

## Conversation Starters

- Do you have any success stories from your past?
- Do you have any failure stories from your past?

## Discuss

**Faithfulness to God is about giving Him your best no matter what. It often seems that faith and success are at odds against each other. The life of Daniel, a man in the Bible who chased after God in everything, shows us that they do not have to be. When it came to a choice of doing something that would compromise his faith versus doing what would lead to obvious success, Daniel chose his faith first. It was a choice he “purposed in his heart” long before faced with making that decision.**

*But Daniel was determined not to defile himself by eating the food and wine given to them by the king. He asked the chief of staff for permission not to eat these unacceptable foods. ([Daniel 1:8 NLT](#))*

- Have you ever been in a position where you felt faith and success were at odds?
- Are there certain stands for faith that are easy to choose?
- Are there certain stands for faith that are hard to choose?

**Christians are called to be transformers, working in the world to introduce everyone to a living and active relationship with Christ. Christians were never meant to be removed from culture, nor are they meant to ignore their faith and solely live for what culture says – neither will make a difference in the world. Christians are to be in the world, but not of it.**

*I’m not asking you to take them out of the world, but to keep them safe from the evil one. They do not belong to this world any more than I do. Make them holy by your truth; teach them your word, which is truth. Just as you sent me into the world, I am sending them into the world. ([John 17:15-18 NLT](#))*

- Have you ever wanted to remove yourself from culture?
- Can you think of examples in Jesus’s life where he faced choosing culture over faith?
- How does Jesus’s example provide encouragement to you?

**Living as a Christian in a world that has different values can be tough. Choosing to honor God requires us to place our trust in Him. Daniel did and he believed God would honor that faithfulness. Daniel ended up being successful for a very long time. Success may not always look like it did for Daniel or what the world would call successful, but we can be certain that God will honor us.**

*God gave these four young men an unusual aptitude for understanding every aspect of literature and wisdom. And God gave Daniel the special ability to interpret the meanings of visions and dreams...Daniel remained in the royal service until the first year of the reign of King Cyrus. ([Daniel 1:18,21 NLT](#))*

- Do you find it hard to trust God?
- What does success look like to you?
- Do you believe God will honor decisions you make for Him?

## Next Steps

Spend some time reflecting on Daniel’s story. Read his full story in the Bible. Pray about trusting in God. If you can purpose now to honor God in everything, use these steps to live like Daniel did:

1. **Be in the world, not of it.** Do not remove yourself from culture, but be diligent in growing in your faith and relationship with God above all.
2. **When you make stands, don’t be obnoxious.** Be respectful of everyone around you.
3. **Don’t make unnecessary scenes; Daniel obeyed quietly.** Try to think of alternatives to choices you could or do face that would not compromise your faith.
4. **Resolve to take stands that you absolutely need to and trust God.** There are certain [beliefs](#) in the Bible that are essential to the Christian faith. Never waiver on these. Can you think of some others that you need to decide now to stand for?

## Further Reflection

Read [Daniel 1 NLT](#).

## Pray

God, thank you for the life and example of Daniel. Thank you for showing us that we can trust you and that you will honor the decisions we make for you. Help us to be courageous and purposeful to stand up for our faith in You and use Your wisdom to guide us with each decision we make in our lives and the culture around us.