

Study in Daniel 1 Daniel-1

by William MacDonald

Daniel's story teaches us the importance of standing firm in our faith and the influence of our upbringing and character in shaping our decisions and actions.

Duration: 42:04

Scripture: Deuteronomy 6:6-9, Daniel 1:8-20, Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Studies"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the story of Daniel in chapter four of the book of Daniel. He emphasizes that history is God's story and that behind every historical event, we can see the hand of God at work. The preacher highlights the importance of honoring God and how Daniel's decision to stand for God made him a notable figure in history. He also draws parallels between the temptation faced by Daniel and his companions in Babylon and the temptation faced by Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.

Transcript

Thank you very much. Daniel, chapter 1. We'll begin reading in verse 1. In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim, 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. Then the king instructed Ashpenaz, 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 ability to serve in the king's palace, in whom they might teach the language and literature of the Chaldeans. And the king appointed for them a daily provision of the king's delicacies and of the wine which he drank, and three years of training for them, so that at the end of that time they might serve before the king.

Now, from among those of the sons of Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. To them the chief of the eunuchs gave names. He gave Daniel the name Beltshazzar, to Hananiah Shadrach, to Mishael Meshach, and to Azariah Abednego.

But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with a 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. Now, God had brought Daniel into the favor and goodwill of the chief of the eunuchs, 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.

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 ten 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. So he consented with them in this matter, and tested them ten days.

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. I'm just going to stop there, and we're going to look at this whole chapter, however. Verse 1 in this chapter is historical.

Verse 2 is theological. Verse 1 tells you what happened. Verse 2 tells you why in the providence of God it happened.

It's true, history is his story, and behind history you see the hands of God. History. In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem and besieged it.

Why did that happen? 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, to the house of his God, and he brought the articles into the treasure house of God. This was a fulfillment of prophecy. God had told Hezekiah that this was going to happen.

He told it to him in living color, and now it's happening. Turn back, please, to 2 Kings 20, verses 17 and 18. 2 Kings 20, verses 17 and 18.

Verse 16 says, Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, Hear the word of the Lord. Behold, the days are coming, when all that is in your house, and what your fathers have accumulated unto this day, shall be carried to Babylon. Nothing shall be left, says the Lord, and they shall take away some of your sons who will descend from you, whom you will beget, and they will be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.

God's word is true. God told Hezekiah this was going to happen. The years passed by, and now it's happening there in Babylon, and Daniel is one of those young men.

Why did it happen? Well, turn to chapter 4 of Daniel, and it'll tell you why it happened. Daniel 4, verse 17. This decision is by the decree of the watchers and the sentence by the word of the holy ones, in order that the living may know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, gives it to whomever he will, and sets over it the lowest of men.

I think that's really fascinating to see behind the headlines of the paper. The hand of God is working all the time. Behind all that passes as history, you see God's hand.

God's hand is working today just as much as He worked in Daniel's day. Now, the king wants some of these Jewish young men to serve in his palace, and there are certain specifications, certain rules, and a certain diet, and he wanted them to eat from the royal kitchens. He wanted them to eat the royal menu.

What was that all about? Well, the king of Babylon wanted to change these Jewish fellows into Babylonian fellows. That's what it was all about. He wanted to really recycle them.

That's a great word today, isn't it? It says he might teach them the language and literature of the Chaldeans. He wanted to do more than that. He wanted to change their names, he wanted to change their food, he wanted to change their lifestyles, he wanted to change their culture, he wanted to change everything about them.

It's rather similar to what the marines do in this country. When young fellows sign up for the marines, they go through a whole new process of deprogramming and orientation. That's what the haircut is all about.

That's what the new vocabulary is all about. That's what the new clothing is all about. That's what the new rules and regulations are about.

The food, the discipline, all the rest. It's a program of deprogramming. They're taking them as civilians, and taking the civilian life out of them and recycling them as marines, right? That's what the Babylonian king wanted to do with Daniel and those three young men.

And a specific temptation came to them in the area of food. I think that's very interesting. They say the way to a man's heart is through his stomach, huh? And it's not the last time, it's not the first time, and not the last time in the history of the world that this temptation came to people.

Think of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. The very first, Adam and Eve. How did it come? It came to them in the temptation of food.

And you think of Esau and that bowl of chili that caused him to lose the birthright. He just satisfied his tummy for a few moments. He lost all the spiritual value.

And then, of course, you think of the Lord Jesus and the temptation in the wilderness. Temptation came to turn these stones into bread, food, to satisfy the appetite. Of course, temptation comes to others in other ways.

Pleasure, materialism, money, wealth, amusements, business practices. Tremendous temptations in business today to cut corners. I'm not sure a man, under the present system of laws in the United States, I'm not sure a man could become wealthy and not fudge.

I'm not sure he could. It's so intricate and involved nowadays. Even the desire for recognition as a scholar today.

Here's a man, and he's a Christian, and he wants recognition as a scholar. He better go light on some of the things that are dear to our hearts. The temptation is to swim along with the tide when in Rome, too, as the Romans do.

I think it's interesting, the original names of these dear fellows. Daniel, Hananiah, Michiel, and Ezraiah. All of those fellows had the name of God in their names, in two forms.

The E-L at the end, that's the name of God, the name of Jehovah, and the I-A-H, the name, well, L is Elohim, and I-A-H, part of the name of Jehovah. These fellows all had the name of God, and the names, what does the name suggest to you? Well, they suggest to me that they had parents who were committed to the Lord. Like when I go into the Safeway store, Safeway, not Lucky, Safeway store, and I meet a family

there for the first time, and they have the kids there, and they introduce the kids to me, and the kids' names are Matthew, Martha, Timothy, and Esther.

What do you think goes on in my mind? Well, you know, I can see you're smiling. You know what goes on in my mind, huh? These people are Christians. All of those names were Bible names, and you know, I think here you have four great motivations for holiness in their names.

For instance, Daniel means, God is my judge, the righteousness of God. Hananiah means, Jehovah is gracious, the grace of God, the righteousness of God, and the grace of God. Mishael means, who is like God, the uniqueness of God.

I think that's beautiful. And Azariah, Jehovah is my helper or keeper, the keeping God. The names in the Bible are really meaningful, aren't they? And of course, they were prophetic in many cases, too.

When they named a boy or a girl, that's what they turned out to be. Many of the names of the Old Testament were prophetic. So, here you have four great motivations for holiness.

The righteousness of God, the grace of God, the uniqueness of God, and the care of God. Now, they wanted to give them four new names, and these four names almost surely have the name of some Babylonian God in them. Some of them are vague and obscure, but almost positively, they have the name of some Babylonian God in it.

For instance, Beltshazzar, that has the name Bell in it, and that's the national God of the Babylonians. You see what they were trying to do with these fellas? They were trying to, as it were, take God out of their lives and put Babylonian gods in their lives. Just changing their name wouldn't do it, but it was just an expression of what they were trying to do.

Shadrach may have the name Aku, the moon god in that name. Marduk was a city god in Babylon, and Meshach says, I am humbled before my God. But, of course, it was a Babylonian God, it wasn't the God Jehovah.

Abednego means the servant of Nebo, certainly one of the gods, the Babylonian God of vegetation. I admit that some of the derivation of these names is obscure, but we can be almost positive that they contained the name of some pagan deity. Well, you can't help what people call you.

These fellows couldn't help that they were given these Babylonian names, but you can help what you are. You can help what you are. Notice Daniel purposed in his heart, verse 8, a wonderful verse of scriptures, Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with a portion of the king's food, meat there meaning food.

Think of the determination of that young fellow, and he was young at this time. I'll tell you, it took courage, didn't it? I mean, he's there at the headquarters of the greatest nation of the world, the leading nation of the world, and here he has the opportunity. I can just see the menu now before the meal, you know, before the meal, and the most beautiful scrawls.

I think it was probably gilt-edged and all the rest, and I want to tell you that was the best food that the biggest empire in the world could offer. What would you do? He said, I will not defile myself with a portion of the king's meat. The courage for a little nobody, as it were, to stand up and say, no, I'm not going to do it, I will not do it.

It would have been much wiser, no, not wiser, easier for Daniel to start to rationalize as Bill McDonnell would have done. Well, I'll go along with what they want, but the Lord knows my heart isn't in it, you know, that's religious. It'd be so easy to say that.

Um, maybe by eating their food I will get along better in the kingdom, and rise to a greater position of prominence, and therefore be a greater influence for God. Isn't that wonderful? Yeah, I could have rationalized like that. I'm very good at that.

And anyway, none of the other Jews would know. We're pretty much cloistered here. We're eunuchs here in the palace of the king, and who will know whether what we're eating, uh, the word wouldn't get out at all.

So, it'd just be a very private matter, anyway. Um, but Daniel wasn't like, Daniel wasn't made of that stuff. Daniel was a man of conviction, a man of courage, and a man of separation.

He would not defile himself. Now, I want to ask you a question. What made Daniel like that? I want to, I want to ask you this morning.

What gave Daniel that mental courage to take a stand like that? Think back with me. There were other fellows that wouldn't do that. What made Daniel different? In fact, it doesn't say anything about the other fellows.

It just says Daniel. Daniel purpose in his heart. Tell me somebody, what, what was it? What do you attribute that to? That's what I believe, his mother.

I believe that. I was walking with one of the interns this last week, and he said, who is the person that had the greatest influence in your life? I like it when young people ask me intelligent questions, but I thought that was a good question. You know, who is the person that had the greatest influence in your life? I said, I have to say, without thinking any further about it, my mother.

She was the one that had the greatest influence. We don't think that, do we? We put such, such an importance on this piece of furniture here, you know, getting up and preaching. The work is done in the home.

But I want to tell you, I don't know Daniel's mother, but I know she had a profound influence in that fellow, and she was breeding this into him all the time. Look, know what you believe, and be willing to stand up for what you believe, no matter all about you, or ridicule you. It doesn't make a bit of difference.

Stand up for what you believe. Be God's man in any situation. That came, it came in handy, that advice that she gave.

Never belittle the influence of the mother at the home. To me, it's the greatest of all influences, greater than any preacher that ever lived. Behind that preacher, there was a mother.

Behind his virgin, there was a mother implanting in his virgin. Behind Wesley, there was that godly mother, Susanna Wesley. Very, very, very, very important.

Deuteronomy 6, 6-9. Deuteronomy 6, 6-9. You know the verses before I read them, but we should read them anyway, because they say it so well.

Verse 6. These words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.

You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. What a wonderful blessing, a family, a home in which the word of God has this prominent place, in which it's being instilled into the heart of everyone that's in the home, adults and children alike. Matt was telling me about an interview, it was in the Navy paper there at Naval Air Station Alameda, I believe.

It was an interview with a lady who had gone into the Navy, and she had worked her way up, she had worked her way up. I can't remember, I don't want to say she had become an admiral, but she was pretty high, probably one of the highest positions you could get in the Navy. And the person interviewing her said, do you have any regrets? And she said, yes, I do.

She said, I regret that I placed a career before a family. She didn't have a family. She made that choice.

It wasn't that she couldn't have had a family, it was that she didn't have a family. And that really spoke volumes, didn't it? It really spoke volumes. She got up to top as far as a career was concerned, but she lived to regret it.

Why wouldn't Daniel eat? Well, it was not kosher. It would have violated the dietary laws of God for his people if he had eaten that food. Anyway, that's not a big deal.

It's the difference between a McDonald's hamburger and a Burger King or something. No, it's not. It's a matter of principle.

It's more than that. It's a matter of principle. And if I can start fudging on a minor matter like that, I can fudge on the bigger matters, too.

God knows that. He was faithful, and little is faithful also in much. God knows just how we stand on all of those things.

And in addition to that, it was probably food that had been offered to idols, and in eating it, Daniel at least would have been associating himself with idolatry. And in addition to that, it was probably prepared by Gentiles, and therefore unclean. Three things, I think, include why he wouldn't defile himself with a portion of the king's meat.

It was against the dietary laws of Israel. It probably had been offered to idols, the food, much of it, if not all, and had been prepared by Gentiles, therefore unclean. Now, Daniel seems to be the leader in this whole matter, doesn't he? He seems to be the leader.

You know, read about the other fellows. It doesn't say the other fellows had strong spines that they were willing to stand up, but Daniel was their leader, and they followed him. They followed him.

I think I might have told you the story of George Truett. He was a preacher down in Dallas years ago. He told this story of once when he was having a series of meetings, he noticed that there were two young lawyers in the audience, and he made a mental note of them.

He found out their names, and he went to their office, and he interviewed them in their office. A real preacher. He said, Why are you not openly and positively on the side of Christ? And they said to him, We have taken Judge so-and-so as our model.

This is a very prominent judge there in Dallas. He is not a Christian. He's not a churchman, and he's the one that we look up to.

He's successful. He's doing well. He can do it without the church.

We can do it without the church. And Truett said to them, Well, you've chosen a very splendid man. I happen to know him, and I respect him, but he said, I want to tell you something.

No man should be another man's model. He said, He is. I'd like to call him my personal friend.

But he said, You mustn't pattern your life after him. The young lawyer said, Well, he rarely goes to church. He's a first-class lawyer, a very useful citizen.

He's doing well in his profession, and with his intellectuality, if he can live without it, we can live without it, too. So, Truett finished his little interview with them, and then he got in his car, and he drove over to the judge's office. He went in, and he said to the judge, I have an ethical question to ask you.

And the judge laughed. He said, Huh? He said, Ethical questions? He said, Those are for preachers and teachers. And Truett said, Yes, and they're for you, too.

And the judge said, What is the question you'd like to ask? And he said, Does a man have a moral right to occupy some position, if in occupying that position he would be harming somebody else? And the judge said, No, he doesn't have any right to do that. And Truett said to him, Well, that's the position you're in. He said, There are two young lawyers in this city who are looking to you as their model.

They're sheltering behind you, and they're going to do what you do. And you've never taken your stand positively for Christ, and they're not going to either. Well, the judge got up from his seat, and he went over, and he opened the window, and he looked down at the crowd swarming below his office building there.

And he turned to Truett, and he said, I'll be at the service tonight. And Truett said that he only preached to one man that night, the judge. He just preached to the judge that night.

And at the end of the sermon, he said, Who for his own sake, first of all, and then for the sake of someone who may be sheltering behind him, perhaps all unknown to himself, will make his surrender to Christ? And you know, one of the first men to rise to his feet that night was the judge. And he went down the aisle, and he met Truett at the end of the aisle. And he said to Truett, You hadn't reached the door before I locked it, fell on my knees, and I said, Great God, has it come to this that I'm staying out of the kingdom myself? And by the power of my personal influence taking others in the downward way, help me that my influence may be saved, and my soul too.

And Truett said to him, Look behind you. And he turned and looked and saw two young lawyers coming down the aisle to the front, following his example. And they got down to the front, and they said, When we saw you start down, judge, we started down, too.

Well, I see that here in the story of Daniel and those other young men. Daniel took the lead, and they followed him. You know, some of us saw that in the service, in the armed forces.

A lot of people are just very reluctant to take a stand, but when somebody else does, they're willing to step forward and say, Yeah, well, I'm a Christian, too, to take a stand for the Lord. And it's true in business, too. It's true in all of life.

People are looking at you. Somebody is waiting for you to take a positive stand for the Lord, and if you do, he or she will follow. Well, it's interesting to me that Daniel courteously, courteously, he didn't say, No, I won't do it under any circumstances, I won't do it.

He courteously requested that he and his friends might be exempted from eating from the royal menu. And, you know, God was working on his behalf. You know that God can influence the minds of people that aren't his own.

He can influence their intellects and their emotions and their will. And so he asked this of the chief of the eunuchs, and he said, Look, you're endangering your own head, and you're endangering my head. I think he was more worried about himself than he was about Daniel, to tell you the honest truth.

He didn't give him a positive answer, and so Daniel went to one of the subordinates. He went to the steward, verse 11, whom the chief of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Ezeriah. And he said, Look, let's just put it to the test.

Ten days. Let us just go on a vegetarian diet for ten days, and then that will be the test. Then, verse 13, let our countenance be examined before you, and the countenances of the young men who eat the portion of the king's delicacies, as you see fit, so deal with your servants.

It was a compromise. Well, you know, some compromise is bad, some compromise is good. There are situations where we can ask for a compromise like this.

Instead of just saying, but no, I have to be so careful, I have to be guided by the Spirit of God when we do a thing like this. Anyway, it worked, didn't it? It really worked. God was working on his behalf, and although Daniel was uncompromising in one way, here he made a legitimate compromise with the steward.

It shows you his perseverance, too. He didn't give up easily. He didn't go off in a corner and sulk.

He was going to see this thing through. Now, what does this teach? Should we all be vegetarians? Is that the lesson of this chapter? I'm not going to say that at all in the Bible. It was just a simple illustration of that time, and of the situation in which Daniel and his friends found themselves.

We do have a lot of scriptures that serve as guidelines as to the food we eat after the flood. Probably before the flood, the people were all vegetarians, don't you think? Then after the flood, God said, look, eat meat, enjoy, and the people did, at least. Then the law came, of course, and pork and other meats were prohibited to the children of Israel, not to the Gentiles.

In Mark, the Lord taught the disciples, it's not what goes into the mouth that defiles a man, but what comes out of his heart that defiles him. This he said, making all foods clean. In other words, any food that God has given to man is clean for man to eat.

In Acts, of course, we're told that the food we eat is sanctified by the word of God in prayer, and I believe that so, so much. I really believe that when I sit down to a meal and give thanks for it, I can eat it and know that God will use it, the strengthening of my body, to serve him better. Other considerations of the food

doesn't agree with you, don't eat it.

If you have some allergic reaction to it, don't eat it. Or, if eating it would stumble somebody else, that's guideline that God has given us in his word, don't eat it if it would stumble somebody else. And that's brought up by Paul very clearly in 1 Corinthians, isn't it? Well, anyway, the plan worked.

At the end of ten days, they were really good-looking fellows, really good-looking fellows. They looked better than those who had eaten the gourmet food. What it teaches me is a vital connection between the spiritual and the physical, very vital connection in all of life.

They not only looked better, but they had superior knowledge. Just this, they had superior knowledge, superior wisdom, and they were skilled in literature, and God gave them superior understanding of visions and dreams. Now, you didn't get that by eating vegetables, did you? This was really God at work in their behalf.

Just think of it, giving them superior understanding of visions and dreams, that was going to come in very handy before long, wasn't it? Very, very handy. And the marvelous thing is, it gave them greater favor with the king. Oh, that's great.

Anyway, they had a greater favor with the king than the Babylonian fellows. And here they were just little Jewish nobodies who had been made eunuchs, and here they are. You know, there's one verse of Scripture that goes through all the book of Daniel, it seems to me, 1 Samuel 2, 30, Them that honor me I will honor.

God has written that principle into all of life, and it has never been repealed. It pays to obey the Lord. It pays to be true to Him, no matter what the cost may be.

I love the story of Eric Little. You've heard it many times, but it really fits into this chapter so well. A bow-legged little Scottish divinity student.

Get that? A bow-legged little Scottish divinity student. He entered the 1924 Olympics to run the 100-meter race. When he heard that the race was on Sunday, he said, no way.

No way. He would not. He refused to run.

He put duty to God before worldly success, and tremendous pressure came upon him to run. You're a traitor to Britain if you don't run. Our hopes are based upon you.

You've got to do it. He didn't even hear them when they said that. All the British athletic authorities, his teammates, the press, the public, he had been Britain's main hope for the 100-meter race.

He was the nation's golden boy, somebody said. I like that. Now he's a traitor.

But he says, I'm not running on the Sabbath, and nothing would budge him. Reverence for the Lord's Day was infinitely more precious to him than a gold medal. Well, a compromise was made with him, and they allowed him to run the 400-meter race on a weekday.

That was not his race. He had not trained for that race, but he said he would run, and he started to train quickly, but that wasn't much. And just before he ran, just at the beginning of the race, a man stepped out and handed him a note.

The man was the fellow who gave rubdowns to him and his teammates. It's not in the picture, it's an American athlete, but actually the man who did it was the man who gave him rubdowns before and after a race, and he looked at the note and it said, Them that honor me I will honor. 1 Samuel 2.30. And the day of the race was searing hot.

I want to tell you, for a Scot, 70 is really hot. You know, in Scotland, if it's 70, they say, somebody put the poor cow in the barn, you know. Don't leave a cow out in the sun when it's 70 degrees, you know.

Or if the dog is with his tongue out, they say, what's the matter with the dog? What's the terrible heat, you know? 70. This day was searing hot, and he was assigned the dreaded outside lane, the very worst possible lane to run in. And the pistol cracked, and Eric was off, and his style was appalling.

Just listen to this. His arms were flailing like a windmill, his head was back, his chin was up, his mouth was open, and his knees were jumping. Couldn't have been worse.

And yet at the tape, he had won the Olympic gold and set a new world record. 47.6 seconds for the 400-meter race. Them that honor me, I will honor.

When he died in 1945 in a Japanese concentration camp, one of the leading British newspapers said, Scotland has lost a son who did her proud every moment of his life. That's wonderful, isn't it? Scotland has lost a son who did her proud every moment of his life. Them that honor me, I will honor.

And dear Daniel was made of that same stuff, wasn't he? Made of that same stuff. Look, we're talking about him. December 4, 1994.

Still talking about him. I tell you, if you hadn't made that decision for God, if you hadn't stood for God, you wouldn't be hearing about him this morning, and I wouldn't be talking about him. Boy, that has a lesson for us today.

Young people, it has a lesson for you going out into the world when you're tempted to do things that are not wrong. A banker said to one of the junior clerks, if I gave you \$50,000, would you help juggle the books? And the young fellow thought, and he said, yes, I would. He said, would you do it for \$1,000? And the young fellow said, what do you think I am, a common thief? And the banker said, we've already established that.

Now we just want to know your price. He had already betrayed the fact that he was a common thief. Now the only question was, how much would you do it for? That's it.

If I gave you \$50,000, would you help me juggle the books? Yes, I guess I would, he said. Would you do it for \$1,000? No, what do you think I am, a common thief? And, you know, history is filled with pages of men in our day who have compromised, and the trap is sprung, and yet we find Christian men who have refused to compromise. Sometimes it might even mean a refusal to accept a promotion, or a refusal to laugh at a dirty joke.

I remember when Eisenhower was president, one of the newspaper reporters went in and told a dirty joke in his presence, and Eisenhower didn't laugh. That was the last time that newspaper man ever tried that deal. And the Lord really did give us the courage of Daniel.

Take our stand for the Lord. Be men and women of conviction, boys and girls of conviction. Stand for what is right.

And even though a thousand voices from the world may call, shall we pray? Father, we thank you for this timeless account of one of your faithful men in a heathen environment, in a pagan environment, just as we live today. It would have been so easy for him to cater to his body, to be body conscious, and just eat the very best food that was available in the world at that time. And yet, who refused to do it out of loyalty to you and to your word? We know that the King of Babylon is still active in the world in another sense, tempting us to cut corners, to violate our own conscience, to do things that we know are not right.

Help us, O God, to have the courage to say no. We ask it in the Savior's name. Amen.

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