

Daniel—How to be a Christian Influence

Daniel One

Ice Breaker—What is the most special Christmas that you remember, perhaps one in which you seemed especially close to God?

***Daniel 1:1-7** In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. **2** And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with some of the vessels of the house of God. And he brought them to the land of Shinar, to the house of his god, and placed the vessels in the treasury of his god. **3** Then the king commanded Ashpenaz, his chief eunuch, to bring some of the people of Israel, both of the royal family and of the nobility, **4** youths without blemish, of good appearance and skillful in all wisdom, endowed with knowledge, understanding learning, and competent to stand in the king's palace, and to teach them the literature and language of the Chaldeans. **5** The king assigned them a daily portion of the food that the king ate, and of the wine that he drank. They were to be educated for three years, and at the end of that time they were to stand before the king. **6** Among these were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah of the tribe of Judah. **7** And the chief of the eunuchs gave them names: Daniel he called Belteshazzar, Hananiah he called Shadrach, Mishael he called Meshach, and Azariah he called Abednego.*

1. In gleaning out the wiser young men of Judah, what do you think Nebuchadnezzar was trying to accomplish, even to the point of changing their names?

2. Explain some of the cultural changes that must have taken place in the lives of these four young men. What are some ways our culture today is pulling Christianity out of norms?

Daniel 1:8-16 *8 But Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself with the king's food, or with the wine that he drank. Therefore he asked the chief of the eunuchs to allow him not to defile himself. 9 And God gave Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the chief of the eunuchs, 10 and the chief of the eunuchs said to Daniel, "I fear my lord the king, who assigned your food and your drink; for why should he see that you were in worse condition than the youths who are of your own age? So you would endanger my head with the king." 11 Then Daniel said to the steward whom the chief of the eunuchs had assigned over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, 12 "Test your servants for ten days; let us be given vegetables to eat and water to drink. 13 Then let our appearance and the appearance of the youths who eat the king's food be observed by you, and deal with your servants according to what you see." 14 So he listened to them in this matter, and tested them for ten days. 15 At the end of ten days it was seen that they were better in appearance and fatter in flesh than all the youths who ate the king's food. 16 So the steward took away their food and the wine they were to drink, and gave them vegetables.*

3. How do you think Daniel would compromise his faith if he ate the king's food? Why was the eunuch afraid to grant Daniel's request?

4. Given Daniel's resolve (v. 8), how did Daniel solve his cultural difference?

5. After ten days of the testing, how did the young men appear and what was the impact of their appearance? (see verses 16 & 17 for a hint) How did Daniel use his relationship with the chief official?

6. One of the unspoken themes here is sanctification- the idea of people separating themselves especially for God. Daniel was willing to be marked as separate, even though he knew that might lead to problems. Can you think of a time when you separated yourself for God's special use?

7. Pastor Dave says that we should “keep bringing value while returning to your identity in Christ.” In the middle of the current crisis, what are some of the ways you notice Christians making positive changes?

8. Without compromising our identity, how might we make positive changes in the midst of the current environment?

Daniel 1:17-21 To these four young men God gave knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning. And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds. **18** At the end of the time set by the king to bring them into his service, the chief official presented them to Nebuchadnezzar. **19** The king talked with them, and he found none equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; so they entered the king’s service. **20** In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters in his whole kingdom. **21** And Daniel remained there until the first year of King Cyrus.

9. Pastor Dave says “It is better to make a difference than to make a point?” What is the difference between making a point and making a difference? Can you think of a time when the actions of someone else made a profound change in your outlook?

10. What were the two things that God gave the young men? When the king tested them, how did he find them?

11. How did God gift Daniel and his three friends? How do you think they were a help to the nation of Israel?

Pastor Dave ends his sermon by encouraging us to “know right from wrong, but stop striving to prove your case. . . instead, do right as you engage our culture.”

12. How can we individually know right from wrong, but not get lost in proving our case? How we can live closer to God while still engaging our culture?