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Participant Handout

2026 Annual Theme: Hope in Motion

BIBLE STUDY
August 5, 2026

August 2026 Theme: Operating in godly Obedience

Lesson Subject : “An Excellent Spirit” *Unit One: Daniel*
Daniel 5:9-14 (Key verse: vs.12)

Topics

- ❖ Scripture Reference
- ❖ Reflection Questions
- ❖ Outline
- ❖ Introduction
- ❖ Background and Context
- ❖ Explore the Text
- ❖ Check for understanding
- ❖ Life Application

Scripture Reference: Daniel 5:9-14 New American Standard Bible 2020

⁹ Then King Belshazzar was greatly alarmed, his face grew *even more* pale, and his nobles were perplexed. ¹⁰ The queen entered the banquet hall because of the words of the king and his nobles; the queen began to speak and said, “O king, live forever! Do not let your thoughts alarm you or your face be pale. ¹¹ There is a man in your kingdom in whom is a spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of your father, illumination, insight, and wisdom like the wisdom of the gods were found in him. And King Nebuchadnezzar, your father—your father the king—appointed him chief of the soothsayer priests, sorcerers, Chaldeans, *and* diviners. ¹² *This was* because an extraordinary spirit, knowledge and insight, interpretation of dreams, explanation of riddles, and solving of difficult problems were found in this Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar. Let Daniel now be summoned and he will declare the interpretation.”¹³ Then Daniel was brought in before the king. The king began speaking and said to Daniel, “Are you that Daniel who is one of

the exiles from Judah, whom my father the king brought from Judah? ¹⁴ Now I have heard about you that a spirit of the gods is in you, and that illumination, insight, and extraordinary wisdom have been found in you.

Reflection Questions

Question 1: When was the Last time you haven been thoroughly impressed with a person, a job or service that was done?

Question 2: Have you ever heard of the term or concept Excellence? Where did you first become acquainted with it? Please described what it looks like?

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DANIEL: A READING AND STUDY GUIDE		
Chapter	Content Summary	Related Articles
1	Young Daniel, in training in Babylon, determines to keep God's Law; enters Nebuchadnezzar's civil service.	Dietary Laws Exile
2	Daniel interprets Nebuchadnezzar's dream of future world empires.	Nebuchadnezzar Kingdom
3	Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refuse to worship an idol; are rescued from fiery furnace by God.	Idol
4	Nebuchadnezzar is punished with madness for his pride. When restored, he acknowledges and worships God.	Gentiles Worship
5	Daniel interprets an inscription which appears at King Belshazzar's feast and warns of Babylon's imminent fall.	Babylon
6	Daniel, now a high official in the Medo-Persian Empire, is delivered by God from a den of lions.	Persia Darius
7	Daniel dreams of four beasts who represent successive world empires. An angel interprets the dream.	Angels Sovereignty
8	Daniel dreams of a ram and a goat, whose horns represent rulers of Medo-Persia and Greece.	Greece
9	The angel Gabriel gives Daniel a time frame for the appearance of God's promised Messiah.	Messiah Seventy Weeks
10	Another angel appears to explain "what will happen to your people [Israel] in the future."	Future Israel
11	The angel describes war raging in the Middle East, and an invasion of Israel by "the king of the North."	Antichrist Abomination of Desolation
12	After a time of terrible tribulation, to last 1,290 days, blessing and resurrection will come.	Tribulation Resurrection

Introductory/ Contextual Clues

For the last year or so we have read or heard New Hope's purpose statement. The phrase operating in godly excellence stands up and out in that purpose statement. There are some people who may know what this means, or think they know what it means to operate in godly excellence while others may not know. I believe it serves us best to examine these terms through examples provided to us in the word of God. Moreover, I also believe that it is useful for us to review the etymology of the term *excellent* while finding ways to implement or make it indigenous in our churches, communities and world. Hopefully this will assist in shaping our biblical view of what it means to operate in an excellent spirit.

What is Excellence? The Bible introduces the term excellent or excellence 12 times. Our time within this study will focus on the Hebraic writings or the Old Testament therefore let us define the Hebrew word for Excellent.

The Hebrew term for Excellent is *yattirah* (transliteration) this means exceedingly; extraordinary, surpassing, exceptional, very great, extra plentiful.

Aristotle has a magnificent quote for Excellence. We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a Habit. Aristotle continues by stating Excellence is never an accident. It is always the result of high intention, sincere effort, and intelligent execution; it represents the wise choice of many alternative-choices, not chance.

Collin Powell says that Excellence is not an exception; it is a prevailing attitude.

John W. Gardner says that Excellence is doing ordinary things extraordinarily well.

Maya Angelou wrote "Whatever you want to do if you want to be great at it, you have to love it and be able to make sacrifices for it."

Now that we have defined *excellence*, let's look on the opposing end of the spectrum and define *mediocrity*. It means low quality, value, ability or performance.

Who is the Spirit? The third person of the Godhead. The spirit is the term *ruah* in the Hebrew which means breath, wind spirit. In the Greek it is the term *pneuma* which means breath or wind.

Why is Daniel claiming the spotlight: Daniel is described in Daniel 5:12 not by himself but in third person dialogue by the queen, that Daniel was someone essential, important, and impactful because he has an excellent spirit. Daniel does not possess this extraordinary ability on his own merit it is because of the spirit of God that dwells within that allows him to have unusual insight, interpretation and wisdom that surpasses others.

Understanding Daniel - Significance/Background and Context

The Book of Daniel offers a picture of arresting faith. The enigmatic [mysterious, perplexing] book shows models for living imbued [filled] with hope and meaning. The courageous stories about Daniel's life in Babylon show a tenacious [persistent, determined] belief, despite terrible odds that one individual life can make a difference for God.

The first half of the book, Daniel 1-6, consists of a collection of narratives about Daniel and his friends Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, Who bear captivity and tests of faith that demand the ultimate trial- martyrdom. Pressed to the brink all endure their trials and although willing to die rather than abandon their obligations to God are miraculously spared multiple death threats from cruel regimes.

DANIEL 1:1B Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it.

Daniel 1:4

- Apprehended (of Daniel)
- Appearance of Daniel
- Appetite of Daniel- Matthew 6:17-18
- Aptitude of Daniel (The capacity to learn)
- Apprentice nature of Daniel
- Application of Daniel

Explore the Text/ Lessons from Daniel:

- The **Character of Daniel** *Daniel 5:11*
- The **Chains of Daniel** *Daniel 1:1*
- The **Charisma of Daniel** *Daniel 2:6 and Daniel 5:7*
- The **Cance of Daniel** *Daniel 5:12*

The Character of Daniel

Richard Foster stated that superficiality is the curse of our age. The doctrine of instant satisfaction is a primary spiritual problem.

In accordance with Daniels reputation from antiquity, he is portrayed as righteous and wise. He is seen as an intermediary who is able to interpret dreams and thus convey the will of the transcendent God to humans.

As we read early on in the book of Daniel it is refreshing to see that Daniel and his colleagues have no plans to engage in compromise. The wonderful quality of Excellence does not seek to compromise its standard. Daniel is carried away into a particular culture, and He maintains his values of faith in the face of foreign gods and opposition. There was a depth to Daniel's convictions and there was a depth to Daniel's faith. **Daniel 1:8-15**

The Desperate need today is not for a greater number of intelligent people, or gifted people, but for deep people.

Daniel had an excellent spirit. This was evident in how he governed himself through his relationship with God in his daily devotion which included his diet, his prayer life, and his dedication to the commands of God. **Daniel 2:18**

God has given us the discipline of the spiritual life as a means of receiving his grace. The Disciplines allow us to place ourselves before God so that he can transform us.

The Chains of Daniel

Daniel 1:2 Daniel is introduced as one of the Jewish youths deported to Babylon by King Nebuchadnezzar in the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim King of Judah. He and his friends are trained to serve in the royal court and have many wonderful exploits Daniel distinguishes himself as an interpreter of dreams and mysterious signs (Daniel Chapter 2, 4, and 5)

Daniel was noted for his righteousness and wisdom. Like Joseph, he was able to give accurate interpretations. This resulted in his promotion to a high position at court (**Daniel 2:48 and 5:29**). Just as Moses and Aaron displayed more power to work wonders than Egyptian magicians, Daniel exhibited more power to reveal secret things than all of the Babylonian magicians, conjurers sorcerers and Chaldeans.

Just as Daniel was in Exile our souls were in exile. We were chained by sin. **Proverbs 5:22 and John 8:34**, but then came the son of God that exhibited an excellent spirit. **Luke 4:32**

The Charisma of Daniel

Theodoret of Cyr: Daniel having become a receptacle of the divine spirit, gives wise advice on everything, makes intelligent utterances on everything clarifies riddles in dreams, removes the obscurity from what is hidden in some obscurity and by setting free what is held in bondage in secret recess, as it were.

Daniel has a skill that only comes from God. **Daniel 5:14-17**
Someone brought Daniel up because he had an excellent spirit.

Daniel had a made-up mind **Daniel 1:8** His environment would not deter his values or his excellence. He had a healthy resistance. There was a being about Daniel which in turn affected his behavior.

Proud Spirit Daniel 5:20
Premiere Spirit Daniel 5:10-11
Providential Spirit Daniel 5:12
Produced the same Spirit Daniel 5 :22-28

The Chance of Daniel

Opportunity finds those who operate in excellence. This request unto the Lord for Compassion **DANIEL 2:18** There was prayer transpiring before the fiery furnace or before entering into the lions' den.

Excellence does not have to market itself. But excellence brings about promotion.
Daniel 2:48

Check for Understanding

1. Biblically Define Excellence?

2. What does it mean when it implies that Daniel had an Excellent Spirit.

3. What other Biblical Character can you compare to Daniel who exhibited an Excellent Spirit?

Life Application

How will you challenge yourself to be a person of excellence? Today begin the journey of looking within and ask the Lord to give you His marvelous spirit in order that you may serve him in spirit and in truth!