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LOVING JESUS, LOVING PEOPLE, PLOWING A COUNTER-CULTURE

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**TEXT:** Daniel 10

**MAIN IDEA:** When we are beaten down with discouragement, only God gives us what we truly need.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- Because of a shortened spring season, this winter season Communities season is extended to April 12. Then, we'll take two weeks off for Easter, and the spring season will run from April 27 to June 14.
- We are committing ourselves to a season of prayer and to consider joining us in fasting every Tuesday, as we look forward to Easter. This is a great time when God is at work and the gospel is spread with clarity and power. We invite you to join us at 7 am on Tuesdays at both campuses to pray for the Lord to renew our hearts and to work through us in reaching those who don't know him.
- Our Good Friday Prayer Gathering will be held on Friday, April 18, at 4:00 PM and 5:30 PM, at both the Ringwood and Totowa campuses. Please join us for prayer, worship, and communion, as together we remember the Lord's death for our sins.
- Good Friday wouldn't be good without Sunday—so come worship the risen Lord Jesus with us! Here are the service times:

Totowa

Saturday, April 19

4:00 PM

5:30 PM (Spanish and ASL translation)

Sunday, April 20

8:00 AM

9:15 AM

10:30 AM

11:45 AM (Spanish translation)

Ringwood

Sunday, April 20

8:30 AM

10:00 AM

11:30 AM

**GETTING STARTED:**

- Watch this week's Community Extras Video.
- **Optional Icebreaker:** Who are you mugging this Easter season?

## A Man Greatly Loved

### Read Daniel 10:1–3.



Think about some of the things we've been seeing over the past few weeks. Why is Daniel mourning?



What are some reasons you have experienced discouragement in your walk with the Lord?



In the Totowa sermon, Ryan identified three lies that lead to spiritual discouragement: (1) God doesn't love me; (2) all my devotion doesn't make a difference; and (3) God can't help me. Which lie are you most likely to entertain in your heart?

### Read Daniel 10:4–11.

The identity of this “man clothed in linen” is a matter of much debate. At the very least, he may be an angel whose glory far exceeds the other angels in the Book of Daniel. This is clear, both from the description of his appearance and the fact that Daniel is so overwhelmed in his presence that he collapses. It is also possible that this may have been God himself since his description somewhat resembles God's appearance in Ezekiel 1:26–28. However, in 12:7, he swears “by him who lives forever,” which indicates that he is subordinate to God (cf. Heb 6:16). The possibility is certainly open that this is a pre-incarnate vision of Christ, especially since Jesus' first appearance in the Book of Revelation draws heavily on this passage, as well as other parts of Daniel (Rev 1:12–16).

Scenes involving angels in the Old Testament often contain mysterious elements that make it difficult to determine the identity of the visitor (e.g., Exod 3:1–6; Judg 13:2–20). Throughout this passage, it is unclear how many angels are attending to Daniel. There may be as many as four: The man clothed in linen, one who touches him in verse 10, one who touches his lips in verse 16, and one who touches him and strengthens him in verse 18. It is also possible that one, or more, or all of these are the man clothed in linen (especially the last one).



This is now the second time an angelic messenger has come to Daniel during a revelation that Daniel finds troubling, affirming that he is “greatly loved” (cf. 9:23). Where should we look for assurances of God's love when we experience difficult circumstances?



What role does the Word of God play in our lives when we are discouraged and questioning God?

## Your Words Have Been Heard

### Read Daniel 10:12–14.

The Prince of Persia seems to be a hostile spiritual being appointed over the Medo-Persian empire, while the angel Michael is the one who watches over Israel. In verse 20, we will also be introduced to “the Prince of Greece.” The idea that spiritual beings function this way is suggested by

Deuteronomy 32:8–9, which says that God “fixed the borders of the peoples according to the number of the sons of God” (see also Ps 82:1–4).



What does this passage reveal about prayer and spiritual warfare?



Daniel remained faithful and consistent in his prayers, yet he was confronted with visions that foretold more hard times for his people. In the sermon, Ryan said that the second lie that leads to discouragement is that our devotion to God doesn’t make a difference. What does Galatians 6:9–10 have to say about this?

### **You Have Strengthened Me**

#### **Read Daniel 10:15–21.**

Nothing changes in Daniel’s circumstances, and the visions he will continue to see portend hard times for Israel. Nevertheless, Daniel’s encounter with God gives him peace, courage, and strength. This is now the third time Daniel is given assurance that he is “greatly loved” (v. 19).



Daniel’s visions are disturbing to him, so much so that he needs to be revived three times. What is he told in this chapter that is a reason for internal peace?



There are many virtues in the Christian life (love, faith, knowledge, self-control, etc.). Why is courage a Christian virtue?



What is an area of life where you need God to give you strength?

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### **PRAYER TIME**

Praise God that he is working for his glory and the good of his people, even when we don’t see it.

Pray for the Lord to give you peace, courage, and strength to remain faithful to him.

Pray for someone you know who needs these things in their life right now.