

# GOD AT WORK

## Group Discussion Guide – Education & Work

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### WARM-UP

1. What's a foreign culture that fascinates you? What about it do you find interesting?
  2. What did you want to "grow up to be" when you were a kid?
  3. In your field of study or work, what are some typical ways that people act without integrity?
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### TRUTH

#### Read Daniel 1

When Daniel and his friends arrived in Babylon after being exiled from Jerusalem, they encountered a drastically different culture. They would be faced with the challenge of how to remain faithful to God in the midst of a culture that wasn't all that godly. The fields we work in can be like Babylon. Some aspects might be good and some might be ungodly. We face the same challenge that Daniel and his friends did. By paying close attention to their example, we can hold onto faithfulness in the midst of a work world that doesn't make it easy.

#### A Part Of The Culture

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. Among these were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah of the tribe of Judah. 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. (Daniel 1:5-7)

Notice how Daniel and his friends don't reject many aspects of the culture they're a part of. They receive Babylonian education, Babylonian clothes, and even Babylonian names. Being a Christian doesn't mean you extract out of your field and go live in the woods (unless that's where your field happens to be). It means doing excellent work in your field, knowing that your primary identity rests with God and not the culture. We can be Christians and excellent in our fields.

- ▶ What impact would it have if Christians extracted themselves from all fields of study and work?

## Apart From The Culture

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. (Daniel 1:8)

There were certain lines, however, that Daniel and his friends wouldn't cross. Eating kosher food was part of the covenant between God and Israel, so eating the king's food would've meant "defiling" themselves before God. There will be lines in our fields we can't cross and still remain faithful to God. It's vital that we know these lines (by knowing God's word), see them clearly, and pray for the courage to stand firm even when it costs us.

- ▶ What are some lines in the your field of work or study that Christians shouldn't cross?

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## GRACE

### The God Of All Culture

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. (Daniel 1:15)

In the eyes of the Babylonians, rejecting the king's food in favor of vegetables was foolish. Daniel and his friends would obviously be weakened and would fall behind their colleagues. That's the same perceived risk we run by remaining faithful to God in our fields—falling behind everyone else. The Babylonians, however, didn't realize the true source of Daniel's strength – faithfulness to God. God gives wisdom, insight, and courage to the faithful who trust him for success and make him their true strength.

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## CHANGE

- ▶ In his stand of faithfulness, Daniel didn't go it alone. He had Hannaniah, Mishael, and Azariah. Who are some Christians in your field who you can stay connected with to help strengthen your faithfulness?
- ▶ In Daniel 1-2, it's clear that Daniel and his friends prayed for wisdom and insight when navigating the tension of culture and faithfulness. Do you regularly pray for wisdom and insight in your field? Why or why not?
- ▶ What do you think faithfulness to God looks like in your field of work or study? How are you doing in your faithfulness?

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## PRAYER

- ▶ Pray for wisdom and insight to be excellent in your field.
- ▶ Pray for courage to stand firm in faith when it gets difficult.