

IN THE WORLD, NOT OF IT

Bright Lights in a Dark World: Daniel - 2

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Text: Daniel 1:1-21

The World Wants You—And it Wants Your Children

"Then the king commanded Ashpenaz, his chief eunuch, to bring some of the people of Israel... youths without blemish... and to teach them the literature and language of the Chaldeans. The king assigned them a daily portion of the food that the king ate, and of the wine that he drank. They were to be educated for three years, and at the end of that time they were to stand before the king.... And the chief of the eunuchs gave them names: Daniel he called Belteshazzar, Hananiah he called Shadrach, Mishael he called Meshach, and Azariah he called Abednego." (Daniel 1:3–7)

"Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world." (1 John 2:15–16)

Resisting Assimilation Requires Disciplined, Corporate Effort

"But Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself with the king's food, or with the wine that he drank.... Then Daniel said to the steward whom the chief of the eunuchs had assigned over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, "Test your servants for ten days; let us be given vegetables to eat and water to drink." (Daniel 1:8–12)

God Helps Those Who Remain Faithful to Him

"At the end of ten days it was seen that they were better in appearance and fatter in flesh than all the youths who ate the king's food. So the steward took away their food and the wine they were to drink, and gave them vegetables." (Daniel 1:15–16)

"You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, "He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us"? But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble." Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you." (James 4:4–10)

We Have Life Because Jesus Would Not Assimilate

"Then Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written, "You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve."" (Matthew 4:10)

"The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify about it that its works are evil." (John 7:7)

Discussion Questions

- 1) What is the one place where you feel the greatest pressure to assimilate to the world?
- 2) What disciplines and practices help you resist? Are they sufficient?
- 3) How can we help one another do better?
- 4) How can we make things better for the next generation of believers?