



onechurch

bigIdea



In this political season, we've been lead to believe that there are only two options for change. That change happens when we vote for a certain candidate. When we vote for a certain political party. But true change—and the potential for change—doesn't just happen in Washington. True, lasting change doesn't begin in the White House, but in your house. America's best hope for the future doesn't depend upon Obama or Mitt Romney—America's best hope for the future is you and I and Christians everywhere taking a stand and not just voting—but living differently. Living in this world and living like Christ followers. Because America's best kept secret isn't Republican or Democrat, Elephants or Donkeys. America's hope isn't about elephants and donkeys—America and the world's best hope is you living a godly life in a dark place.

BIG IDEA: When we compromise, we compromise our influence.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Recall your first days at college, basic training, camp, or any other away-from-home training. What was it like? What were you feeling?
2. What kind of experience do you think it was for Daniel and his friends to be taken captive from Jerusalem to Babylon? What do you think they were thinking and feeling?
3. Daniel was great. Consider the *great* people you know. Do you consider them *great* as a result of their character or because of their accomplishments?
4. When have you ever chosen to pursue success or recognition at the expense of your integrity?
5. "The most direct path to success or maintaining success is often not the most ethical one." Do you agree or disagree?
6. Daniel could have chosen a shortcut to success, but it would have sabotaged God's future plans for him and his friends. How have you sabotaged God's blessing on your life by choosing to compromise?
7. *Read Daniel 1.* Trace Daniel's emotions through this chapter. How would Daniel feel in verse 3? Verse 8? Verse 15? Verse 20?
8. By the end of the book, Daniel is recognized as great and his name is recorded in the Bible. How does his decision in this chapter reflect his greatness?
9. *Read Daniel 1:1-2.* What does the fact of God's sovereignty (God is in control) mean to you in your everyday life?
10. *Read Daniel 1:3-7.* How were these Israelites chosen and trained for the king's special service? (1:3-7) What specific tactics were used to give Daniel and his friends a new Babylonian orientation? How did the king seek to capture their mind? Their body? Their loyalty?
11. Chris said, "*We must be excellent, and follow that up with character.*" We have to get past the fact that Christians are looked like second best at everything that we do, because we're Christians. What do you think he meant by that? Why is doing things with excellence important? Why is character important?
12. Have you ever met Christians who aren't excellent and have gaps in their character? What do you think about their faith?
13. Why do you think the chief official changed the Israelite's names? You can pick more than one:
 - a. to intimidate them
 - b. to brand them
 - c. to frighten them
 - d. to anger them
 - e. to discourage them
 - f. to assimilate them



14. What happens when people lose their wealth, their identity, their education, culture and are trained in ways foreign to their personal identity?
15. *Read Daniel 1:8*. When Daniel became prisoners of war, they were pressured to change many things as a part of their ‘training’ process. What concessions were they willing to make and where did they draw the line and say no? Why do you think they drew the line where they did?
16. Daniel and his friends had to determine which parts of Babylonian culture they could live with and which parts they should stand against. How do you make that determination in your own culture?
17. What is an example of an area where you have said, “I draw the line here and I will not cross it?” What has happened as you have made this stand and maintained your integrity?
18. How has God rewarded you for taking a stand for righteousness? (Daniel 1) On the other hand, what price have you had to pay? (Daniel 3, 6)
19. Chris said, “If you compromise on little things, you will compromise on big things. Little compromises lead to big compromises.” Speculate how would Daniel’s life be different had he compromised here in chapter 1—the beginning of his story?
20. Jesus said that His followers were to go into all the *world*, which is the Greek word *kosmos*, which means the social order which exists. What areas of society are lacking a Christian influence right now?
21. *Read Colossians 3:23*. Why is work often thought of as ‘secular’, and church described as ‘sacred’? Discuss God’s purpose for work.
22. What are you doing specifically to win the respect and admiration of non-Christians—your boss, your fellow employees, your professors, your classmates, your unsaved neighbors?

MOVING FORWARD

What ways does God want to use you to change the culture of your workplace? Change the culture of your neighborhood? Change the culture of where you live and where you do life?

Every decision you make and the subsequent outcome writes a chapter in the story of your life. For Daniel, the wisdom and courage he displayed to know and do what’s right, even when it was hard, demonstrated his greatness far beyond any accomplishments he may have achieved. What are some of the areas Christians take a stand against in the secular environment that should be secondary issues, thus hindering our impact with others?

CHANGING YOUR MIND

Work hard and cheerfully at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people.
Colossians 3:23

