

Spiritual Growth Questions for February 26, 2023

1. **Read Daniel 1:8-16.** How would you summarize what Daniel was trying to prove by the kind of testing he pursued in these verses? What were the most significant obstacles Daniel had to overcome in verses 8-16?
2. **Read Daniel 1:8.** Daniel 1:8 says that Daniel purposed/resolved in his heart...” not to defile himself. The idea here is that he made up his mind or resolved not to compromise his principles. How does someone do this? What’s involved in having firm purposes and enduring commitments? What’s the downside of making these commitments? Upside?
3. **Read Daniel 1:12-16.** How did the chief of the eunuchs respond to Daniel’s request? What part did God have in helping Daniel stand firm? How do you think this test prepared them for the future?
4. **Read Proverbs 4:23.** What does it mean to keep your heart with all diligence? How does this command apply to what Daniel and his friends faced? What’s wrong with the argument “Everybody else is doing it?” Have you ever had a conviction that went against the culture around you? What did you do?
5. **Read Daniel 1:17-19.** What did God give to the four youths? What did God give to Daniel? Where do you think the magicians and enchanters get their wisdom and understanding? Why was Daniel’s wisdom better than theirs?
6. **Read Daniel 1:20-21.** Why do you think a person with Daniel’s values and convictions would be valuable to a secular king? Why do you think a person with Christian convictions would be a valuable employee? What stands out about the length of Daniel’s service?
7. **Read I Peter 4:10.** What physical, mental and spiritual blessings has the Lord given to you? How can you use them to bring glory and honor to him the way Daniel and his friends did?
8. From these verses, what did you learn from Daniel’s experience that could help you when your values are being tested?

Deeper study: Think about areas of your life that tend to make you anxious. Write one or two of them below. Next to each one, write a truth about God that corresponds to the situation. For example, if an area that makes you anxious is finances, next to that you might write, “My God will supply all my needs.” After you have made your list, ask God to help you to trust Him in each of these areas of your life.

Prayer: Dear Sovereign Lord, I recognize that you have placed me right where you want me to be in this broken world. I humbly ask that you prepare and use me as your witness to the people you have placed in my life. May my identity as your child be stronger than any pressures this world may place on me. May your wisdom to me guide me through the obstacles that I am facing right now. I place my obstacles in your hand, and I trust you with the outcome as I follow you this week. In the name of Jesus, Amen!

Living for God in a Broken World: A Study of Daniel Navigating through the Obstacles Daniel 1:8-21 February 26, 2023, Pastor John Lloyd

How do we live for God in ungodly times-like our own. Is it worth standing firm and obeying God when His kingdom seems so far away? How can we live courageously and confidently in nations that do not seek to live under God’s rule? How is it possible to be a blessing to our nations and show the power and goodness of our God, even in a time such as ours? This is the context that Daniel found himself in. This story will exalt God as king and His kingdom in ways that will ultimately find their fulfillment in Jesus. Today, we will see how Daniel and his three friends navigated through the obstacles that were challenging them. My prayer is that we will learn to trust God with the obstacles we are facing. “I can trust God with all of my obstacles!”

Daniel 1:8 But Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself with the king's food, or with the wine that he drank. Therefore, he asked the chief of the eunuchs to allow him not to defile himself. 9 And God gave Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the chief of the eunuchs, 10 and the chief of the eunuchs said to Daniel, “I fear my lord the king, who assigned your food and your drink; for why should he see that you were in worse condition than the youths who are of your own age? So you would endanger my head with the king.” 11 Then Daniel said to the steward whom the chief of the eunuchs had assigned over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, 12 “Test your servants for ten days; let us be given vegetables to eat and water to drink. 13 Then let our appearance and the appearance of the youths who eat the king's food be observed by you, and deal with your servants according to what you see.” 14 So he listened to them in this matter and tested them for ten days. 15 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. 16 So the steward took away their food and the wine they were to drink and gave them vegetables. 17 As for these four youths, God gave them learning and skill in all literature and wisdom, and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams. 18 At the end of the time, when the king had commanded that they should be brought in, the chief of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar. 19 And the king spoke with them, and among all of them none was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. Therefore, they stood before the king. 20 And in every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters that were in all his kingdom. 21 And Daniel was there until the first year of King Cyrus.

Background on Nebuchadnezzar: 2 Kings 25:1-7 King Zedekiah and his sons. Jeremiah 29:21-23 Zedekiah and Ahab executed by fire. This king was an expert in torture, and his word was law. His cruelty was unparalleled.

Daniel 5:18-19- O king, the Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar your father kingship and greatness and glory and majesty. ¹⁹ And because of the greatness that he gave him, all peoples, nations, and languages trembled and feared before him. Whom he would, he killed, and whom he would, he kept alive; whom he would, he raised up, and whom he would, he humbled.

Big Idea: I can't overcome all the obstacles that I face while living on this earth, but God can! I can trust God with my obstacles!

I. _____ Obstacle: _____ to put God _____ in all areas.

Daniel 1:8 But Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself with the king's food, or with the wine that he drank. Therefore, he asked the chief of the eunuchs to allow him not to defile himself. (Daniel 10:1-3)

Matthew 6:33 But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. (Matt. 7:24-25 House built on a rock.)

Don't wait till the moment you are being tempted to tell yourself that you won't sin. Decide in advance not to sin. Defilement distances God's people from His protection. (I Corinthians 10:13, James 1:13-15)

Daniel and his friends were forced to be in Babylon, but they would not let Babylon get into them. They made a conscious and determined decision to say no. Daniel Akin

Guiding Principles: Purity is my number one priority over pleasure. I resolve to follow God no matter what! Purity choices prepare me for future battles. I can trust God with my obstacles!

II. Direct _____ Obstacle: _____ the _____ into God's hands.

Daniel 1:9 And God **gave** Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the chief of the eunuchs, ¹⁰ and the chief of the eunuchs said to Daniel, "I fear my lord the king, who assigned your food and your drink; for why should he see that you were in worse condition than the youths who are of your own age? So you would endanger my head with the king."

Three options: We don't settle in at all. We merge with the culture. The only way to faithful living is through relationship. Gabriel Hilleson

Daniel 1:11 Then Daniel said to the steward whom the chief of the eunuchs had assigned over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, ¹² "Test your servants for ten days; let us be given vegetables to eat and water to drink. ¹³ Then let our appearance and the appearance of the youths who eat the king's food be observed by you, and deal with your servants according to what you see."

Test your servant-

Daniel 1:14 So he listened to them in this matter and tested them for ten days. ¹⁵ 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. ¹⁶ So the steward took away their food and the wine they were to drink and gave them vegetables

Philippians 4:19 And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. (See deeper study question)

Guiding Principles: God knows where exactly where you are. Seek God's wisdom for a path. Follow the Holy Spirit's leading. I can trust God with my obstacles!

III. _____ Conflict Obstacle: _____ all you have is from God.

Daniel 1:17 As for these four youths, God **gave** them learning and skill in all literature and wisdom, and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams. ¹⁸ At the end of the time, when the king had commanded that they should be brought in, the chief of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar.

Daniel and his friends are an excellent model for the integration of faith and higher learning. Although they were forced to be involved in the most challenging and pagan curriculum of the day, they kept their vital piety and were successful in every way. Eugene Carpenter

I Cor. 4:7 For who sees anything different in you? What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it? I Pt.4:10 As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another

Daniel 1:19 And the king spoke with them, and among all of them none was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. Therefore, they stood before the king. ²⁰ And in every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king inquired of them, he found them **ten times better** than all the magicians and enchanters that were in all his kingdom. ²¹ And Daniel was there until the first year of King Cyrus.

Ten times better-
First year of King Cyrus-

Genesis 12:2 And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." (**Allow me to bless people who are not like me**).

Guiding principles: Yielding your gifts to God allows God to expand them exponentially for His Glory. Your witness for God is revealed through humility. I can trust God with my obstacles!