

Underdog: Under God - Daniel

Icebreaker – What attribute(s) of the Vail Valley culture has most influenced you?

In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. And the Lord delivered Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the articles from the temple of God. (Daniel 1:1-2a)

Daniel: an underdog where godly character collides with ungodly culture...

- **Your values are challenged** – “Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, chief of his court officials, to bring in some of the Israelites from the royal family and the nobility – young men without any physical defect, handsome, showing aptitude for every kind of learning, well informed, quick to understand, and qualified to serve in the king’s palace. He was to teach them the language and literature of the Babylonians. The king assigned them a daily amount of food and wine from the king’s table.” **(Daniel 1:3-5a)** –
- **Your identity is challenged** – “Among these were some from Judah: Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. The chief official gave them new names: to Daniel, the name Belteshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abednego.” **(Daniel 1:6-7)**

How do your Christian values/identity align and/or collide with what the world values and how it sees its identity? Personally, what of culture is the biggest risk for you succumbing to its pressure?

Maintaining godliness in the face of worldliness requires personal conviction...

Name some of your core convictions? What areas still cause confusion? What needs to happen in order to move that confused conviction to certainty?

- **Determine what’s right ahead of time** – “But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food...” **(Daniel 1:8)**

Three levels of conviction...

- **Public** – what I say I believe
- **Private** – what I think I believe
- **Core** – what my actions reveal I believe – “Even if all fall away, I will not.” **(Mark 14:29)**

When you read the “three levels of conviction” in the box above, do you notice any obvious discrepancies for the the values in your life. (ie: what you do/say in public isn’t what you do/say in private?)

- **Be gracious every time** – “...he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself in this way.” **(Daniel 1:8)**

...always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else. **(1 Thes. 5:15)**

- **Trust God all the time** – “Please test your servants for ten days: Give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink. Then compare our appearance with that of the young men who eat the royal food, and treat your servants in accordance with what you see.” **(Daniel 1:12-13)**

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Of the three “personal conviction” bullets above, which most strikes you as the one God may be laying on your heart today in order to solidify it in your life? Maybe as you stand firm in that, God will grant you with the following point! Pray about this to close.

As you stand firm on your convictions, God will take care of your direction...

And Daniel remained there until the first year of King Cyrus. (Daniel 1:21)