

# STAND

HOW TO THRIVE IN A CULTURE OF COMPROMISE



## STAND, PART 1: WHEN CULTURE SHIFTS

Over the last couple decades? Hasn't it felt like our culture has increasingly gotten darker and darker? We get numb to the cycle that we go through: natural disasters, school shootings, lootings and beatings, teachers getting pepper sprayed. We become callous because we've seen it so much. We want to do something, but we don't know what to do to fix all of these problems. How do you live a godly life when culture shifts?

**BIG IDEA:** How do you live a Godly life when culture shifts? By being people full of grace and truth.

## 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 were some of the losses, changes, and traumas that Daniel and his friends faced, and how could these experiences have deflated and discouraged them?
3. During this tragic time in Israel's history, how do you see God still present and at work among His people?
4. In your opinion, is it too easy or too hard to become a Christian?
5. [With your Bible or Bible App, read Daniel 1:1-2.](#)

*<sup>1</sup> During the third year of King Jehoiakim's reign in Judah, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. <sup>2</sup> And the Lord delivered Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand. The Lord permitted Nebuchadnezzar to take some of the sacred objects from the Temple of God. So Nebuchadnezzar took them back to the land of Babylonia and placed them in the treasure-house of his god.*

[Daniel 1:1-2 \(NLT\)](#)

6. Chris said, "God is always in control of who's in control." Do you know this to be true?
7. What does the fact of God's sovereignty (God is in control) mean to you in your everyday life?
8. When you read the Bible, does it emphasize God's in control or deemphasize this? When you consume social media and the news, do they emphasize this or deemphasize that God is in control? So what do you need more of in your life?
9. [With your Bible or Bible App, read Daniel 1:3-7.](#)

*<sup>3</sup> Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, his chief of staff, to bring to the palace some of the young men of Judah's royal family and other noble families, who had been brought to Babylon as captives. <sup>4</sup> "Select only strong, healthy, and good-looking young men," he said. "Make sure they are well versed in every branch of learning, are gifted with knowledge and good judgment, and are suited to serve in the royal palace. Train these young men in the language and literature of Babylon." <sup>5</sup> The king assigned them a daily ration of food and wine from his own kitchens. They were to be trained for three years, and then they would enter the royal service. <sup>6</sup> Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were four of the young men chosen, all from the tribe of Judah. <sup>7</sup> The chief of staff Ashpenaz renamed them with these Babylonian names: Daniel was called Belteshazzar. Hananiah was called Shadrach. Mishael was called Meshach. Azariah was called Abednego.*

[Daniel 1:3-7 \(NLT\)](#)

10. 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. 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
12. Chris said, *"When culture shifts, it will try to rename you. But the only one who can name you is the one who made you."* How does our culture try to rename and label you?

## THINK ABOUT IT

What ways does God want to use you to change the culture? 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?

## MOVING FORWARD

We have to work hard not to be a church where grace and truth conflict but coexist. Jesus was full of both grace and truth. So, in response, let's make three commitments:

- Let's be more concerned with who we are reaching rather than who we are keeping.
- Let's always present the ideal while embracing what is real. Let's always err on the side of grace.
- Let's not allow our theology to get in the way of ministering to everyone.

## CHANGING YOUR MIND

*"Select only strong, healthy, and good-looking young men," he said. "Make sure they are well versed in every branch of learning, are gifted with knowledge and good judgment, and are suited to serve in the royal palace. Train these young men in the language and literature of Babylon."* Daniel 1:4