

Momentum for Life 1

Daniel Intro

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Introduction: This is the time of year for new resolutions. Making resolutions is really a good thing because we are recognizing our need to make a commitment to change in certain areas of our lives. But making a commitment and keeping a commitment for life are two different things. So three years ago I started an annual series entitled Momentum for Life. Since I began this Journey I have noticed lasting change in the five momentum boosters of God: Devotion to God, Readiness for Lifelong Learning, Invest in Key Relationships, Vision and Eating and exercise. The one momentum booster I am least happy with is eating and exercise. As I have studied holiness, I have noticed these five momentum boosters are a recurring theme no matter the book. So this year we are going to study the book of Daniel and how it applies to momentum.

Faith is not the instant realization of a preferred future. Sometimes people think when Jesus comes into their life, if they pray hard enough and believe hard enough good things will happen. Good things don't just happen. They're the result of positive momentum. It is why the call of Jesus is to *follow me*, not *believe in me*. When God brings Jesus into our lives, when we begin to follow Jesus, it creates momentum. It is momentum that carries us to the place of our desired future. Grace is not passive. I know we are saved by faith but so many people see salvation as a particular time and place in the past. Salvation is also active. It is progressive. It is present. That is why the Bible says to work out your salvation in fear and trembling. Daniel the Prophet is exiled to a foreign land to work out God's desired future in the middle of a bunch of hostile pagans. It is a reminder and encouragement that no matter the place a child of God can find momentum for life through the Power of the Holy Spirit.

Change happens because of the unseen force of momentum. Stagnation and death happens when there is no momentum. In fact it takes almost twice as much energy to put into motion-momentum a resting object as a moving one. Yet most of us are clueless about Momentum. To start of the New Year- I have a short quiz for you on momentum.

1. momentum is the product of the mass and v_____ of an object ($p = mv$).

Ans. Momentum is the product of the mass and velocity of an object ($p = mv$).

2. *How much momentum does a 1 gram spinning top have?*

Ans: None: A spinning top has zero total momentum, because for every moving point, there is another point on the opposite side that cancels its momentum. It does, however, have kinetic energy.

3. *How much Momentum does a .45 caliber bullet have at a 1000 feet per second?*

Answer: The rifle and bullet have zero momentum and zero kinetic energy to start with. When

the trigger is pulled, the bullet gains some momentum in the forward direction, but this is

canceled by the rifle's backward momentum, so the total momentum is still zero. The kinetic

energies of the gun and bullet are both positive scalars, however, and do not

cancel. The total kinetic energy is allowed to increase, because kinetic energy is being traded

for other forms of energy. Initially there is chemical energy in the gunpowder.

This chemical energy is converted into heat, sound, and kinetic energy. The gun's "backward"

kinetic energy does not still the shooter's shoulder!

The point of this little exercise is for us to understand that momentum is forward motion.

Just like the scientific motion there are momentum busters in the real world. Daniel faced a multitude of momentum busters in his life. Let us begin today by studying Daniel's life and how he handled momentum busters. Daniel and all of us face three major Momentum busters: rationalization, procrastination and stinkin thinkin.

1. DANIEL AND Rationalization

Rationalization is to attempt to make the irrational rational. To devise self-satisfying but incorrect reasons for one's behavior. Rationalization is one of the consequences of sin. It would have been so easy when Daniel age 15-17 was carried away from Jerusalem to Babylon—think well I no longer have parents—I no longer live in Israel—I should just act like every one else—try to fit in—you know get along—to go along. He could have justified his sins by all the injustices he suffered. Instead Daniel overcame Rationalization by looking at the reality of his own sin. Daniel was an overcomer because he looked reality squarely in the face. We need the reality of the shame of our sins so we have the momentum to change. Daniel realizes, we cannot have forward motion without the acknowledgment of sin and guilt. *So he says, Lord, you are righteous, but this day we are covered with shame--the men of Judah and people of Jerusalem and all Israel, both near and far, in all the countries where you have scattered us because of our unfaithfulness to you. O LORD, we and our kings, our princes and our fathers are covered with shame because we have sinned against you. Daniel 9:7,8*

We may be vocationally or relationally gaining momentum towards holiness. But if our daily devotions or physical health, or any other area of our life is sputtering-we are losing momentum even in the areas that are working for us. Momentum is always lessened if an object is slowed down by any issue. Not too mention that God desires all areas in your life to be working together. Here is one example – your body. A lot of us compromise through the years. We think, “Well, I’ve got a good marriage and I’m a good worker.” But we rationalize and allow ourselves to physically get out of shape or too slowly ebb into bad health problems. We may find ourselves with a heart attack no longer able to work and the marriage is under incredible stress due to poor health. Remember, I said grace is not passive; it’s active. Salvation is a partnership - it means sweat equity on our part. That’s why just like Daniel we must stop the rationalization and face the reality and move forward toward God’s wholeness.

2. Daniel and Procrastination

The first way you get unstuck is to deal with rationalization, with a healthy dose of reality.

But now you have we must deal with the sin of Procrastination. Procrastination is overcome by facing our fears.

The call of God on our lives is a call of holiness. I want you to get out your note sheets and Bibles, because in these eight weeks we are creating lifelong habits that will build momentum for change and will help you in the “stuck” areas of your life. Write down “a call to holiness.” What does the word holiness sound like? Wholeness. I used to hear the word holiness and think it was one of those cloudy, pie-in-the-sky concepts of God that meant goodness. No. It means to be whole in every area of your life. God is a holy God, which means he demonstrates total excellence and wholeness in his character. This is a journey in wholeness, this Christian life. It’s not a belief system. What stops momentum faster than anything is procrastination.

The second area you have to deal with in your life to get off “stuck” is procrastination. Procrastination is when you don’t know where or how to get started in a particular area of your life. You know you need

to, you just don't know how so you don't do anything.

Daniel six Verse sin is a story of a confrontation that would freeze most into neutral, instead it caused Daniel to shift into high gear. His political enemies wanted to do away with Daniel but could not find any dirt on him—so they turned on his goodness. Let us now read the story.

So the administrators and the satraps went as a group to the king and said: "O King Darius, live forever! 7 The royal administrators, prefects, satraps, advisers and governors have all agreed that the king should issue an edict and enforce the decree that anyone who prays to any god or man during the next thirty days, except to you, O king, shall be thrown into the lions' den. 8 Now, O king, issue the decree and put it in writing so that it cannot be altered—in accordance with the laws of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed." 9 So King Darius put the decree in writing.

10 Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before. 11 Then these men went as a group and found Daniel praying and asking God for help. 12 So they went to the king and spoke to him about his royal decree: "Did you not publish a decree that during the next thirty days anyone who prays to any god or man except to you, O king, would be thrown into the lions' den?"

The king answered, "The decree stands—in accordance with the laws of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed."

Then they said to the king, "Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or to the decree you put in writing. He still prays three times a day." 14 When the king heard this, he was greatly distressed; he was determined to rescue Daniel and made every effort until sundown to save him.

Procrastination is when you don't know where or how to get started in a particular area of your life. You know you need to, you just don't know how so you don't do anything. There are many reasons for

getting stuck in neutral. Procrastination show up when we promise to do something but do not follow Through. Here's the second area: you're overwhelmed. You've got so much to do; you don't know where to get started. Here's the third characteristic of procrastination: disorganization. God is a God of order Cluttered spaces create cluttered minds which create cluttered spirits which create cluttered eternities. Have you ever noticed when you allow a little clutter in your house it grows? It's like cancer. Doubt me? Look at my office! The last motivation for procrastination is facing our fears. I think facing our fears is often behind our feeling of being overwhelmed, or unwillingness to follow through and even in our disorganization.

Confronting our fears, from the real to imaginary is a key to our growing in our faith. You may fail to go on a diet, because you have failed at so many before this one, and if this one does not work-you are fearful there will be no other options. You may know 2009 is the year you need to make a career change, but you put off the search, because you fear the rejection of not being hired. You have been putting off repairing that relationship for awhile-is it because you fear the other party may use your mercy to harm you? You may be a chewer or smoker of tobacco, there is no doubt you need to quit, but you also no that the effect of withdrawing from nicotine will not be pleasant. So you and I stay in neutral.

Let's face it we all are afraid at times-it's normal-but honestly isn't our imaginary fears greater than reality? Legendary boxing trainer Cus D'Amato who pointed out, fear can be a powerful motivator. Any one involved in boxing would know this to be true. True courage is not about being fearless; It's about overcoming fear, going ahead and saddling up as John Wayne said. It is making a willful decision to go ahead with something worthwhile even though you are terrified.

Daniel in Chapter Six faced a reality greater than his imaginary fears. As some one involved in the Kings Court- He knew that those who displeased the king ended up lions food. So when he heard it was now illegal to pray-what did he do? Devise a scheme how to pray with out getting caught? Hold a political protest? Clam up and not say what he needed to say? Cave into the pressure and not pray?

No he faced his fearful reality and overcame procrastination by going home to a open window to pray where he could be seen. I believe that he knew he had enemies out to destroy them and this was their plot-so he prayed as his way of saying; Let's get it on! If you need to overcome procrastination face your fears and embrace God's peace. Whatever your New Years resolution is it is going to require you facing your fears head on. http://ginghamsburg.org/sermon/resources/2005_01_16_Text/100/

3. Daniel and Stinkin Thinkin

The Bible's account of the conquest of Jerusalem is also confirmed by Babylonian records. First, let's notice the biblical record: "***And the Lord God of their fathers sent warnings to them by His messengers, rising up early and sending them, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place. But they mocked the messengers of God, despised His words, and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people, till there was no remedy. Therefore He brought against them the king of the Chaldeans [Babylonians] ...***" (2 Chronicles 36:15—17).

"Then they burned the house of God [the temple], broke down the wall of Jerusalem, burned all its palaces with fire, and destroyed all its precious possessions. And those who escaped from the sword he carried away to Babylon, where they became servants to him and his sons until the rule of the kingdom of Persia, to fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah ..." (2 Chronicles 36:19—21).

Jerusalem was actually conquered twice. The city was first captured but not destroyed. Later it fell a second time, in 587 B.C., when it was destroyed as the Bible describes. The city was put to the torch, its palaces and temple burned and its walls demolished. The Bible faithfully describes both defeats but does not specify when the city was conquered the first time.

Like the Assyrians, the Babylonians deported vanquished peoples to maintain tighter control over conquered territories. As their cousins in the northern kingdom of Israel fell into captivity by Assyria more than a century earlier, Judah's inhabitants now were taken to Babylon.

The situation seemed hopeless. Judah was devastated, and the Babylonians forcibly removed most of its citizens. Yet, in spite of their situation, God through His prophets encouraged the people not to give up hope that they would one day return to their homeland. He not only sent prophets to Judah but to Babylon as well. Men such as Daniel and Ezekiel, who both lived in Babylon, spoke of a coming restoration of Judah.

All of this happened to Daniel whom we are studying, probably some Where between 15-17 and he never saw the restoration of Israel in His life. When I think of being a teen and seeing my family possibly Slaughtered- being enslaved-taken into servant hood in a foreign culture-it would be easy to be bitter-but difficult to overcome stinking thinkin and become better.

Think how easy it would have been of Daniel to have all or nothing thinking-I have eaten a pork chop after a forced march God is now through with me. I am no longer worth anything. Think how easy after losing your family, friends and nation to mentally filter every thing through hate-revenge and anger. Many of the Jews wearing the same sandals as Daniel discounted all their blessings in Babyon and were miserable and misery to many others! Psalms 137 record this when it states: By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept when we remembered Zion. There on the poplars we hung our harps, for there our captors asked us for songs, our tormentors demanded songs of joy; they said, "Sing us one of the songs of Zion!" For some Jews There was no good thing in Babylon and there would be nothing but tears until Zion was restored. Have you noticed when you get tunnel vision all you can see is the cave in and not the supports. Many Jews overgeneralized with their stinking thinking: for God to let this happen to Jerusalem-He must be through with us-so I am going become a Babylon. Do you know that even after God restored Israel a Majority of the Israelites stayed in the pagan land of captivity-because their thinking used it as a excuse to justify their sin!

So how did Daniel after losing all that he loved, kept stinking thinking at bay? Daniel overcame stinking thinking By focusing on God Power! I want you to remember what the Pioneer Bible Club is teaching your child on Sunday night: God's Power + Man's Obedience = Victory.

The Book of Daniel teaches us that to make a difference in this world, to grow in holiness, to

right wrongs, and to overcome Evil you will find yourself in the middle of a cat fight. So you and I as God's children can never let your stinking thinkin to control us. To grow into wholeness requires us to never let our fears control us. Daniel overcame all of this simply because he focused on God's Power. In this book he is able thru God to visualize the coming of the messiah and the restoration of Israel all because he refused to give into stinking thinking. Instead he focused on God Power + obedience =to walking in Victory. For Godly momentum to happen our life we must stop the stinking thinking and focus on God's power!

Conclusion: Daniel is one of the most complicated books in all of the bible. One of the biggest challenges of preaching is to give meat to the mature and Milk to the newborns without choking to death anyone. So as I prayed and studied for this sermon I made the decision that we would Skim the Surface and Go deep in applying the truths of this great book. But that means that to love God with your mind for the next six weeks it would be wise of you to study this book in depth on your own. Here are three subjects I think would greatly help you understand this book: The Theme: God's Sovereignty-The Literature type: Apocalyptic and God's unending Kingdom. If you need some help and I will help you discover some tools to make your study easier.

But; What we are going to do the next five weeks is make a life map to holiness. Holiness means wholeness. We're going to introduce five daily activities that will give you momentum to reach God's excellent purpose for your life. Here they are; some of you will remember these. I use the acronym DRIVE. We're going to begin to practice these. Next week we're going to begin with devotion to God. I begin every morning spending an hour in the word through the Transformation Journal, and in prayer and journaling. That begins to give you momentum for every area of your life. R is readiness for lifelong learning. If you quit growing when you're thirty, forty, fifty, sixty or seventy, you're dead. I love it that people like Benjamin Franklin invented bifocals at age seventy-eight. It is continually allowing God to be the potter and you the clay for him to shape and mold. I is investing in

key relationships. As I have made resolutions, this is the year for my marriage. You all know I've got a decent marriage, but sometimes we put it on cruise control and I just think my marriage has been a little bit on cruise control. Don't tell Carolyn I think that. Well, she'll like it when she knows that this is the year where that's the priority in my life. V is visioning - that is the ability to see through eyes of faith. We're going to spend a whole week on that. E is eating and exercise. I love the way Dwight L. Moody said it. He was an evangelist - the Billy Graham of the 1800s - who used to fill baseball stadiums when he spoke. He said, "*We pray like it is all up to God and we work like it is all up to us.*" Isn't that a great quote? Let me say this, opportunity is not going to come and drag you behind off the couch. You have to put yourself out there. You have to start the climb of faith.

Amen. God bless.