

ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

Holy Goals (Pathway to better health)

Has this ever happened to you? Have you ever said to yourself, "This time is going to be different!" Sound familiar? Whether it is this time or this year, I believe that we have all tried to inspire ourselves with this resolution. "This time..." the outcome will be different than all of the times before. Something is going to change. Right?

And in some cases, this becomes a recurring theme. Nothing really changes despite our plans. Despite our intentions.

We fall short. This has happened to me more times than I want to imagine.



I don't like to let people down. Yet my role as pastor puts me in a lot of situations where I feel that I have done just that. "This year is going to be different," I declare. This year I am not committing to do

things that I cannot do," is one approach I've tried that does not work very well. When I remember that I serve a God who expects me to declare the impossible on His behalf, I remember that I am committed to being a conduit for God's love. And God does the impossible every day. But only when God decides. Meanwhile, people are disappointed in me.

What about you? Do you have significant change that you hope can

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Special points of interest:

*** Worship Design will be meeting on the 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 Association will be meeting the second Tuesday of each month until further notice, meeting will start at 7pm in the Wesley Room downstairs.

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 addiction 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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Holy Goals (Pathways to better health)...cont. from page 1

happen in your life? Keep in mind, the focus of my question is on you. I have learned the hard way that we cannot change other people. Nor can we always improve our circumstances all that much. At least, not on our own.

But what about your health? Would you like to be healthier? Would you like to wake up each morning with more energy, think

more clearly, be less dependent on prescriptions, or other ways you use to take the edge off?

I love Jeremiah, chapter 29. The prophet's letter to the exiles in Babylon is priceless. This week we reference one of my favorite parts of this chapter — one of my favorite scriptures. God lets us know that only God knows the divine plans that are in store for us, and they are for our

prosperity. God's plans offer us the future that we hope for, and not the future that the world offers us.

But God alone knows how to get us there. If we trust God with our future, then we will seek God with all of our hearts. We are genuinely 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	

Coming up this week

Jan 13	Mon	5:00pm	Youth Choir
		6:00pm	Worship Design
		7:00pm	Flint Jubilee
Jan 14	Tues	10am-2pm	Water Distribution
		6:00pm	Community Gospel Choir
		7:00pm	Kearsley Park Neighborhood Assoc
Jan 15	Wed	12Noon	Pastor Book Club
		6:00pm	Beginners Bible Study
		6-8:00pm	Rec Nite
Jan 16	Thu	6:00pm	Worship Band Practice
Jan 17	Fri	11am-2pm	Asbury Cafe Open
Jan 18	Sat	10am-12N	Japanese Jiu Jitsi
Jan 19	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
Ushers	Anthony, Jim
Production Team	Jonathon, Terrance
Children	Patrice & Mirium
Worship Leaders	Cyndi
Café	Christine & Norma

Jim Craig	Leadership Chair
Kevin Croom	Operations
Blair Neifert	Farm Manager
Israel Unger	Function to Funding

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.

Asbury Staff

Rev. Dr. Tommy McDaniel	Pastor
Connie Portillo	Office Secretary
Sylvia Pittman	Empowerment Arts

Pastor Tommy

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.**

Holy Goals (Pathways to better health) ... cont. from page 2

The Daniel Plan offers us guidance, but not a fixed pathway with a precise destination.¹ Instead, this plan is a plan to add the spiritual disciplines back into our life that the world has conspired to take away. The gods of this world demand our allegiance, and they are cleverly disguised as having our best interest in mind. But when another human tells us that they know what is best for us, we need to be careful. Even the suggestions found in the Daniel Plan should not take precedence over what God puts on our hearts.

The Daniel Plan is a guide book based on prayerful discernment.

I alone know the plans I have for you, plans to bring you prosperity and ...plans to bring about the future you hope for.

Jeremiah 29:11

Thankfully, the developers used medical research, experience, and a God-driven desire to help people become aligned with God's plan. God's Word is still the foundation. And God's daily guidance is the secret ingredient that makes it all come together. But we should interpret scripture using experience, tradition, and reason.

But as humans, we have limitations. Our first limitation is that we have a choice to make. The decision is ours to make, postpone, or turn the other way. Freewill is a divine gift that can only come from the God of Creation. "You decide", is the theme of

scripture. And if your answer is yes, the Bible is the best user manual available. All other guides are interpretations. Mine included.

So learning what the Bible has to say is an essential discipline that God offers us to help us find peace and joy in our life. It is sad how many people look elsewhere first. And even more disturbing is how many of us are more willing to listen to someone selling us something. Even though, in the end, only delays our success of achieving, "this time will be different."

I am not criticizing books, articles, papers, advice, or even Wikipedia. I am not criticizing salespeople or marketing teams. Well, maybe a little, when their sales goal is harmful to our health. I am a reader. And I am a life-long learner. I'm blessed not to be so smart that I can't learn something every day. Also, I tend to forget a lot of things that I learned, sometimes things I learned in kindergarten, that I wished I hadn't forgotten. I am talking here about which sources should take priority for us.

For example, the Daniel Plan book and some of the associated references emphasize the need for us to set goals regarding our health. The Bible does not go into some of the details that help us structure our goals. Books and experts on setting goals, emphasize the idea of SMART goals. SMART is a memory aid for writing a goal that is simple, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound. Then track your goals using your personal

*Daniel Plan Journal.*²



Also, one of the essential parts of interpreting scripture is our collective experience. And experience has proven that if we don't write down our goals, we are much less likely to achieve them. For example, experience has taught us that unless we set a goal where progress can be measured, we are unlikely to reach our goal. The specifics of writing down our goals are not found in scripture, but the Bible has a lot to say about how to go about setting life-giving goals.

This week, we are going to talk about *Holy goals*. A play on the word, Holy Ghost, because without God in the loop, our goals are more likely to take us further away from our real goal of peace and joy. On the other hand, there is something that many of us have learned from experience that is worth sharing.

Let's face it, most of us are not all that clear on the idea of God telling us what our goals should be for our health. Some of us simply take the stance that if we are sick, God should heal us. And when this does not happen, we blame God.

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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

I alone know the plans I have for you, plans to bring you prosperity and not disaster, plans to bring about the future you hope for. Then you will call to me. You will come and pray to me, and I will answer you. You will seek me, and you will find me because you will seek me with all your heart. Yes, I say, you will find me, and I will restore you to your land.

Jeremiah 29:11-14a (GNT)

NOTES FROM WORSHIP

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS

1. Read Jeremiah 29:11-14a (GNT). What does this scripture mean for you? For Asbury? For our community and our city? Can you imagine that this scripture applies to you both personally and in terms of your church and community? Why or why not? How does this affect your participation in the Daniel Plan?
2. Read the article in this week's Circuit Rider, *Holy goals*. Are you all in? Do you have some basic goals in mind for improving your health? What help do you need in writing SMART goals? Are you using the *Daniel Plan Journal* yet? Why or why not?
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.

Holy Goals (Pathway to better health) ...cont. from page 6

We don't blame ourselves. But God gave us the free will to choose how we make choices regarding taking care of our bodies. And most illness is preventable if we take care of our bodies. Ouch!

The Daniel Plan puts it on the line. You choose. If you want better health, refocus your prayers towards the prayer request, "Lord, help me to take better care of my body." Learn about what this means from others, from reading the Daniel Plan resources, and from your own experiences. And prayerfully write down your goals for making the lifestyle changes that you learn are required for you to meet your goals.

So I pray to God to show me the way. Instead of clarity, God puts this Daniel Plan thing in my path. Now what? Here is some advice that I hope can work for you. Do

something. Worry less about whether you clearly heard God's voice with a well-defined SMART goal. Instead, focus more on staying connected to God to help with discerning your day to day progress and challenges. God will answer. In my experience, God answers prayer as you go forward rather than while you are sitting around waiting for a bush to catch on fire.

Trust that God has a plan in mind for you. But God is infinitely wiser and more powerful than we are. If you make a mistake, God still has your well-being in mind. God can work with whatever you give Him. But only when you are all in. It really is a trust thing. Trust that God will help you adjust as you move forward. But first, the decision is yours.

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.

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