

## **Integrity: To Be a Daniel**

### **Daniel 1**

We live in a world of compromise. In fact, compromise is often praised as a virtue; it's diplomatic and reasonable. In some cases, it's appropriate.

There are times when compromise is not appropriate. It's in those times when someone holds fast to their integrity, they are often viewed as difficult, hard-nosed, and unconcerned about the common good. The world loves compromise, but shouldn't Christians be different?

Too many believers worry about what people will think, say, or do if they take a stand on godly principles. So instead, they compromise their convictions or maintain them under the cover of darkness. They are cowards. If you're faint-hearted, take a lesson from the life of Daniel—a man with a backbone.

### **The Test of Integrity**

Following his first invasion of Judah and siege of Jerusalem in 606 B. C., King Nebuchadnezzar took hostage dozens of quality Jewish youths. Daniel was one of those youths who was especially destined for greatness, and today his name is synonymous with integrity and an uncompromising spirit.

What was it that tested Daniel's integrity? It wasn't captivity; *it was privilege*. Daniel and the other Jewish young men chosen to advance Babylonian culture were given privilege, education the best food and drink, and the promise of a high governmental position. While few people would have a problem with this, Daniel did.

Daniel drew the line where the Scripture did—he wouldn't eat the king's food or drink the king's drink. Why?

First, eating food prepared to Babylonian standards was likely to put the young exiles in violation of God's laws concerning unclean foods. Leviticus 7:22-27; Leviticus 11

Second, those enticing morsels and vintage wines—perks of the king's service—had been ritually dedicated to Babylon's false gods.

Daniel wanted no participation in any pagan feast, even to the slightest degree. That would be a form of idolatry that would provoke the wrath of a jealous God. Exodus 20:4-5

His decision seemed petty, but it was ultimately a decision about who he worshiped.

Our culture and in some segments of the church, people are worshiping a myriad of ideas, philosophies, beliefs, religions, and even people, believing that these will save them and humanity from whatever the enemy is.

Ideas have consequences; philosophies have consequences, beliefs have consequences, religions have consequences, following people have consequences.

Worshiping anything or anyone else besides Jesus Christ and Him crucified is idolatry. These false gods at the least will make your life miserable and at the worse destroy you.

### **The Results of Integrity**

Daniel's decision constitutes a basic part of genuine integrity and the uncompromising life: *you must draw lines where Scripture draws them*.

His uncompromising lifestyle stands in sharp contrast to the way many believers live out their convictions. Many Christians tend to waver and offer ambiguous explanations for abstaining from certain secular activities. Why do believers do this?

They are more afraid of what others think about them, then they are about what their holy and righteous Creator and Savior thinks about them.

Daniel, however, was unashamed of God and His standards. He took the opportunity to state his convictions.

### **Unashamed Boldness**

If Daniel wanted to abstain from eating and drinking what the king provided, he could have gone about it several ways.

Daniel, having made up his mind, chose the route of open boldness. "He sought permission from the commander of the officials that he might not defile himself" (Daniel 1:8). He was respectful but unbending. That's called courage.

### **Unearthly Protection**

Daniel was in a foreign country, at the very heart of the empire that had just destroyed his homeland. And yet, "God granted Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the commander of the officials" (Daniel 1:9).

He proved the truth of Proverbs 16:7: "When a man's ways are pleasing to the Lord, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him."

Don't compromise and forfeit God's protection. Stand firm in obedience to God's Word and trust Him—He'll take care of you.

### **Unhindered Persistence**

In his boldness, Daniel didn't hesitate to go right to the top. But when Ashpenaz feared the forfeiture of his head for granting the special menu, Daniel was undeterred. He appealed to a lower-ranking overseer who monitored him—presumably a man who would not be as afraid of Nebuchadnezzar since he didn't report directly to the king.

Daniel showed another vital trait of integrity: *persistence in doing what is right*.

### **Unblemished Faith**

When Daniel sought permission to go on a water and vegetable diet, he demonstrated unwavering faith in God. Daniel 1:12-13

Daniel did what was right, and trusted God for the results, no matter what.

In this case, God caused Daniel to look healthier than all the other youths (Daniel 1:15).<sup>[1][1][1]</sup><sub>[SEP][SEP]</sub> If it had turned out that Daniel's appearance failed the overseer's scrutiny, I believe he would have trusted God without wavering, maintained an uncompromising lifestyle, and humbly accepted the consequences. I also believe that all true Christians will show the same fortitude during trials.

### **Application**

If you've fallen into a pattern of compromise, confess it as sin to the Lord. Repent and look at Daniel as an example of unwavering integrity. Then seek the Lord's help to live like he did. You must resolutely set your heart as Daniel did to fear the Lord, and the Lord alone. Borrow a little backbone from him, and you'll live your life with integrity before God.