them objects of compassion before those who have taken them captive, that they may have compassion on them 51 (for they are Your people and Your inheritance which You have brought forth from Egypt, from the midst of the iron furnace), 52 that Your eyes may be open to the supplication of Your servant and to the supplication of Your people Israel, to listen to them whenever they call to You. 53 "For You have separated them from all the peoples of the earth as Your inheritance, as You spoke through Moses Your servant, when You brought our fathers forth from Egypt, O Lord God."

2. Daniel claimed God's promises. Jer 29:1-2, 10-14

Now these are the words of the letter which Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem to the rest of the elders of the exile, the priests, the prophets and all the people whom Nebuchadnezzar had taken into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon..... "For thus says the Lord, '**When seventy years have been completed for Babylon, I will visit you and fulfill My good word to you, to bring you back to this place. 11 'For I know the plans that I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope. 12 'Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. 13 'You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart. 14 'I will be found by you,' declares the Lord, 'and I will restore your fortunes and will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you,' declares the Lord, 'and I will bring you back to the place from where I sent you into exile.'**

NOTE: See Daniel 9:1-3 to find out how Daniel used this promise to approach God.

APPLICATION

1. As Christians:
 - a. We have a personal, intimate relationship with God the Father through Jesus Christ the Son.
 - b. We have been indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God who keeps us, enlightens us, guides us, and empowers us.
 - c. Through prayer we can communicate with God and through God's Word He communicates with us.
2. There is no reason why we should not be people of high esteem in heaven.
3. The question is:
 - a. Are we devoted to God?
 - b. Are we unwavering in our confidence in God?
 - c. Are we committed to spiritual discipline?
 - d. Do we believe God's word and do we plead God's promises?
4. Like Daniel we live in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. Philippians 2:15.
5. May God constantly strengthen us that we might be highly esteemed in His sight.