

Daniel: Faith That Stands Will Endure.

Daniel 1:8-21

MPS God's grace empowers His people to stand and endure when we live to honor Him by faith.

OBJ Every person can understand a life of faith that stands to honor God by seven lessons.

READ Daniel 1:8-21

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. ⁹And God gave Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the chief of the eunuchs, ¹⁰and 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." ¹¹Then 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. ¹³Then 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." ¹⁴So he listened to them in this matter, and tested them for ten days. ¹⁵At 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. ¹⁶So the steward took away their food and the wine they were to drink, and gave them vegetables.

*¹⁷As for these four youths, God gave them learning and skill in all literature and wisdom, and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams. ¹⁸At 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. ¹⁹And 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. ²⁰And 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. ²¹And Daniel was there until the first year of King Cyrus. **Daniel 1:8-21***

Daniel made a decision. In the Bible, Babylon is the kingdom of darkness, and Daniel has been relocated to the heart of darkness. We should not miss the irony of his new location though, the land of Shinar.(1:2) Now the center of world power, Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, who believes he is god, has Babylon headquartered at the same location where God frustrated the efforts of man to make himself god the first time, Tower of Babel(Genesis 11:1-9). And in the heart of darkness, they have decreed to brainwash these young men, changed their names to force a Babylonian identity upon them, and stripped them of human dignity. This is all very important for us to understand as we approach today's passage.

"*But Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself...Therefore he asked*". Of all the monumental changes that occurred, Daniel did not allow all that had happened to distract him from staying focused on serving God. You can't control what people do to you, Christian, but YOU ARE always responsible for whether you honor the Lord with your life. Daniel resolved to honor the Lord with his whole life. His resolve directed him to take every measure possible to bear a faithful witness for the Lord. "*Therefore, he asked*"(.8b). When confronted with what Nebuchadnezzar, and ultimately Babylon, wanted to make of his life, Daniel made sure his life honored his true King, The Lord Almighty. We don't know exactly why he asked for different food and drink. But of greatest likelihood, it was not due to health concerns or even idolatry, but because a different diet plan was the only way for God to be honored. It may not seem monumental to us, but for Daniel it was strategic, and it reveals his faith in God.

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OBJ Five Lessons of Faith to Stand and Endure

Lesson #1: Faith acts to move God to work!¹ Daniel resolved in his heart because he believed God. Daniel understood what

¹ "The righteous shall live by faith." (Romans 1:17 cited from Habakkuk 2:4; see also Hebrews 10:38; Galatians 3:11)



Hebrews 11:6 states, “*And without faith it is impossible to please him.*” And faith is never only a matter of the heart. What Daniel knew to be true in his heart meant he had to act on that belief. [A resolve of heart to honor the Lord understands that faith always manifests in action to see God work.](#)

1:9-11 The next verse records God’s work; “*God gave Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the chief of the eunuchs.*” The words here are important because they give us indication of how God works. The first is the Hebrew word for covenant love, and the second means sympathy for another’s plight. These words tell us that God is not only working in Daniel, but He is working for Daniel. [What Daniel knew in his heart he here records for us to know of his testimony of the Lord’s work.](#)

The chief eunuch had pity on Daniel but refuses the request because he fears for his life. An interesting situation arises, though, by his answer to Daniel. The chief eunuch’s response presents a contrast of powers that creates a stark tension in the whole storyline. Two kingdoms in contrast, and two loyalties face off; one of love to honor, and the other of fear to self-preserve. [Whose way is best, which King’s strategy and command will win? The Chief Eunuch may not have granted Daniel’s request, but he was now fully aware of Daniel’s heart to honor his God.](#)

TRANS **Daniel doesn’t let “no” stop him.** Instead, He moves on to make his request to the steward of the chief eunuch. [Lesson #2: Faith persists in righteousness in the face of opposition and disappointment.](#)

You may not think much about this lesson, but it is surely one of the most important. Many people give up and stop at the first hint of opposition or disappointment, concluding ‘God is not in this’, or ‘this is not the right thing to do’. But a readiness to give up likely reveals a using God for personal means, not seeking to honor God above all; a lack of faith, not a failed attempt at it; and as is very often the case, an unwillingness of personal sacrifice in serving God. Sometimes a “no” is God’s way of preparing you. [The Enemy works to thwart and frustrate, but faith persists because God is worthy of honor, and especially before those who don’t know Him, who need someone to bear a faithful witness.](#)

1:12-16 **When Daniel goes to the steward he likely expects another no.** This time he lays out a plan that mitigates the steward’s risk. He proposes a ten day test of water and vegetables for he and his three friends, instead of the king’s food. We don’t know exactly what about the food would have defiled them. It may have simply been that a different diet would have made enough difference to cause the steward and chief eunuch to know there was a difference, and where that difference had come from, NOT Nebuchadnezzar, but Daniel’s God. We don’t have to know this exactly. What we can say is that Daniel wanted to make sure his Lord was honored in his actions.² At the end of the ten days the steward would decide who looks better. [What could ten days of a three-year plan\(1,095 days; <1%\) possibly hurt?](#) The steward listens and agrees to their plan. At the end of only ten days their appearance was so strikingly different that the steward changed the diet for all the youths. [Daniel never questioned whether God would be faithful. He only aimed to discern how he could honor the Lord.](#)

[Lesson #3: Faith tests to discern God’s will and way.](#)

Daniel is putting God on the hook to show-up and work. IF God doesn’t work, Daniel will not only lose, but he and his three friends will be shamed in everyone’s eyes. Daniel knew that risking his own reputation was worth it because he was serving God to honor His Name among the nations. Through Daniel’s test the steward will see God’s work, and in only a short amount of time. But Daniel doesn’t need sight; he has faith. The demand or need to see to believe is for the unbeliever. But as we’ve already said, “The righteous live by faith.” When you know the Lord, you don’t “need to see” or “demand a sign” to believe, you only trust and obey because you believe. Daniel knew what God wanted, a faithful witness to honor His name among the nations. He just didn’t know exactly how God would do it. So, he created a test to discern God’s will. [Testing God is an act of treason and unbelief.\(Matthew 4:7; Deuteronomy 6:16\) Testing to discern God’s will is an act of faith that honors God.](#)

[“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” Romans 12:2](#)

² Joyce G. Baldwin, [Daniel: An Introduction and Commentary](#), vol. 23, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1978), 92. Baldwin notes, “It would seem that Daniel rejected this symbol of dependence on the king because he wished to be free to fulfil his primary obligations to the God he served. The defilement he feared was not so much a ritual as a moral defilement, arising from the subtle flattery of gifts and favours which entailed hidden implications of loyal support, however dubious the king’s future policies might prove to be.”



ILLUS When was the last time you were faced with a really hard decision, maybe even one in how to honor the Lord? We seldom ever make these decisions quickly, and almost never only in a moment. Hard decisions cause us to look back on our lives, remember the principles we've established from lessons learned, and apply them to reach our final decision. God invites us to live by faith, to test to discern His will so His Name will be honored. Never underestimate the power of God to use your effort in trusting and following Him as a faithful witness for the world that is watching. **Daniel's test was as much a discernment of God's will for him as it was a demonstration of God's power for the steward.**

TRANS A resolve to serve God doesn't mean the path will be easy. This first test was their easiest, but there would be plenty more to follow.

1:17-20 Again, God works in the lives of these four youths. This time He gave them all they needed to excel in the tests that would face from the Babylonian education. And for Daniel, he was given learning and skill in understanding all visions and dreams. When the time came for them to stand before King Nebuchadnezzar, they stood out from all the rest. They were found not only better than the rest of their class, but *"ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters that were in all his kingdom."* **The King's estimation of how much better they were is not merely a calculation of how they out-performed others, but an immeasurable declaration of how God had blessed them with favor in the King's eyes.**

Lesson 4: Faith perseveres to endure by God's strength for His glory.

Daniel and his friends could have been satisfied with their first victory, but that was not their end goal. Once they discerned how God was using them, they were clear how they were to proceed. The victory from the food test confirmed in them that God would use them in greater ways in Babylon. And God's favor paid off in a really big way. Faith always takes today's discernment and victory to use as tomorrow's strength to persevere. Every day is not designed as a test in whether we will trust and obey God. But faith does lead us to persevere in God's strength every day, knowing greater tests will come. **Faith perseveres through trials and tests to endure by God's strength so that every measure of success serves His glory.**

What this first chapter provides for us is an introduction to the whole book. We will see Daniel face tests time and time again. He discerned God's will through a test in the beginning, but God's will would lead him into many and much harder tests the remainder of his life. In every test, Daniel undoubtedly remembered that first victory and the way God worked in him and for Him to give him favor and compassion, wisdom and a strong spirit. Verse 21 states, *"And Daniel was there until the first year of King Cyrus."*

Lesson 5: Faith always receives God's reward.

God honored Daniel by outlasting Nebuchadnezzar. The Babylonians overcame Daniel, but he outlasted them. When I think of Daniel, I cannot help but be reminded of the promise we have in Ephesians 6:13, *"Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm."* **Daniel took a stand to honor His Lord. And the Lord honored Him so that when the earthly kingdoms fell, Daniel still stood.**

Gospel The way God worked in Daniel is not unique to Daniel, but distinct of how our God works for those whose faith is in Him. Three times chapter one tells of God's work; He gave Judah into the hands of Babylon(.2), He gave favor and compassion to Daniel in the sight of his captors(.9), and He gave learning and skill in all that they would face(.17). This is the way God works to bring salvation. God subjected the whole creation to bondage in hope for freedom. In sin, we are enslaved and separated from God. But His mercy and grace for us is great! The Bible records another record of God giving. **"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."** **John 3:16 Have you believed in Jesus to receive eternal life in Jesus?** The Bible also records that God any who lack wisdom only need to ask and He will give it generously. **"If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him."** **James 1:5 God gives all we need to know him and serve Him, when by faith we stand to honor His Name.**

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APPL Why would God send Daniel to Babylon? The heart of darkness needs light the most. The heart of the enemy is where God strikes for his final victory. God still calls people to stand by faith for Him. He sends people to foreign lands, to foreign people, and to foreign places to pierce the darkness with the light of the gospel. **If God's people won't go, how will the world ever hear and know?** God sends His people because He gave His grace and compassion by His only begotten Son.

APPL Why is Daniel so valuable for us today? We live in Babylon.

APPL Who will trust to take a stand to honor the Lord with your life?

