



PURITY UNDER PRESSURE

Daniel 1:1-21

Nebuchadnezzar wanted them to be Jews on the Outside (to help him govern the Jewish people) but Babylonian on the Inside (to think like him and to hold values like the Babylonians).

Daniel teaches us that the struggle is not to make the culture Christian, but how a Christian can live in a hostile culture. Daniel takes a stand and places himself against his culture. But what occasioned surprise was the extent to which he exposed himself to the pagan thinking and culture that surrounded him. Moreover, we are shocked by the great effort he took to keep his distinctiveness quiet. Daniel was no Origen, the third-century theologian, who as a young man desired to throw himself in front of the emperor's chariot and proclaim Christ so he could achieve the glory of a martyr's death. Neither was Daniel a Jerome, who fled to a monastery to avoid worldly pollution or, when feeling the unwanted arousal of sexual stimulation, would throw himself into a thorny bush. [NIV Application Commentary, *Daniel*, 66]

Jesus calls us to be "in the world, but not of it" (John 17:16), but also to be as "shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves." (Matt. 10:16).

1 John 5:19 - We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one.

(TLB) ¹⁹ We know that we are children of God and that all the rest of the world around us is under Satan's power and control.

Ron Dunn says, "The picture here is that of a little baby lying in the lap of his mother, absolutely helpless. The devil was so successful that the Scripture says that the whole world lies helplessly in the lap, in the power, in the grip, of the devil."

1) Daniel and His Dilemma (v.5)

Daniel 1:5, "And the king appointed for them a daily provision of the king's delicacies and of the wine which he drank."

NEW EDUCATION, NEW NAMES, NEW DIET

He didn't draw the line when it came to the education.

- If we are going to minister in the culture we live in, we are going to know something of the culture.
- God uses highly educated people to serve Him. (Paul quoted Greek Philosophers; Moses – Acts 7:22)

5 Worldly Reasons why Daniel Should Have Eaten the Meat [BILL BENNETT]

1. Only a kid – 15 years old (probably) certainly not older than
2. Far away from home
3. A good way to get an advancement [*many men can say “no” to liquor from regular folks, but can’t say “no” to their boss or other executive*]
4. Fear of execution
5. God had let him down [so he could have thought]. God’s not my friend. He didn’t keep me safe. He took me off into captivity.

His Peers May Have Pressured:

- “Listen, Daniel, we’re a long way from home. Nobody will know or care what you do here. We are off here by ourselves.”
- “Come on, Daniel, it’s just a little thing. It really doesn’t matter.”
- “Now then, Daniel, let’s not get legalistic about this. You can carry that kind of thing too far.”
- “Daniel, it may not be strictly kosher, but it will give us an opportunity to witness. How can we win people if we offend them.” [Vines, 28]

2) Daniel and His Decision (v.8)

Daniel 1:8, “But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king’s delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.”

TODAY’S APPLICATION: I will not defile myself:

- Marrying a non-believer (2 Cor. 6:14)
- Foolish friends (Ex. 23:2; 1 Cor. 15:33)
- Dishonest money (1 Timothy 6:10)
- Intoxicants (alcohol and drugs) (Hab. 2:15; Prov. 20:1; Prov. 31:4-7; Prov. 23:29-35)
- Sexual immorality (Heb. 13:4; 1 Cor. 6:18)

3) Daniel and His Difference (v.15)

Daniel 1:15, “And at the end of ten days their features appeared better and fatter in flesh than all the young men who ate the portion of the king’s delicacies.”

Whom we serve will eventually show on our faces.

Psalm 119:97-99: “Oh how I love thy law! It is my meditation all the day. Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation.”

4) Daniel and His Destiny (v.21)

Daniel 1:21, “Thus Daniel continued until the first year of King Cyrus.” (see Ezra 1:1)

***Your decisions today affect your destiny tomorrow.
A holy person is a powerful tool in God’s hands.***