

# (Daniel) Purity in the Face of Adversity

by David Guzik

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*The book of Daniel begins with the Babylonian conquest of Judah, highlighting God's judgment on the nation for its idolatry and disobedience, and the importance of faithfulness and commitment in the face of adversity.*

**Duration:** 52:10

**Scripture:** Daniel 1:2-3, Daniel 1:8, Daniel 1:17, Daniel 1:20-21, Romans 12:1

**Topics:** "Adversity"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the story of Daniel and his friends in Babylon. The young men were appointed a daily provision of the king's delicacies and wine for three years of training. Despite the challenges they faced, including the temptation of indulgent food and being far from home, Daniel and his friends chose to obey God and not defile themselves. Their obedience and devotion to God resulted in them being blessed and finding favor with the authorities. The speaker encourages the audience to give over and above their reasonable service to God, as God rewards those who trust and serve Him faithfully.

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## Transcript

Tonight we're beginning our study through the book of Daniel and we're going to consider together Daniel chapter 1. It's a little hard to know where to begin with the book of Daniel. Of course, we'll start in chapter 1 verse 1 in just a few moments but whenever you're introducing a new book of the Bible you're confronted with a whole bunch of scholarly research and such and some of that research suggests to us that Daniel did not write the book of Daniel. You should know this because that the book of Daniel contains so many precise prophecies precisely fulfilled that many people would like to say people who don't believe in the inspiration of the Bible that these prophecies could not have been written before the fact that absolutely of necessity they were written after the fact and and because it describes future events with such precision people who don't believe that God knows the future would like to suggest to us that that Daniel did not write this book but actually someone much later somebody in the time between the Old Testament and the New Testament the time of the Maccabees as it's sometimes called they try to point out various mistakes or or criticisms and such now I've researched this all very thoroughly I don't think it's necessarily productive for us to go into sort of an academic point-by-point refutation of all those different things tonight. Let me just say to you that I think Jesus took away all doubt from our minds about who wrote the book of Daniel in Matthew chapter 24 verse 15.

Jesus said this He says therefore when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet and then he goes on to explain what people should do in response When they see the abomination desolation folks you get the point there That Jesus made it very clear that it was Daniel the prophet who wrote about the abomination desolation and so Jesus tells us that Daniel wrote the book of Daniel and that should be enough for us and Maybe as we make our way through the book of Daniel We can point out different places where people would like to say Well, this is a mistake or this proves that it was written much later and we can show how the facts of the case Show that exactly the opposite is true But you need to understand That the book of Daniel is under such great attack because it contains more fulfilled prophecies than any other book in the Bible and in New Testament prophecy Daniel is referred to more than any other Old Testament book This is an extremely important Section of Scripture for our consideration and in God's plan of the ages you should know that at times in the past communist governments prohibited preaching from the book of Daniel and They prohibited it because they know that Daniel reveals God's knowledge of the future And it shows that in the end of it all the Lord God and his people win It doesn't surprise us at all that there have been people who hate the book of Daniel in days gone by Well, let's just jump right into it here Daniel chapter 1 beginning now at verse 1 in the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim Jehoiakim, excuse me king of Judah Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it and the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand with some of the articles of the house of God which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his God and He brought the articles into the treasure house of his God Well, you'll notice again that the Bible doesn't begin with once upon a time or in a land far far away at a distant time And place no it gives us a definite time and place It speaks about the third year of the reign of a particular man named Jehoiakim Who was the king of Judah now this man Jehoiakim?

Was not one of the true Descendants of the royal lineage of David and Solomon This was a Judean king placed on the throne by the Pharaoh of Egypt His name means Yahweh raises up, but the Lord didn't raise up this man at all Pharaoh did and when Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came and attacked Egypt on the way down He stopped off at the nation of Judah and he stopped off at the city of Jerusalem And this mighty ruler of the Babylonian Empire Came against Jerusalem, and it says there in verse 1 that he besieged it now again understand Why he came down?

It's not like Judah presented some kind of great threat to the Empire of Babylon not at all Judah was a small nation in some ways an insignificant nation compared to the mighty Babylonian Empire But the true opponent of the Babylonian Empire in those days was the Empire of Egypt and The Pharaoh of Egypt invaded Babylon in response this young prince this man destined for the throne named Nebuchadnezzar He defeated the Egyptians at a very famous battle in history at a place called Carchemish And then Nebuchadnezzar pursued their fleeing army all the way down to the Sinai And along the way or perhaps on the way back.

We don't know Completely for sure he subdued Jerusalem Which was a city that had been loyal to the Egyptian Pharaoh now all of this happened 600 years before the birth of Jesus 605 BC to be certain and it was the first but it was not the last Encounter between Nebuchadnezzar and Jehoiakim that there were actually two later invasions as well one in 597 and one in 587 BC when the city of Jerusalem fell finally to the Babylonian Empire Now again, we could go on and on about some of the historical details about this But I want you to notice just very plainly here that God was bringing his judgment upon the people of God Upon the the city of Jerusalem and the nation of Judah because they were unfaithful to him Did you notice what it said in verse 2 and the Lord Gave Jehoiakim the king of Judah into his hand you read that at once

and he said well God isn't supposed to do that. I Mean Judah is the nation.

That's the Lord's nation. It's that's the capital city of Jerusalem right there God isn't supposed to give over his people to their enemies. He's supposed to protect them But you see God's hand was obvious in all of this the Lord gave Judah into the hands of the Babylonians because number one that the people of Israel the people of Judah were were greatly filled with idolatry They were given over to the worship of Baal and Ashtoreth and all the pagan gods Around them and and God was not pleased God was not I died honored by this idolatry but the second reason why God Allowed the Babylonians to conquer the city of Jerusalem and the nation of Judah Was because the people of Judah failed to give the land the Sabbath rest that God prescribed We find in the scriptures that God Said that every seven years that the people of Israel should let the land lie fallow That they should practice sort of a ancient form of crop rotation Just as much as in the weeks of the year there was to be a Sabbath day every week So God ordained that the land would get a Sabbath year every seventh year well for a period of 490 years the people of God failed to give the land their proper Sabbaths and over those 490 years all you got to do is divide it by seven and you come up with 70 years and so there was essentially 70 years that the people owed to the land and God said well I'll make sure that the land gets at 70 years I'm going to deport the people of Israel the people of Judah out of the promised land and that's what he did with both the Assyrian invasion of the northern kingdom of Israel and the Babylonian invasion of the southern kingdom of Judah and so God always settles his accounts with those who refuse to respond to his warnings and We find that later on not only was Jerusalem Invaded but actually it was destroyed and the temple was destroyed.

You see God was in command of all of this God was in command of this whole situation As much as anything because he had a man to train and to raise up and it was this man Daniel and Daniel would be raised up in the crucible of trial and affliction in Babylon instead of in Jerusalem We notice as well in verse 2 that it says that the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand With some of the articles of the house of God And so we notice here that Nebuchadnezzar did not take all the furnishings of the temple only some of them reportedly some of the furnishings of the temple were hidden from Nebuchadnezzar and some Jewish legends say that they were hidden by the prophet Jeremiah So that the Babylonians would not get a hold of for example the Ark of the Covenant and There are legends that say that to this day. The Ark of the Covenant is hidden Some people believe it's in a distant place other people believe that it's Right underneath the temple mount there But they say that the Ark of the Covenant is hidden and we know from this though With certainty that Nebuchadnezzar didn't take all of the articles of the house of God just some of them And it was a very clear thing that he was trying to communicate by taking the articles that belong to the temple You see by taking these items and depositing them in his own Babylonian temple That's what it says that he did with them Look at it again in verse 2 the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand With some of the articles of the house of God which he carried into the land of Shinar Shinar is just another name for Babylon and to the house of his God and he brought the articles into the treasure house of his God Francis was a very Dramatic way to declare what Nebuchadnezzar thought and what Nebuchadnezzar thought was my gods the gods of the Babylonians There's so much mightier than than your God. Oh Judah So this really at the end of verse 2 we're left with a real situation here Here are some of the articles of the temple of God and they're not lying in the temple of God in Jerusalem They're sitting in the temple of a pagan God Somewhere in Babylon We sort of scratch our head and we wonder this is a very low State of affairs for the people of God a matter of fact for God himself.

You might even say It seemed as if the God of Israel had lost out to the gods of Assyria Egypt and Babylon You're going to see through the book of Daniel that God Vindicates himself that he shows his own might his own power at a time when the conquest of Israel and the conquest of Judah Might have brought his reputation into disrepute You're going to see that God is more than able to defend himself through what we see here together in the book of Daniel Now coming to verse 3 we read then the king instructed Ashkenaz the master of his eunuchs to bring some of the children of Israel and some of the king's descendants and some of the nobles Young men in whom there was no blemish, but good-looking Gifted in all wisdom possessing knowledge and quick to understand who had the ability to serve in the king's palace and Whom they might teach the language and literature of the Chaldeans So Nebuchadnezzar not only confiscated some of the holy things from the temple But he also took some of the shining lights of Judah's future He looked around and he picked some of the choice People of noble households or of the royal household and he took them Young men perhaps anywhere from 13 to 17 years old and he took them back to Babylon with him Now if you notice he took them for a very true intention It says there in verse 4 who had the ability to serve in the king's palace Is he Nebuchadnezzar was a smart guy this this king over the Babylonian Empire? He he was a wise administrator and he was a very shrewd tactician taking these young men that the cream of the crop the Best of the best of the the young shining lights of Judah and taking them back to Babylon served two things First of all, they could be very useful in his own civil service You know if you're going to go conquer a nation Why not take the best young people from that nation that you've just conquered take them back to your home capital city And use them in your own government. You'll staff yourself with great people that way Nebuchadnezzar knew that he needed good people around him if he was going to rule the Empire with excellence And so he looked for the best people he could even among nations that he had conquered but that wasn't the only smart thing about this You see when Nebuchadnezzar left the city of Jerusalem He left his own guy in charge there and he said well this this city. This is under my dominion now It's not officially part of the Babylonian Empire, but you guys will serve me.

You'll answer to me You'll be under my dominion Well, how could he keep the leading families of the nation of Judah subservient to him? Well, it helps if you have some hostages We could almost regard these young Hebrew men as hostages taken from Judah back to Babylon And it would make the noble people and the leading people of the the nation of Judah hesitant to revolt against Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon because they knew that the lives of their own sons would be in jeopardy back in the capital city of Babylon Now in verse 5 we hear a little bit more of the fate of these young men as they traveled to Babylon we read there in verse 5 and the king appointed for them a daily provision of the king's delicacy And of the wine which he drank in three years of training for them So that the end of that time they might serve before the king Well, it was a given that the Babylonian government would provide for these young men in training, right?

Here they've taken them from their own land and they're not expected to support themselves They're sort of given a scholarship in the civil service training University of Babylon and so they would be housed in a dormitory and they would eat at the cafeteria in such Yet the king wanted to show these remarkable young men from the nation of Judah a special honor And we noticed there in verse 5 that it says that the king appointed for them again This is Nebuchadnezzar Nebuchadnezzar appointed for them a daily provision of the king's delicacies and of the wine which he drank Friends, this was a special and a remarkable honor that these young men should get the same food That the king himself ate, you know, maybe we should remind ourselves That in the ancient world much more than in the modern world There's a huge difference or there was a huge difference I should say between the people that assumed it between the food that

was enjoyed by the elite and what the common people ate I Mean if you were part of the elite class in the ancient world, you might eat pretty good You might eat meat all the time.

You have a selection of grains and vegetables and fruits and all the rest Let me tell you something if you were of one of the common people you would be Happy with bread and water and in a little bit of meat from time to time There was a huge difference between what the elite ate and what the common people ate My friends, you know, it's not like that in our world today, is it? I mean just about everybody can eat whatever they want to eat not that it's necessarily good for how we look But the same food is pretty much available to all and at a relatively inexpensive cost So you see what a privilege it was in the ancient world to take these young men out of the city of Jerusalem Bring him to this foreign capital the city of Babylon say we want to train you we want to raise you up as civil servants in our government and You're going to get to eat from the king's table It's a very very impressive offer Now if you notice as well, they try to enact some other changes that's in verse 6 Now from among those of the sons of Judah were Daniel Hananiah Mishael and Azariah to them the chief of the eunuchs gave names to Daniel the name Balthasar To Hananiah Shadrach to Mishael Meshach and to Azariah Abednego Now these four particular Jewish young men now, let's remind ourselves.

There were more than these four We don't know how many perhaps there was 20 perhaps there was 50 But it was a larger group than just these four but Daniel is telling us about these four in particular Daniel Hananiah Mishael and Azariah and each one of them as all of these captives taken away to Babylon were given Babylonian names and every one of these Babylonian names I won't get into the meaning of each one of them But let me just tell you that each one of these Babylonian names in some way glorifies or draws attention to a pagan god of the Babylonians and This is what they enlisted them for was for three years of training So they're going to indoctrinate them into the Babylonian culture and system and government You see the whole purpose for the food for the names for the education.

The whole purpose of it was very simple This was an effort at total indoctrination The the effort was to make these Jewish young men leave behind Their Hebrew God and their Hebrew culture they wanted to embrace They wanted them I should say to embrace the Babylonian culture and Nebuchadnezzar wanted to communicate to these young men You look to me for everything You're done looking to your own people. You're done looking to your own God. We'll give you new names we'll give you your own education and Perhaps as persuasively as anything.

I'll let you eat from my very own table You see I want you to see then you may know how this chapter ends up ahead of time Daniel and his friends refused to be Indoctrinated into the Babylonian system at least they refused in some of the most crucial ways They insisted that they look unto God Instead of looking unto Nebuchadnezzar You know, I think that uh that Satan uses a very similar strategy against us You know, he wants us to feed on what the world offers just like Nebuchadnezzar wanted these Jewish young men to to feed on what the Babylonians offered So Satan wants believers today to feed on what the world offers You know, is that your life right now? Maybe that's pretty good description of your life today Day in day out you're feeding on what the world offers to you Whatever the world throws out before you that's what you're eating. That's what you're feeding upon Friends, you know, there's a much much better way for your life It's to feed on the things of God. It's to be Transformed by the renewing of your mind and instead of feeding your mind on all the things of the world To feed yourself on the Lord God and on his word maybe some of you have a Background in computer programming or at least are a little familiar with it if you are then then you're familiar with the phrase garbage in Garbage out and that's a phrase used sometimes by computer programmers to indicate that if there's something wrong with the programming

code You're going to get a bad result And you shouldn't go around blaming the result or blaming the the computer itself The problem is that there's a there's a garbage in the computer code Therefore that programming code is going to produce garbage Think that same idea of garbage in garbage out.

It goes for your mind We're so foolish to think that we can fill our minds with garbage seven days a week and Then wipe it all away with an hour and a half of church on Sunday morning It just doesn't work that way You have to watch what the world feeds you all the time Secondly I want you to see that they did something differently here Not only does Satan want us to feed on what the world offers But he also wants us to identify or name ourselves in reference to the world in other words that the Babylonians no longer wanted these Jewish young men to think of themselves as Jewish young men They wanted them to think of themselves as Babylonian young men therefore they gave them Babylonian names You know the world is more than happy and Satan is more than happy to give you a name You shouldn't accept it You should think of who you are in the Lord who the Lord God has made you. I mean, who are you? Are you a mother? Are you an office worker? Are you a grandparent look those? Identifications can have their usefulness in this world, but friends, you know beyond any doubt first and foremost your primary Identification is as a child of God That's who you are more than anything you're a follower of Jesus Christ and that should be your main Identification with who you are in Jesus Christ now Satan would love to have you identify or name yourself in reference to the world Know that the people of God should think differently on this matter And then of course not only did they want to feed them certain things not only did they want to name them certain things? But he also wanted to educate Daniel and his companions in the ways of Babylon and doesn't Satan want to educate us in the ways of the world Oh, you can be smart about so many things. Can't you so many things in this world? You can be knowledgeable knowledgeable about or an expert in But how important it is to be educated in the things of God? Be educated in God's Word and in God's truth So we find here that they've changed their names they've set him in this place They put him before the king's table.

They they've set up this three-year program. Well, what's Daniel's response? Look here at verse 8 but Daniel Purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's delicacies Nor with the wine which he drank Therefore he requested of the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself Well, this was a very bold thing for Daniel to do He came to the chief of the eunuchs and said I don't want to defile myself Now I want you to notice that that ancient Hebrew word for defile has the idea of polluting or staining The implication here is that Daniel Explained the spiritual basis for his request This is very bold for Daniel to do He went up to the chief of the steward of the chief eunuch over the whole group of men who were being trained And he said I don't want to eat the food from the king's table or drink the wine from the king's wine cellar Because it would defile me before my god. It would make me spiritually Impure or stain me spiritually He didn't want to make it seem that he wanted to avoid the king's food out of other reasons to say well You know, I I have this metal condition.

I just can't eat those foods Well when really all along the reason was a spiritual reason Daniel came right out boldly. I want to make a stand for my god. I don't want to be defiled before my god I want to make a stand right before him But I want you to know as well that says there in verse 8 that Daniel requested He asked this We scratch our heads about this Say Daniel, aren't you making a big deal over a little thing? Well, yes Friends, don't you realize that the only way to go on with God is by being faithful in the little things You might ask Daniel.

Why are you bringing religion into it just has to do with what you eat and what you drink But Daniel realized that his relationship with God touched everything in his life, including what he ate Maybe Daniel

remembered that the very root of sin goes back to eating forbidden food And he didn't want to imitate Adam in the Garden of Eden And so he considered that he did not want to defile himself and we scratch our heads at that and we say well What was so wrong with the food that the king offered to him? Well, I can think of three reasons why Daniel and his friends Considered that the king's food unacceptable to them. First of all, it undoubtedly was not kosher There would be pork offered there. There would be other Animals that were forbidden and even the animals that were allowed such as let's say a beef from cattle or whatever It was not prepared in a kosher way.

The kosher doesn't just refer to the actual food itself but for example animal has to be butchered according to kosher regulations and the first thing that you have to do if you're going to butcher an animal according to kosher regulations is you have to drain as much blood from the animal as Absolutely possible and they do that by the first thing is by cutting the jugular vein and draining out as much blood as they can in a kosher butchering and Daniel knew very well that even if some of the food was Was acceptable in the kind of animal it was it wasn't prepared in a kosher way So Daniel said no, I won't accept this secondly Everything that they ate all the meat all the vegetables everything else that was put before them. It was probably first Sacrifice to one of the pagan gods before they ever ate of it thirdly to eat at the king's table was a heavy implication of Fellowship with the Babylonian cultural system you know in that part of the world in the ancient world to share a meal was to commit oneself to Friendship it was sort of a covenant significance to eat at the same table as somebody and or to eat the same food At least and and Daniel didn't want any business of that. I Think it's fascinating The Daniel and his companions did not object to the name that was given to them In other words, they didn't draw the line there.

They didn't say well, no, we will not accept these names No, not not in any regard. No, no Daniel didn't object to the name that was given to him because Daniel knew who he was He didn't care what you called him. He knew who Daniel was He knew that Daniel was a child of God and so who cares what you call me he considered I Think it's also interesting that they did not draw the line in the sand at the Babylonian education They were still enrolled in this three-year program to teach them all the business of the Babylonians Daniel did not draw the line there because Daniel knew what he believed Well, you want to teach me other things as well.

Go ahead Teach away live it up But I know what I believe but Daniel did object to the food from the king's table Because to eat that food was direct disobedience to God's Word Once you notice that it wasn't just that he rejected the food, but also the wine verse 8 mentions God didn't forbid drinking wine but in pagan cultures almost all the wine and meat was dedicated to the gods so Daniel refused it and Verse 8 tells us that he made a request To the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself This remarkably courageous decision that Daniel made Was was all the more remarkable when we think about all the reasons why he might not have made this decision. I Mean think of it. First of all, think of all the things that made this a hard decision to make First of all, I would say that it was hard because the king ordered the menu You know when the king orders the menu, maybe you better just eat it Rejecting that menu was rejecting the king in a certain way and it could result in a severe punishment Secondly, it was a tough thing to do because refusing the food might have branded them as being uncooperative I mean here you are in the midst of all your Jewish Companions and maybe there's 20 of you or maybe there's 50 of you and and you're all vying to have positions of status and and Standing among one another and if you're the one who's branded a troublemaker if you're the one branded uncooperative You're gonna spoil all your chances of advancement after all It was only these particular ones these four Daniel and then Shadrach Meshach and Abednego It was just these four young men among all the Jewish young men who were

captive there in Babylon It was only these four who did not eat the food.

I Think a third reason why this was a tough decision to make was because there was a very real threat of punishment You know ancient Kings were well known for the severe and often sadistic Punishments that they inflicted upon those who crossed them Nebuchadnezzar himself was a man who was capable of great cruelty We know this from the scriptures themselves in Jeremiah chapter 39 it describes for us how Nebuchadnezzar did something very cruel to King one of the kings of Judah he brought this king of Judah before him in shackles and Then he brought the sons of the king of Judah before him and what he did was he murdered the sons of the king of Judah and then immediately after murdering the sons of the king of Judah He had the eyes of the king of Judah gouged out That this man would live the rest of his days blind With the memory of the last thing that he saw with his eyes and that was his own son murdered before his own sight other rulers of Judah according to Jeremiah chapter 29 were literally roasted to death over a fire by Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon and so when you know That a fella is capable of this kind of sadistic torture. Well, you're hesitant to cross him right didn't bother Daniel So it was tough because the king ordered the menu. It was tough because it would have branded them as uncooperative It was tough because there was a real threat of punishment It was tough for a fourth reason because the food itself was no doubt pretty attractive I mean, what would you rather eat what the king has to offer right there or or just live on on bread and a few Simple vegetables and water for three years.

I mean this was a real denial of the taste buds Next I think that another thing that made this tough was the fact that that mere distance from home made this challenging Now, let's not forget that these young men were a long way from home They were a long way from their parents they were a long way from other Institutions and and circles of people around them that might keep them walking the straight now friends. You know how this dynamic works in life How many men who would never dream of? Indulging in pornography in their daily walk here will do it when they're away on a business trip There's something In a very ungodly way that seems freeing to many people when they travel And these young men were a great distance from home and being separated from family and home. It was easy to compromise and then finally and perhaps most strongly I I consider the fact that it it was perhaps easy For these young men to think that God had let them down By allowing them to be carried away to Babylon.

I Mean, let's not forget the whole spiritual dynamic going on here Some of the treasures from the temple in Jerusalem. They're not in the temple in Jerusalem They're from the temple of Jerusalem and they're sitting in the temple of a Babylonian God and isn't that wild? Nebuchadnezzar the king there is thumping his chest saying how great his gods are how great he is and It'd be easy sort of to hang your head look down at your shoes and wonder why God lets you down To wonder why should we risk our necks for a God who let us down when we needed him? I? Think many Christians today have a mentality that says God you do right by me and I'll do right by You now, of course, God will always do right by us Let's face it. We don't always know what is right for us and It's possible that you here tonight that you feel that God has let you down Have you been tempted by that thought before I know that I've been tempted by it Friends it takes just a little bit of perspective to understand that God has not let you down at all But I think it's fascinating that that even if if Daniel and his companions considered that for a moment They didn't let it dissuade them Instead, what did he do if you notice here in verse 8? It says but Daniel purposed in his heart You see in this Daniel illustrates how to conquer a difficult trial and how to glorify God before others in the midst of a time of testing And I want you to notice some of the things that Daniel did first of all He set his heart didn't he and said there in verse 8 that he purposed in his heart.

He made up his mind beforehand That he would not compromise friends how important this is How important it is for you to begin the day saying I will not sin in this area that has been troubling me I will rely on the strength and the power of the Holy Spirit today instead of looking to my own Resources and God helping me I will not sin friends If you sort of leave it up to the impression of the moment if you leave it up until the food is set on the table Before you you might give in but it says that Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself It's a decision you make ahead of time If you leave the decision for the for the heat of the moment, you're going to be waylaid many many times Daniel was wise enough to not do that and he purposed in his heart. I The other thing that Daniel did here that that made him succeed was that his protest was courteous Daniel requested he didn't demand he made a polite request showing discretion You know making a stand for Jesus Christ does not mean that we must be obnoxious Daniel made a polite request He didn't start banging at the table saying take this food away from me. I cannot eat it It shall defile me.

No, he made a polite request before the food has ever sat down Think another reason why Daniel succeeded in this was because he sought to deny himself You know Daniel and his friends knew that this would cost them something yet. They were willing to do it They knew it might cost them their very lives to refuse this food from the king's table, but they were willing to do it They were willing to to practice this self-denial and for many of us Well, we're willing to stand up against sin and all up until it costs us something Until it means that we have to deny self the next the test must be very boldly put Now Daniel was willing to be put to the test and we're going to see that in future verses here Let's jump into verse 9 now where he says now God Had brought Daniel into the favor and goodwill of the chief of the eunuchs. Isn't that great? God did not abandon Daniel when Daniel took a stand for him Daniel Entrusted himself to God and God came through in a glorious way I'm sure it was a stretching experience for Daniel and his friends But God came through for him and God moved upon the authorities so that they regarded Daniel with goodwill Did you notice that in verse 9 God brought Daniel into the favor and goodwill of the chief of the eunuchs? So Daniel suggests a plan here notice in verse 10 and the chief of the eunuchs said to Daniel I fear my lord the king who has appointed your food and drink For why should he see your faces looking worse than the young men who are your age? Then you would endanger my head before the king Now we can sympathize with the with the chief of the eunuchs here He's coming before Daniel good Daniel eat.

Whatever you want to eat I don't care, but you gotta understand where I'm coming from. I'm responsible for your health and for your well-being And if you go on this radical diet It makes your health suffering and you appear pale and piqued and skinny before the king That's going to be my head on the line your scruples shouldn't put me at risk So what does Daniel do look at what he suggests here in verse 11 So Daniel said to the steward whom the chief of the eunuchs had set over Daniel Hananiah Mishael and Azariah Please test your servants for 10 days and let them give us vegetables to eat and water to drink Then let our countenances be examined before you and the countenances of the young men who eat the portion of the king's Delicacies and as you see fit so deal with your servants I think that Daniel is so wonderful here in his response You know the steward asked Daniel Hey, look at it through my eyes this might put my neck on the line and Daniel said I understand completely So let's just undergo a little bit of test Daniel saw the the situation through the stewards eyes and he addressed the stewards legitimate concerns He wouldn't let the chief of the eunuchs pay the price for his own conscience And so through it all Daniel was willing to put himself and his faith in God to the test. I think there's something so wonderfully reasonable About Daniel's approach.

He could have gone on a hunger strike He could have started throwing over the banquet tables and tossing the silverware instead He made a polite request and he made it to the right person and he said put us to the test You shouldn't bear the burden of this. Let me bear the burden You know in this sense we might say that Daniel made a godly and wise Compromise with the chief of the eunuchs and he certainly didn't compromise in an ungodly way But but Daniel was willing to bend He didn't just say well by no means are we going to eat the king's food that that's all there is to it No, he said well, let's do this test and we'll see how it works out and we'll trust that God will work this situation out Daniel was willing to work with the chief of the eunuchs You know James chapter 3 verse 17 speaks about a certain kind of wisdom godly wisdom It says but the wisdom that is from above is first pure then peaceable gentle willing to yield Full of mercy and good fruits without partiality and without hypocrisy. Did you notice that line in there? willing to yield That's a problem with many Christians today, they're not willing to yield they say well, you know, we shouldn't compromise as Christians and you're right on Biblical principles we should not compromise Friends I find a lot of Christians unwilling to compromise on things that aren't biblical issues.

They're their own things. They're their own Peculiarities, they're their own things that they just won't budge on You know, we see this a lot is you see it in marriages You see a husband who demands that a certain thing be done a certain way in his house even though it inflicts a lot of discomfort and a lot of Uncomfortableness and disharmony on his wife But but oh, he's he's mr. Stick to his guns. He won't compromise Mr. You're a fool and you don't love your wife at all You know, well, should I compromise? Yes, you should in that instance We're not talking about a biblical principle We're talking about how you set the dinner table are you talking about the order in which you do this? Are you talking about different techniques that that have nothing to do with flowing directly from a biblical principle? It's a difference of opinion Daniel was willing to yield Many of us we we try to excuse our obstinacy and our incredible stubbornness And try to make it sound like it's spiritual like this is some issue of compromise and oftentimes It's not an issue of compromise at all It's just an issue of stubbornness you see Daniel wasn't the kind of guy who was going to make the chief of the eunuchs put his neck on the line for Daniel's Convictions Daniel say well, these are my convictions.

I'll put my neck on the line And that's what he did And now let's take a look at verse 14 So he consented with them in this matter and he tested them ten days and at the end of ten days Their countenance appeared better and fatter in flesh than all the young men who ate the portion of the king's delicacies Thus the steward took away their portion of delicacies and the wine that they were to drink and gave them Vegetables you see after ten days the test was proven. He said well, this is great This was the power of God at work just in the fact that the chief of the eunuchs consented to it He didn't have to consent to it. He had all the power in this situation.

He could have said yes He could have said no, but God moved upon his heart so that he said yes and Daniel and his friends They seem to compete completely at the mercy of this man But God moved upon the man and he consented with them in this matter and at the end of the ten days Daniel and his friends looked better and fatter than the other Jewish young men who didn't Partake of these things or excuse me who did partake of the king's food and Daniel and his friends didn't Now again when it says their features appeared better and fatter, I think we can say again that that's the hand of God at work There's no real biological reason why a vegetarian diet should make them appear better and fatter Oh, perhaps their diet would have made them appear the same Perhaps that that their food would have been just as good as the food of the other guys But it doesn't say just as good. It says that they looked better and they even looked fatter than before So God honored them in this now verse 17 as for these four young men God gave them

knowledge and skill and all literature and wisdom and Daniel had understanding and all visions and dreams Now at the end of the days when the kings had said that they should be brought in The chief of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar Then the king interviewed them and among all none was found like Daniel Hananiah Mishael and Azariah Therefore they served before the king and in all matters of wisdom and understanding about which the king examined them He found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers who were in all his realm Thus Daniel continued until the first year of King Cyrus You see the the special Intellectual ability and Daniel and his companions where it says God gave them knowledge and skill it wasn't due to their diet It wasn't because well, they're eating so healthy. So look how good their minds work.

No, it was due to the special Intervention of the Lord these young Jewish men gave themselves to the Lord in a remarkable way and God blessed them in a remarkable way Just just consider that for a moment Let's remind ourselves that of These four Jewish young men that the group of Jewish young men present was much larger than this much larger And so friends I think what we need to consider here is that the majority of the Jewish young men did not make a stand for God as Daniel and his three companions did and In not making this dramatic stand for Lord. They were not blessed the way that Daniel and his friends were They might say well, it was a remarkable thing It was going above and beyond the call of duty for them to forsake the food at the king's table this way Well, first of all, it wasn't it was simple obedience, but it was above and beyond the common level Of living out their faith that was before them They they sought to serve God in a remarkable way and God blessed them in a remarkable way One of the books that J Edwin or wrote called can God He quotes an evangelist named Billy Bryce saying to this to him He said Edwin if Christians would only give over and above their reasonable service The Lord would give over and above the usual blessing Friends, I don't know what it is that you're giving to the Lord in your life What of your time? What of your resources? What of your attention? What of your devotion? But let me say this without without any fear being contradicted if you give the Lord more he will bless you more and Daniel and his friends understood this principle God blessed them for acting upon this principle But whatever it is, you're giving the Lord. Why not give him more? If you don't spend any time every day with God Why don't you determine that you're gonna start doing it right now and let's say that you do spend time with the Lord every day Now, let's say you're gonna give him more time Whatever it is you give to the Lord Give him more of it.

You give him more of what you have you see if God doesn't bless you more It's exactly what he did in the life of Daniel and his companions He blessed him so much that it says here in our text that Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams friends Do you see the purity of heart and faithfulness to God came before Daniel was enlightened in these divine? Mysteries and prophecies later on in this book. We're going to see how the Prophet Daniel received spectacular Revelation, but he started out by being a simple dedicated follower of God And these young men Daniel Hananiah Mishael Azariah It reads like a roll call to the hall of faith these young men from Jerusalem were immersed in the study of Babylonian culture and Literature and religion yet. They remain completely faithful to God It showed that the works of prophets like Jeremiah and Zephaniah and Habakkuk had not been in vain These young men were in Babylon, but they were not of Babylon Whatever training they received from their parents or or the prophets they they received it.

Well You see the conclusion of it all in verse 21 where it says that Daniel continued until the first year of King Cyrus And that's some 60 or 70 years later Daniel had a long successful career and he had it in the worst of circumstances You know Daniel worked for tyrants who cared nothing of killing their staff and

advisors much less firing them His own employer suffered the worst kind of hostile takeover when the Middle Persian Empire conquered the Babylonian Empire But the seeds of his great success over a long period of time are Evidence in the very first chapter of the book of Daniel Daniel shows us that his inner conviction an inner conviction unto the Lord can overcome any kind of outer pressure He shows us that God honoring convictions yield God given Rewards and friends make maybe that's it in your own life Maybe that's why you don't see the blessing of the Lord in your own life it's it's Because you don't give to the Lord the belief the obedience that you should have That this hinders the flow and the work of the Holy Spirit in your life If you would give yourself unto the Lord as Daniel did you would see God bless you as he blessed Daniel Oh, not that he would make you the right-hand man to a king or to a president Although we wouldn't say that that's out of the question certainly But you would see that God's power would be at work in your life in a greater way than ever She prayed that the Lord would make us to surrender to him as certainly Daniel was Father that is our prayer tonight that you would That you'd work in us a heart of true and complete surrender to you But no matter what the cost no matter what the danger We would repent of our sins confess them before you and others were appropriate And that father we would be surrendered to you that we might see the glory of your power and work through us Help us Lord Dare to be like Daniel In the kind of stand that we take for you Thank you Lord, we love you and praise you tonight in Jesus name. Amen

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