

# “GOD’S BLESSINGS ON THE DEVOUT”

DANIEL 1:17-21

**Theme:** When a believer is faithful to God in small ways, He grants them opportunity to serve Him in more significant ways.

## I. He Blesses Their Preparations for Ministry -1:17

### A. *OUR PREPARATION IS PRACTICAL*

1. The statement *“as for these four youths, ...”* – a distinction is drawn between these four specific ones and all the rest of those captives being trained with them.
2. Because of their devotion to the Lord and their commitment to His service, God takes special interest in them and endows them with a greater stewardship than the rest – cp. [Luke 12:48](#); [Matthew 13:12](#).
3. He grants them *“knowledge and intelligence in every branch of literature and wisdom.”*
  - a) *“knowledge”* [מַדָּע] – refers to the ability to penetrate through the mists of heathen uncertainty and detect what was actually true.
  - b) *“Intelligence in every branch of literature”* – refers to the master of all the subjects studied in the books available to the Chaldeans so that they could explain its nature and significance.
  - c) *“wisdom”* [חָכְמָה] – the ability to rightly apply the knowledge acquired, and to do so in the fear of God, shrewdness or prudence.
4. These represent the practical, general preparation that God provides those who are devoted to Him – how to perceive truth, the increase of knowledge and the right ability to apply it – cp. [Luke 1:80](#); [2:40, 52](#).

### B. *OUR PREPARATION IS PRECURSORY*

1. However, the preparation of three men wasn’t generic – it was also tailored to equip them for what they would face down the road.
2. We are told specifically about how Daniel was prepared – *“Daniel even understood all kinds of visions and dreams.”*
3. This ability was completely separated from the disciplines to which the mind of man can contribute – this ability was entirely of God.

4. This ability to interpret dreams (of others) and visions (of his own) would consume the better part of his career as recorded in Scripture.

## II. He Blesses them by Performance of Ministry - 1:18-20

### A. *THE OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE* - vv. 18-19

1. Verse 18 propels us to the conclusion of their training and shows us how their hard work and the blessing of God resulted in doors of opportunity to serve.
2. *“Then at the end of the days which the King has specified for presenting them, the commander of the officials present them before Nebuchadnezzar.”*
3. Now by the grace of God, when they were evaluated by the King, they performed with excellence – *“the King talked with them, and out of them all not one was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah.”*
4. The King was able to see the hand of a gracious God, albeit unwittingly, and saw the difference in the performance of these young men.
5. In fact, *“they entered the King’s personal service”* – a position of great privilege and success.
6. The Scriptures are clear that God is the one to be credited with their placement there, not merely the result of their intelligence.
7. As they consistently demonstrated faithfulness and devotion to God, God repeatedly responds by granting them increasingly significant opportunities to serve Him.

### B. *THE DISTINCTION OF SERVICE* - v. 20

1. *“As for every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the King consulted them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians, and conjurers who were in all his realm.”*
2. *“ten times better”* – is literally “ten hands better” – indicating their performance once on the job was supernaturally blessed by God.
3. Notice that they weren’t merely compared to their peers within those brought over in captivity, but to *“all the magicians, and conjurers who were in his realm.”*
4. The careers of these men primarily dealt with providing the king counsel concerning matters beyond merely logic and traditional discipline.

5. It is true that those who allow their lives to be lived according to the truths of God's Word find prosperity and blessing – cp. [Psalm 1:2-3](#).

### III. He Blesses Their Perpetuation of Ministry - 1:21

#### A. *THE BLESSING OF PERPETUATED SERVICE*

1. We are told that *“Daniel continued until the first year of Cyrus the king.”*
2. This would mean that Daniel was present for the entire 70 years of captivity that was fulfilled – being approximately 85-90 years old when Cyrus decreed for the Jews to return to their land.
3. Daniel lasted, by the grace of God, “through all the plots and intrigues that regularly exist in oriental courts; through all the jealousy and envy that could only be expected toward a foreign captive in high office; through a series of four rapid successions of Babylonian kings, two of which had suffered assassination; and through the fall of Babylon itself to the genius of Cyrus, the Medo-Persian.”<sup>1</sup>
4. *“The first year of Cyrus the king”* would have been October, 539 BC, about 66 years after Daniel's captivity, making him about 81 years old – cp. [Daniel 10:1](#).

#### B. *THE BASIS OF PERPETUATED SERVICE*

1. Faithfulness to the Lord – cp. [Psalm 37:1-6](#).
2. Personal Discipline – [Daniel 1:8](#).
3. Exercise of Wisdom – [Daniel 2:14](#).
4. Courage – [Daniel 2:16](#).
5. Humility – [Daniel 2:27-28](#).
6. Vision for what God can do – [Daniel 3:17](#).
7. The Anointing of God's Spirit – [Daniel 6:3](#).
8. Integrity – [Daniel 6:4](#).
9. Patience – [Daniel 6:4](#).
10. Prayerfulness – [Daniel 6:10](#).

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<sup>1</sup> Leon Wood, A Commentary on Daniel, p. 47.