

ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

All in (A new decade begins)

This Sunday is our kick-off for the Daniel Plan, and it is the last Sunday of the decade. In a few days, we will begin 2020. A new year and a new decade. What are your hopes for the next ten years? You all are at the top of my list. My hope is that everyone in our community will be healthier and have the energy and desire to take on the work of creating a vibrant community together. Are you all in?



I start with research when I prepare to write an article. I do the same for each Sunday's message. Our topic for this week is health? I have read at least a hundred articles and dozens of books about health. I am not fixated on health. But I know that God has called me to speak and write about health. I also know that God wants me to take care of my own health. And this is where I fall short. I often fail to find a healthy balance between what I do for others and what I do for myself. It's complicated. But I know that it does not have to be. So why make it complicated? Why can't I be all in?

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Volume 20 Issue 5

January 5, 2020

Special points of interest:

*** City of Flint Neighborhood Planning will be meeting in the Fellowship Hall on Tuesday, January 7th at 5pm.

*** Worship Design will be meeting on Monday, January 13th and 27th at 6pm in the Asbury Library.

*** Leadership Team will meet on Monday, January 20th at 6pm.

*** Effective Tuesday, January 14th the Kearsley Park Neighborhood Assoc will be meeting the second Tuesday of each month until further notice, meeting starting at 7pm.

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True Worship (Let God transform you)

Holiday celebrations are behind us. Another decade is behind us. Years from now, when our children are much older, they may look back at the last decade with nostalgic recollection. This happens to all of us to one extent or another. We reframe and rewrite our history to conform to what works for us. But this article is not a look back. This article looks for-

ward and then offers a way to get there.



If you are one of the people who declared that you are "all in" and signed up for

the Daniel Plan, congratulations.¹ You took the first step towards a much better future for yourself. Stick to the plan, and your life will change for the better. This decade will be tremendously better than the last. This is not just my promise or the promise of those who documented and shared the Daniel Plan. This is a promise from God found in scripture.

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True Worship (Let God transform you) ...cont. from page 1

But making lifestyle changes is difficult. Several years ago, I discerned that God was calling me to give up meat. No explanation. No speech on animal cruelty. In hindsight, I figured out that this lifestyle change was both a test of my trust, and now I realize that God has a much bigger goal in mind. This is where the Daniel Plan comes into play.

But even though I was successful at eliminating meat from my diet, which isn't necessary for most people, I was not successful at removing dairy. "Cheese is addictive," according to Dr. Neal Barnard, founder of the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine. According to Barnard, because dairy proteins, called casomorphins, attach to the same brain receptors as heroin and other narcotics, acting as mild opiates. As a result, eating cheese produces a little hit of dopamine.²

Other food addictions include animal fat, salt, and sugar. I won't go into the chemistry here. Still, anyone who has tried to eat just one potato chip

has experienced a craving for a salty snack. Food addictions are subtle. We all have them, so they seem like part of God's plan for our diets. The truth is that most of our food addictions are fed by a corporation's plan for profit. Our health is not a part of their business plan.



Day 2 in *The Daniel Plan Journal* has a quote from Marie T. Freeman that is a good starting point for making a lifestyle change.³ "If you want to form a new habit, get to work if you want to break a bad habit, get on your knees." Every 12-step program that I am aware of references a "higher power" that is a critical part of recovery. For us, the God who created us is the higher power that we need.

Changing addictive behaviors is beyond the limits of our willpower. And while food addictions seem trivial in comparison to alcohol and drug addictions, food addictions are challenging.

Cyndi and I are frequently asking each other, is this allowed? Is peanut butter on the Daniel Plan? What about crackers? How much butter is too much? Are you sure that you should be having another slice of bread? There is a learning curve. And the idea that there is so much to learn can be overwhelming.

My advice for you, for Cyndi, and for myself, is to relax. Yes, when I think about the learning curve and the journey ahead, I get overwhelmed. I like roadmaps. I like knowing about the next turn ahead. And I can be fearful when there is so much unknown. But fear is the opposite of faith. And the Daniel Plan is a faith journey. We don't know as much as we may want to know. So, we take each step in faith.

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All in (A new decade begins)...cont. from page 1

The top two leading causes of death in this country are heart disease and cancer. And the research is clear. What we put into our bodies and what we do with our bodies is the primary contributor to our quality of life and how long we live. Most of our health outcomes are not the fault of our DNA. So why don't we just change our lifestyle over to a healthier lifestyle? Don't we want to have less disease?

Don't we want to get well? Why are so few of us all in?

The Daniel Plan is the outcome of a collaboration of doctors and pastors at Saddleback Church in Southern California.² When the Daniel Plan was launched at Saddleback, over 15,000 people signed up, and the results were miraculous, but also predictable. They were miraculous only by comparison to

the rest of us. The results were predictable because God wants this for all of us. But we have to be all in. This week we talk about the motivation for being all in.

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In our Prayers

| | |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| Curtis Young | Miriam Watson |
| Rachel Bastine | Shirley Craig |
| Norma Buzzard | Christopher Lewis |
| Mary Lyons | Sarah Tanner |
| Barbara McIvor | Elizabeth Wright |
| Austin & Mary Suffle | Judy Tanner |

FRIENDS AND LOVED ONES WHO ARE HOMEBOUND OR IN NURSING CARE

| | |
|------------------|--------------|
| Mary Nations | Mary Russell |
| Elaine Lamoreaux | |

THANK YOU, THANK YOU!!

A BIG thank you for the wonderful gifts and beautiful Christmas cards I received from many of you!

2019 was here and gone and 2020 is here! And so I end this year with this:

Please God heal the broken people. Make the sick well again. Restore happiness to those in despair. Bring love to the lonely, food to the hungry, protect our children and above all peace to our world.



Coming up this week



| | | |
|--------|---------------|--|
| Jan 6 | Mon 5:00pm | Youth Choir |
| | 7:00pm | Flint Jubilee |
| Jan 7 | Tues 10am-2pm | Water Distribution |
| | 4:30-8pm | City of Flint Neighborhood Planning Comm |
| | 6:00pm | Community Gospel Choir |
| Jan 8 | Wed 12Noon | Pastor Book Club |
| | 6:00pm | Beginners Bible Study |
| | 6-8:00pm | Rec Nite |
| Jan 9 | Thu 6:00pm | Worship Band Practice |
| Jan 10 | Fri 11am-2pm | Asbury Cafe Open |
| Jan 11 | Sat 10am-12N | Japanese Jiu Jitsi |
| Jan 12 | Sun 8am-10am | Japanese Jiu Jitsi |
| | 9:30am | Café Open |
| | 10:30am | New Beginnings |
| | | Contemporary Worship |

Asbury Worship Series Daniel Plan (January 2020)



If you haven't already signed up to participate in the Daniel Plan then just do it. Walk by faith. The Daniel Plan is not a diet plan, it is a spiritual journey. There is a lot of information and a lot of changes to be made regarding food, but we begin with faith. We begin by ac-

knowledging that lifestyle changes don't happen by our own will power.

Here is the game plan, message-wise for our Sunday worship:

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Book Club News

We will be finishing a book written by a local hero in January. However, each week we will have a



"Daniel moment" that focuses some attention on the Daniel Plan. We will watch a short video lesson each week on

important information about the Daniel Plan that will help us with our journey.

Our current book was written by Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha. Dr. Mona

is the courageous, children's doctor who risked her reputation and her career to bring to light that our public water was poisoning us. Being a whistle-blower in the midst of desperate people willing to destroy anyone who disagrees with them requires courage, and other people willing to stand with you. This is Dr. Mona.

What the Eyes Don't See is a story about all of us. It is a personal story. We know the names in the book, or at least most of them. We know a lot that is not in her book. And we can feel the anger, helplessness, disgust, and regrets, that Dr. Mona shares in her testimony. More important, we have an opportunity to learn from the past, and to work together for a stronger Flint. But what does this look like to you?

Dr. Mona's book will challenge you to get involved, just as we challenge each other. And as we reflect on the events that rocked our community, you can anticipate new ideas and discussions that could shape how you view our circumstances. And what you may feel called to do about it.

I encourage you to come to our Wednesday gatherings. Our small group is a diverse group and we are delighted when new persons join us. I hope that you will join in on our discussion. We meet each Wednesday at Noon. There are a couple of books available. You can contact our office with questions, by phone or simply type your question on our website's homepage — FlintAsbury.org. Please consider making a donation to cover the cost of books.

Leadership in Worship & Service

| | | | |
|-----------------|--------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| Welcome Team | Tony, Mirium | Jim Craig | Leadership Chair |
| Ushers | Anthony, Jim | Kevin Croom | Operations |
| Production Team | Jonathon, Terrance | Blair Neifert | Farm Manager |
| Children | Patrice & Mirium | Israel Unger | Function to Funding |
| Worship Leaders | Cyndi | | |
| Café | Christine & Norma | | |

Asbury Café

Plan to meet outside the sanctuary each Sunday before worship for coffee, tea, snacks, conversation and so on. The music will start when it is time to wrap up and head in for worship.

Come join us for a light lunch, fellowship and discussion. Our food selections have been fantastic and we always have plenty to share. And we are always on the lookout for our next book, video lesson or topic. Your participation and suggestions are greatly appreciated.

Pastor Tommy

Asbury Staff

| | |
|-------------------------|------------------|
| Rev. Dr. Tommy McDoniel | Pastor |
| Connie Portillo | Office Secretary |
| Sylvia Pittman | Empowerment Arts |

Asbury Worship Series—Daniel Plan (January 2020) ...Cont. from page 4

| | |
|------------------------------|----------------|
| True Worship—January 5, 2020 | Romans 12:1-2 |
| Holy Goals—January 12, 2020 | Jeremiah 29:11 |
| Friends—January 19, 2020 | John 13:35 |
| God Power—January 26, 2020 | Ephesians 3:20 |
| Complicated—February 2, 2020 | Psalms 139-14 |

The Daniel Plan

Faith, Friends, Fitness, Food and Focus

Join us each Sunday and invite your friends and neighbors. I lead a short Bible Study in the Asbury Café at 9:30am. You can find more information about us on our website at FlintAsbury.org.

Pastor Tommy

Make a New Year's Resolution for 2020 to commit to The Daniel Plan.

All in (A new decade begins) ... cont. from page 2

One day Jesus was walking down the street during a religious festival. He spots this guy sitting beside a pool where people go for pain relief. There was a tradition that when the water stirred, the first person to go into the pool is healed. But the man could not get into the pool by his own power, and he had been this way for 38 years. Jesus walks up to the guy and asks a crucial question. It is the same question I am asking you in this article. Jesus asks the man, "Do you want to get well?" This might seem like an odd question at first. This guy's been sick 38 years. Of course, he wants to get well.

So why would Jesus ask such an obvious question? "Do you really want to get well?"

I believe that Jesus asked the man this question for the same reason that I am asking you this question. I don't know the specifics of each illness that exists among us. I don't know what worries keep you up at night. I don't know what disappointments each of you struggle with from day-to-day. I don't know what the doctor says to you in the privacy of her examination room.

But I do know this from personal experience, and I know this from observation. It is one of life's axioms. It is both biblical and biological. Unless the answer to the question, "Do you

want to get well?" is "yes," the odds of getting well are minimal. It is not just about self-fulfilling prophecy. It is one of the most significant examples of God's grace that we each experience each day.

Our body belongs to God and is on loan. Each of us is the manager of our body. When one of us tries to exert control over another person's body, this is contrary to God's plan because each of us is responsible for our own body. This is not to say that we don't take care of each other. We must. If I am incapable of taking care of my own body, I need help from others. But I still get to answer the question asked by Jesus.

It is like the parent who allows a child to choose their vocation after realizing that at some point, love is best expressed through letting a person be who they are and not who we want them to be. It is the greatest show of grace that I can imagine. God loves us, and God proves it every day. And yet, God gives us the freedom to choose whether we love God back. And whether we return God's love or not, we are still loved just as much.

"Do you want to get well?" The answer is often so evident that we say yes without really saying yes. We want to be healthier. We want to honor God with our bodies, but there are just too many temptations.

And sometimes it is nothing more than doing what is not good for us just to prove that we are our own person. And if I want another snickers bar then I shall have one. "It is my body," we say, but it's not.

But this is the problem. You did not create your body, so you don't own it. You don't own your body, and your mother does not own your body either. While she carried you, God created you. God knitted you together. God made the subatomic particles that cooperate together to make your eyes, and your ears, and your nose. And you becoming you was a labor of love.

In Paul's letter to the church in Corinth, he writes, "Don't you know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit" (1 Corinthians 6:19). In verse 20, Paul concludes his message on the importance of our bodies to God with "use your bodies for God's glory."

One of the many things about Jesus that I really admire is His ability to be precise. After all of the parables, metaphors, and illustrations through storytelling, Jesus looks us in the eye and says, "If you love me, you will do as I say." I believe that this statement can accurately be translated as, "If you love me, you want to get well. If you love me, you are all in." *Page 10*

THE DANIEL PLAN

GOD'S PRESCRIPTION FOR YOUR HEALTH

SIGN UP TODAY ...

Why the Daniel Plan is so important ...

I have never met Pastor Steve Willis. But there is something that he said that is haunting me. And I hope that it will haunt you too. Pastor Steve's call to action is powerful, timely, and the shoe surely fits our community. We were poisoned by our public water system. But we can recover. Our children can recover. But the problem, at this point, is not someone else's problem. It is our problem. We have the solution and Pastor Steve's challenge is a call to step up and do something about our health.

The fight for good nutrition was never more real to me than when I watched my kindergarten-aged son struggle with adapting to his physician-prescribed, mind-altering drugs. Lucas had been having discipline problems in school, would frequently struggle with the ability to focus on tasks at hand, and found himself well below grade level in many academic areas...This is more than a health issue; it is a social justice issue. Millions of our children are not reaching their God-given potential because we, as adults, won't take the steps necessary to get them the nutrition they need. For the church, this problem has to be seen as a moral issue. For the sake of our children and our nation's future, we have to do better.¹

I agree. We have to do better. Teachers, healthcare professionals, counselors, clergy, and others are anticipating the first part of Pastor Steve's story to be a common story. Children with higher concentrations of lead in their bodies are prone to exhibiting behaviors that are not conducive to learning, including lower cognition. The only known solution is available to us. But not in a drive-through or at a liquor store.

But how is a community that sits in the middle of one of the least healthy counties in Michigan going to be able to regroup and move forward with the necessary changes to help ourselves and our children?

First, we are going to admit that we are incapable. We are going to stop making excuses for ourselves. We are going to quit pointing to some other power, whether it is the force, the ineffective excuse, "I'm spiritual, but I don't go to church" and the hundreds of other absurd claims that I hear every year as to why I don't see people on Sunday mornings. We are going to repent — that is, we are going to change. Our lives matter. Our children's lives matter.

The Daniel Plan
Faith, Friends, Fitness, Food and Focus

I found myself making a declaration this past week that I have declared before. I wrote and said that responding to God's will for our lives is a human right. And as a human right, we need to treat this right in the same way that we protect other human rights. But it is very difficult to respond to God's purpose for us when our health is less than it needs to be. The Daniel Plan is not the solution on its own, but it is a roadmap that points to and can help us pursue the solution. But the solution begins with God. Without God's power any plan is a non-starter.

By the way, Pastor Steve's son, Lucas, soon was off the drugs and today he is an A student. This story is not a one-of-a-kind, never to be repeated miracle. It is the sort of miracle that God offers every one of us. It is the miracle of making better choices. It is the miracle of taking care of ourselves and each other.

We will begin on Sunday, December 29, by writing down a resolution for 2020. For most of us, our resolution will begin in the same way. "In 2020 I will make my health and well-being a priority by participating in the Daniel Plan." And then we will write down a goal for each of the five areas: faith, food, friends, fitness, and focus. During the first five weeks of 2020, we will learn about each of the pillars of success, possibly modify our goals, and meet regularly with others who have made this same New Year's Resolution.

Make a New Year's Resolution for 2020 to commit to The Daniel Plan.

Join us each Sunday and invite your friends and neighbors. I lead a short Bible study in the Asbury Café at 9:30 am. *Dusty 2.0*, the musical, will be performed on Christmas Eve at 6 pm. We are praying for a big turnout, and that most of our visitors will return to participate in the Daniel Plan.

Pastor Tommy

¹ Warren, Rick. *The Daniel Plan*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan;



Life Group Questions & Notes

So then, my friends, because of God's great mercy to us I appeal to you: Offer yourselves as a living sacrifice to God, dedicated to his service and pleasing to him. This is the true worship that you should offer. Do not conform yourselves to the standards of this world, but let God transform you inwardly by a complete change of your mind. Then you will be able to know the will of God—what is good and is pleasing to him and is perfect.

Romans 12:1-2 (GNT)

NOTES FROM WORSHIP

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS

1. Read Romans 12:1-2. What does it mean to you to be a living sacrifice? How is true worship as described by Paul in this text different than Sunday worship? Have you considered what you do outside of Sunday worship as true worship? Why or why not?
2. Read the article in this week's Circuit Rider, *True worship*. Are you all in? Have you signed up to participate in the Daniel Plan and received your copy of The Daniel Plan Journal? If so, are you keeping up with the daily reflection? Are you beginning a habit of journaling?
3. How can the members of your group help you this week and on-going to help you to be more receptive to hearing and understanding the Word of God?



The Daniel Plan Journal is your starting point. Use it. Each day begins with scripture. And initially, there are questions to challenge you. For example, I realized on January 2 that I didn't drink very much water on my first day. Today I will try to drink more water. Yesterday is over. Each day there will be something to forgive yourself for that you did or didn't do the day before. Keep moving forward.

The key is that you are never in this alone. God promises to be with you every step of the way. Even when you misstep.

This is true worship

In Paul's letter to the church in Rome, he spends 11 chapters summarizing everything that God has done for you and me, and he just hit the highlights. Believing that we are who we are on our own power is the essence of arrogance.

So Paul begins chapter 12 by saying, "My friends, because of God's great mercy to us I appeal to you: Offer yourselves as a living sacrifice to God" (Romans 12:1). God created your body and expects you to care for it. Paul's advice is straightforward. Offer your body as a living sacrifice.

But what does it mean to offer our body as a living sacrifice? Paul continues to explain that to be a living sacrifice is to live a life, "dedicated to God's service and pleasing to God." In light of all that God has done, is doing, and will do for us, we use our bodies to serve God.

We gather on Sunday mornings as an act of worship. And too many people get confused. We compartmentalize our lives so much that we presume that one hour on one day each week is the extent of our worship. We check the worship box and head out into the world.

But Paul writes about what it means to God when we use our bodies to serve God when he writes, "This is the true worship that you should offer." That is, what we do with our bodies from 12 Noon on Sundays to 10:30 am the following Sunday determines whether we worship the God who created us, or some human-made god. A human-made god takes and doesn't give much back in return.

Whether the god (little "g") we serve is our job, our home, our addictions, or our nation, the gods of this world will never give back what we give to them. But the Creator God gives back more than we can ever give. This is why in Romans, verse 2, Paul writes, "Do not conform yourselves to the standards of this world." Do not let the world determine the standard by which you live your life. Do not let the world determine right and wrong for you.

So what follows in Paul's letter is critical for your success and for my success with the Daniel Plan. When we try to make lifestyle changes on our own, we either fail, or we change to a lifestyle that is not pleasing to God. Paul writes, "Let God transform you inwardly by a complete change of your mind." This is what a lifestyle change takes. But this is also the key to success with the Daniel Plan. This is what makes the Daniel Plan God's prescription for your health.

If you haven't yet signed up for the Daniel Plan, be sure to do so. Each person living in our community who signs up receives your very own copy of The Daniel Plan Journal. If you are not a part of the Asbury Community, we still invite you to participate with us, but we ask that you purchase a copy on your own. These journals can be purchased on Amazon or other vendors. You can also go to the DanielPlan.com store to buy this and other resources.

Let God transform you inwardly by a complete change of your mind.
Romans 12:12

Here at Asbury, we worship each Sunday at 10:30 am, and I believe that God is calling you to join us. Come and participate in worship, not as a spectator, but as someone who belongs to God. I lead a short Bible study in the Asbury Café at 9:30 am. You can find more information about us on our website at FlintAsbury.org.

Pastor Tommy

¹ Warren, Rick, Dr. Daniel Amen, Dr. Mark Hyman. *The Daniel Plan*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013.

² Jere Downs, "Cheese - or 'dairy crack' - is akin to opiates," *Courier Journal*, Louisville: March 11, 2017. Retrieved from: <https://www.courier-journal.com/story/life/food/farm-to-table/2017/03/07/cheese-addictive-one-doctor-calls-dairy-crack/97960476/>

³ Warren, Rick, and the Daniel Plan Team. *The Daniel Plan Journal - 40 Days to a Healthier Life*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013.

Welcome to the Asbury Community

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Neighborhood Connection



We envision a community in love with God, each other, and our neighbors evidenced by the transformation of ourselves and our neighborhood. We are a center for worship & spiritual growth, a center for connections and a center for health & wellness.

Our goal is a revitalized community where every resident can use their talents and passions for the common good, where children grow into citizens who contribute to building and maintaining a vibrant neighborhood, and all residents are able to enjoy safety, good health, a culture that fosters life long learning and satisfying lives.

We believe that such an ambitious goal can never be attained without God's grace and abundance and Christ calls each of us to be disciples willing to share our witness through words and acts.

All in (A new decade begins) ...cont. from page 6

Are you all in? For most of us, it will take some self-reflection, prayer, and a little time to commit. After all, when we are honest with

Don't you know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit?

1 Corinthians 6:19

ourselves, this is a huge deal. Am I really willing to let go of the habits that are detrimental to my health and develop new habits that are good for my health? Will I commit with my words but continue to do whatever pleases me at the moment. It's your choice.

There is a statement found in the Old Testament that occasionally gets dusted off as a reminder from ancient wisdom. It is simple and powerful. "Choose wisely."

For me, this means that I need to put aside my stubbornness and commit to God's will. Not out of hopelessness, but because of the hope that God offers.

The Daniel Plan is called "God's prescription for your health." I like this statement because it is counter to the prescriptions written by my doctors and by doctors all over the globe. And I believe the wisdom that most of our prescriptions would be unnecessary if we made the lifestyle changes that are necessary for good health. This wisdom comes from doctors when they are not trying to stuff their own pockets with money.

But without the motivation to be all in, sadly, we will be just another statistic. Most persons who commit to New Year's Resolutions that will improve health, only to give up within a few months. Left to our own will

power, this will happen. But God's prescription for our health does not depend on our own will power. It depends on God's power. We surrender our will power to God. Are you all in?

Are you all in?

Here at Asbury, we worship each Sunday at 10:30 am, and I believe that God is calling you to join us. Come and participate in worship, not as a spectator, but as someone who belongs to God. I lead a short Bible study in the Asbury Café at 9:30 am. You can find more information about us on our website at FlintAsbury.org.

Pastor Tommy

¹"Lifestyle Choices: Root Causes of Chronic Diseases," Mladen Golubic, MD, PhD. © 2013 Cleveland Clinic.

²Warren, Rick, Dr. Daniel Amen, Dr. Mark Hyman. *The Daniel Plan*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan;