

LESSON 9 // DEALING WITH DIFFICULT PEOPLE—PART 2

Big Idea: In Daniel 1-6, we see four young men successfully navigate significant pressures. For Daniel this involved dealing with some difficult, evil people. From his example we learn that faith in the living God, grace and wisdom are the keys to dealing with difficult people.

> ***Daniel 6:10 (NLT)*** *But when Daniel learned that the law had been signed, he went home and knelt down as usual in his upstairs room, with its windows open toward Jerusalem. He prayed three times a day, just as he had always done, giving thanks to his God.*
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> ***Romans 12:17-21 (NLT)*** *Never pay back evil with more evil. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable. 18 Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone. 19 Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God. For the Scriptures say, "I will take revenge; I will pay them back," says the LORD. ... 21 Don't let evil conquer you, but conquer evil by doing good.*
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> ***Matthew 5:43-44 (NLT)*** *You have heard the law that says, "Love your neighbor" and "hate your enemy." 44 But I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you!*
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> ***2 Timothy 3:1-2, 5 (NLT)*** *You should know this, Timothy, that in the last days there will be very difficult times. 2 For people will love only themselves and their money. They will be boastful and proud, scoffing at God, disobedient to their parents, and ungrateful. They will consider nothing sacred. ... 5 They will act religious, but they will reject the power that could make them godly. Stay away from people like that!*

Start Talking:

What kind of pressure, if any, do you feel from people and influences around you to compromise your relationship with God? What keeps you from giving in to this pressure?

Start Thinking:

Read Daniel 6:10. In what ways do you think Daniel's consistent, faithful prayer life anchored him in the living God in the face of overwhelming pressure? How does his example encourage and challenge you?

Read Romans 12:17-21. Why is it never the right response to pay back evil for evil? What happens if you return evil to those who do you wrong?

Read Matthew 5:43-44. As followers of Jesus, why should we love our enemies and pray for them?

Read 2 Timothy 3:1-5. What are some practical ways we can "stay away" from the kind of people described in these verses (even if we live or work among some who may be like this)?

Start Praying and Doing:

Pray for a heart like Jesus that desires to "overcome evil with good." Look for opportunities to apply this in situations involving difficult people. Take note of your heart attitude toward these folks and filter that through Jesus' example and exhortation to "love your enemies" and "pray for those who persecute you."