



The Book of Daniel: No Compromise

Daniel 1:5-21

Pastor Brad Wood

In Daniel, Chapter 1, we encounter the powerful account of four young men who refused to compromise their faith despite overwhelming pressure to conform.

Taken captive to Babylon—a rigorous journey of 900 miles that took four months—Daniel, Hananiah, Mishaël, and Azariah faced a complete upheaval of everything they knew. Instead of the expected brutality, they were offered education, comfort, and the king's own food and wine. Additionally, they were given new names tied to Babylonian gods, designed to strip away their Hebrew identity and assimilate them into pagan culture.

Yet Daniel 'purposed in his heart' not to defile himself. This wasn't about being difficult or self-righteous: Daniel approached the situation with humility, wisdom, and grace. He didn't protest the education or even the name change, because he knew who he was in God. But when it came to eating food sacrificed to idols, he drew a line and stood firm.

What's remarkable is how he handled it: with consideration for the chief of the eunuchs, proposing a reasonable test, and trusting God with the outcome. The result? God honored their stand. They appeared healthier than the others, and God gave them knowledge and wisdom that made them ten times better than all the king's advisors.

The lesson for us is clear: we live in a world constantly pressuring us to conform, to blend in, to compromise our purity. But when we resolve in our hearts to stand with God—doing so with wisdom, grace, and humility—He honors that faithfulness, and it pleases Him.

5-Day Devotional and Small Group Guide

Day 1: Purposing in Your heart

Reading: Daniel 1:1-8

Devotional: Daniel's resolve began with a decision of the heart before any external pressure arrived. "Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself." This wasn't a reactive decision made in the heat of the moment, but a proactive commitment to God's standards. Before Babylon's delicacies were offered, Daniel had already determined Whom he would serve.

What decisions can you make today before temptation arrives? Your spiritual victories are won in the quiet moments of purposing your heart toward God. Like Daniel, you don't need to isolate yourself from the world, but you must resolve not to be shaped by it. God honors those who honor Him, even when it costs everything. Where will you draw your line of faithfulness today?

Day 2: Wisdom in Standing

Reading: James 3:13-18; Daniel 1:9-14

Devotional: Daniel's stand for purity was marked by remarkable wisdom. He didn't approach the chief of eunuchs with self-righteous defiance or sanctimonious pride. Instead, he made a gracious request, considered the steward's legitimate concerns, and proposed a reasonable test. True godly wisdom is "first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits."

Standing for truth doesn't require being obnoxious or combative. Daniel showed us that conviction and consideration can coexist. He wouldn't compromise his conscience, but neither would he endanger another person for his beliefs. As you navigate situations requiring you to stand for biblical principles, ask God for wisdom that is both uncompromising and gracious. Pray for insight to address legitimate concerns while remaining faithful to God's Word.

Day 3: In the World, Not of It

Reading: John 17:11-19; Matthew 5:13-16

Devotional: Jesus prayed that we would be in the world but not of it—kept from the evil one while remaining engaged with those around us. Not only did Jesus say that we were to be in the world, He clarified that He quite literally “sent” us into the world. Daniel embodied this perfectly. He learned Babylonian language, literature, and customs. He didn't fear knowledge or hide from cultural engagement. Yet knowledge never overtook wisdom; education never displaced devotion.

Many Christians fear that exposure to worldly thinking will compromise their faith. But isolation isn't God's plan. You're called to be salt and light, which requires contact with what needs seasoning and illumination. The key isn't avoiding the world but maintaining your relationship with Jesus so intimately that you remain unspotted by it. Daniel was in Babylon but refused to become Babylonian. Where has God sent you to be His presence without being conformed to that environment's patterns?

Day 4: God's Favor on the Faithful

Reading: Daniel 1:15-21; Proverbs 3:1-6

Devotional: "God gave them knowledge and skill in all literature and wisdom." Daniel's gifts weren't the result of his diet (or any other works of the flesh) but of God's favor poured out on those whose hearts desired to please Him. When you refuse to compromise, you position yourself to receive what only God can give: supernatural insight, favor, and ability beyond natural explanation.

After ten days, Daniel and his friends appeared healthier than those eating the king's delicacies—a biological improbability that revealed divine intervention. God honored their stand in ways they couldn't orchestrate themselves. You cannot manipulate God's blessing, but you can position yourself for it through faithfulness. When you trust God enough to obey Him regardless of outcomes, He demonstrates His power in remarkable ways. What aspect of your life has God called you to trust Him with results you cannot control? Are there any steps of obedience you must take?

Day 5: The Long Obedience

Reading: Daniel 1:21; Hebrews 12:1-3

Devotional: "Thus Daniel continued until the first year of King Cyrus." This single verse captures decades of faithful, unwavering service. Daniel's career spanned the entire Babylonian captivity and continued into the Persian Empire—through multiple regime changes, tyrant kings, and life-threatening situations. His longevity wasn't luck; it was the fruit of the resolve he demonstrated in chapter one.

Faithfulness isn't a single dramatic stand but a lifestyle of consistent choices. The decision Daniel made about the king's food established a pattern that carried him through lions' dens and political intrigue. Your small choices today are forming the character that will sustain you through tomorrow's greater challenges. Don't despise the seemingly minor decisions about purity, integrity, and obedience. They're building the foundation for a lifetime of walking with God. What small compromise are you tolerating that could undermine your future faithfulness? Address it today and set yourself on a trajectory of enduring obedience.

Small Group Guide: No Compromise – In Purity

Key Takeaways:

1. Purposing in your heart precedes standing in your actions: Daniel made his decision before he faced the pressure.
2. Standing for purity doesn't require being obnoxious or self-righteous: Daniel was gracious, considerate, and reasonable while remaining uncompromising.
3. God honors those who refuse to compromise: Daniel and his friends were blessed with favor, wisdom, and influence because they stood firm.
4. We can engage with the world's knowledge without being conformed to the world's values: Daniel learned everything Babylonian but remained faithful to God.
5. Wisdom from above is both pure AND peaceable: We don't have to choose between conviction and compassion.

Discussion Questions:

- Daniel refused to compromise on purity even when offered comfort and advancement in a foreign land. What areas of your life are you most tempted to compromise in order to gain acceptance or advancement?
- Daniel approached the chief of eunuchs with grace, humility, and wisdom rather than defiance or self-righteousness. How does the manner in which we stand for our convictions affect our witness and the outcome of our stand?
- Pastor Brad noted that Daniel didn't object to learning Babylonian culture and literature, but drew the line at defiling himself with food offered to idols. How do we discern the difference between being *in* the world versus being *of* the world?

- God gave Daniel and his friends favor, knowledge, and understanding *after* they chose not to defile themselves. What is the relationship between our faithfulness in small matters of obedience and God's blessing in larger areas of our lives?
- Daniel was willing to put his faith to the test with the ten-day trial, trusting God with the outcome. When have you had to trust God with uncertain outcomes while standing for what you believed was right?
- The Apostle James describes wisdom from above as pure, peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and hypocrisy. How does this description challenge the way you typically approach situations where you believe you have discernment?
- The sermon emphasizes that knowledge did not supersede wisdom for Daniel and his friends. In what ways might Christians today fear knowledge or education, and how can we pursue learning while remaining rooted in godly wisdom?
- Daniel purposed in his heart not to defile himself before he faced the pressure to compromise. What spiritual disciplines or decisions can we make in advance to prepare us for moments when we will be pressured to conform to the world?
- Pastor Brad mentioned that many churches today reflect no difference between the church and the world. What specific practices or values should distinguish the church as being in the world but not of the world?

Practical Applications:

1. **Prayer:** Pray that God would give you wisdom from above to know when and how to stand firm. And that you would have Daniel's resolve to purpose for your heart not to be defiled.
2. **Reflection:** - Ask God to reveal any areas where you've been enjoying the "king's delicacies"—things the world offers that are defiling your walk with God. Turn from these things and replace them with something that builds your faith (Scripture, worship, fellowship, service).
3. **Scripture Study:** Read 1 Corinthians Chapters 8 & 10, Paul's teaching on meat offered to idols and one's conscience. Note the heart we are to have as believers toward these types of issues.
4. **Accountability:** Identify one area where you feel pressure to compromise (language you use, entertainment you consume, how you spend money, workplace ethics, etc.) Write out a specific commitment to God about how you will stand firm in that area, and share it with one trusted person for accountability.
5. **Thankfulness:** Think of situations from your life where you have seen others live out a Godly example. Thank the Lord for these ones who have been influences upon you.

Further Discussion Questions:

- What made Daniel's situation so challenging? Consider the distance from home, the loss of everything familiar, and the attractive nature of what was being offered.
- Why do you think Nebuchadnezzar wanted to educate and integrate the Jewish captives rather than simply enslave them? What does this teach us about how the world tries to assimilate believers today?
- Daniel didn't object to his new Babylonian name or to learning Babylonian culture and literature. Why do you think he drew the line at the food? What does this teach us about choosing our battles wisely?
- How would you describe Daniel's approach to the chief of the eunuchs? What made his request effective? (Consider his humility, reasonableness, and concern for the steward's safety.)
- Daniel proposed a test rather than demanding his way. What does this reveal about his faith? How can we apply this principle when we face situations where we need to stand for our convictions?
- Pastor Brad quoted Jesus when he said: "We are to be in the world, but not of the world." What does this look like practically in your daily life? Share specific examples from work, school, family, or social settings.
- James 3:17 describes wisdom from above as "first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy." How can we stand firm in our convictions while still demonstrating these qualities?

- Pastor Brad mentioned that "knowledge is not the determining factor—wisdom is." How do we gain godly wisdom to navigate a world that constantly presents us with competing values and beliefs?
- Where do you personally feel the most pressure to compromise your faith or values? (This could be in your workplace, on social media, in family relationships, etc.)
- Daniel "purposed in his heart" not to defile himself. What does it mean to purpose something in your heart before you face the actual temptation or pressure? How can we prepare our hearts in advance?

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