

# AN EXCELLENT SPIRIT

(The Responsibility And Reward Of An Excellent Spirit)  
Daniel 1:8/2:19-23/3:17-18/4:27/5:17/6:10



- ◆ Integrity
- ◆ Gratefulness
- ◆ Wisdom
- ◆ Security
- ◆ Servanthood
- ◆ Courage

“Forasmuch as an *excellent spirit* was found in Daniel” (Daniel 5:12)

“Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes because an *excellent spirit* was in him” (Daniel 6:3)

Bill Kirk

# “THE JOY AND REWARD OF AN EXCELLENT SPIRIT”

## (Message #1)

**Text:** Daniel 1:8 / 2:19-23 / 3:17&18 / 4:27 / 5:17 / 6:10 / 5:12 / 6:3

**Message:** How To Possess An Excellent Spirit

### Introduction

(In Daniel Chapter 5: Verse 12)

“Forasmuch as *an excellent spirit* was found in Daniel”

(In Daniel Chapter 6: Verse 3)

“Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes because *an excellent spirit* was in him”

**Question:** How many of you would prefer to have an excellent spirit, over a mediocre spirit?

**Question:** How many of you would rather sow to the spirit (and experience freedom instead of sowing to the flesh and experience bondage?)

**Question:** How many of you would like God’s favor upon you instead of God’s wrath upon you?

**Question:** How many of you desire joyful consequences from your choices over painful consequences from your choices?

**Question:** How many of you want to be a healthy Christian as opposed to an unhealthy Christian?

**Fact:** Daniel is a picture of a healthy Christian.

**Fact:** Daniel is a picture of a “tried by fire” Christian.

**Fact:** Daniel is a picture of a tempted Christian.

**Fact:** And Daniel is an illustration of how God rewards men and women who possess an excellent spirit!!!

### The Setting Of Our Text Is That...

- #1. Daniel was born about 620 B.C.
- #2. He was 4 years old at the time of the great revival in Judah under King Josiah. (II Chronicles 34)
- #3. Daniel was 10 years old when Josiah died.
- #4. And Daniel was 13 years old when Nebuchadnezzar deported a number of Jews to Babylon, (including Daniel and his friends).
- #5. Daniel comes on the scene as a teenager (with his three companions).
- #6. He finds himself 1500 miles from home serving under 4 different rulers who represented 3 different kingdoms.
- #7. Daniel is a picture of how to **serve** the lord, **glorify** the Lord and be **faithful** to the Lord in the land of the enemy. (hostile territory)
  - ◆ He teaches us how to possess an **excellent spirit**.

### Why Was The Book Of Daniel Written?

(One Reason)

- ◆ To reveal the sovereign will of God in the nations and in your life.
- ◆ To reveal how God uses even pagan rulers to accomplish His purpose.
- ◆ To reveal how man proposes, but God disposes and always has the last say.

(Daniel Has 12 Chapters)

(Pg. 1 of 5)

- ◆ The first 6 are historical (and reveal Daniel's personal integrity).
- ◆ The last 6 are prophetic (and reveal end time events).

**Fact:** The book of Daniel is the key to all biblical prophecy.

**Fact:** Only the book of Daniel can unlock the prophetic in Matthew 24&25 / Mark 13 / Luke 21 II Thessalonians 2, and all of Revelation.

**Fact:** In the Olivet discourse, Jesus quotes only from the book of Daniel.

**Fact:** The Book of Revelation cannot be unlocked without the prophecies of Daniel.

**Fact:** The "Man of sin" in II Thessalonians 2:3 needs Daniel to be clarified.

**Fact:** Daniel (chapters 7-12) covers the Antichrist, the Great Tribulation, the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming, the resurrections and the judgments.

### (Chapters 1-6 are Personal History)

In chapter 1 – The teenagers refuse the kings drink and food.

In chapter 2 – Daniel interprets the image in the kings dream.

In chapter 3 – The 3 Hebrew children are cast into the fiery furnace.

In chapter 4 – Daniel interprets the dream about the tree.

In chapter 5 – Belshazzar's feast and the handwriting on the wall.

In chapter 6 – Daniel is thrown into the den of lions.

### (Chapters 7-12 Are Future Prophecies)

In chapter 7 – Daniel's vision of the 4 beasts.

In chapter 8 – Daniel's vision of the ram, goat, and horn.

In chapter 9 – Daniel's vision of 70 weeks.

In chapter 10 – Daniels prayer and the heavenly messenger.

In chapter 11 – The prophecy concerning Persia & Greece, the South and the North.

In chapter 12 – The end time tribulation and resurrection.

### (Today In Message #1)

#### "The Characteristics Of An *Excellent Spirit*"

(Characteristics we will cover in-depth over the next 6 weeks)

**Question:** Pastor, if Daniel, chapters 1-6, reveal Daniel's choices (and consequences) what is it that produces *an excellent spirit*?

**Characteristic #1:** (Of an excellent spirit) A willingness to choose right, when the environment is all wrong!

Chapter 1:8, "But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the kings meat nor with the wine which he drank, therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself".

- ◆ 4 teenagers from Judah are committed to God, (Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah).
- ◆ To partake of food and wine dedicated to the pagan gods of Babylon would constitute a breach of faith with Jehovah.
- ◆ Daniel and his 3 friends were in a new environment but they maintained their old convictions at personal risk and rejection)

**Question:** How did God honor the integrity of these 4 teenagers?

**Answer:** (Vs. 17-20), God gave them double for their trouble.

(V. 20) The Lord magnified the teens ten times over the others in the palace.

**(The Reward?)**

- ◆ God will lift you up when others put you down, (and)
- ◆ God will take notice when you say "NO" to temptation.

**Characteristic #2: (Of an excellent spirit) A willingness to "Thank God" when blessings come your way" (or) A willingness to take no credit for what God has done!**

Chapter 2: Verses 19-23: "I thank thee and praise thee O God; it is you that has given me wisdom and made known the kings dream unto me.

- ◆ (V. 1), King Nebuchadnezzar dreams a dream about an image and can't sleep.
- ◆ (V. 10), No one in the king's palace can interpret the dream.
- ◆ (V. 12), The angry king says, "Kill all the wise men of Babylon".
- ◆ (Vs. 15 & 16), Daniel says, "Hold on boss, don't be so impatient".
- ◆ (V. 16) "Give me some time and the Lord will show me what He means".
- ◆ (V. 19), "The secret is revealed to Daniel".

**Question:** What does Daniel do afterward?

**Answer:** (v. 23) He pauses to thank God and give Him all the praise, thanks, credit and glory.

**Question:** How did God reward Daniel?

**Answer:** (V. 48) Daniel was promoted and blessed above all.

**Characteristic #3: (Of an excellent spirit) A willingness to choose companions who fear God above every other opinion.**

Chapter 3: Verses 17 & 18, (Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refused to bow to the golden image, and were thrown into the fiery furnace).

- ◆ Daniel's 3 friends at work refused to compromise.
- ◆ With poise and calm, they chose to die rather than bargain their testimony. (v. 18)
- ◆ The enemy said in (v. 12), "They serve not thy gods"

**Question:** What did Daniels friends do under pressure to bow?

**Answer:** They (v. 21) were cast into the furnace heated seven times hotter, (because they feared the Lord not man).

**Question:** How did God reward them?

- #1. Jesus showed up in the furnace with them. (v. 25)
- #2. Jesus shielded them from all harm and smoke.
- #3. Jesus (v. 30) saw that Daniels friends were promoted because they feared the Lord more than the furnace and the fear of man.

**Characteristic #4: (Of an excellent spirit) A willingness to speak the truth in love, even when it hurts!**

- ◆ In chapter 4, Nebuchadnezzar has a dream about a tree that grows tall and is suddenly cut down.

- ◆ In vs. 25-27, Daniel interprets the dream (or vision) and gives the bad news:

**“O King, you are about to be abased because of your pride”**

- ◆ (Vs. 30-33), The king is reduced to the field (as a beast).

**(In Other Words)**

- ◆ Daniel (at the risk of rejection and personal loss) is willing to speak what God gives him.

**Question:** What was the reward for Daniel’s obedience?

**Answer:** (V. 35), He receives the acknowledgment that we all need to hear: “God will do according to His will and no one on earth (or in heaven) can stay his hand”.

**Characteristic #5: (Of an excellent spirit) A willingness to not use God for personal gain!**

- ◆ (V. 5) At Belshazzar’s party, God writes a message on the wall.
- ◆ In (v. 19) the host is deeply troubled.
- ◆ In (v.13) Daniel is brought in, and in (v. 16) he is promised all kinds of prizes to interpret the wall message from God.

**Question:** How does Daniel respond?

**Answer:** (V. 17) “Keep it boss, I refuse to market, sell and profit from what God has given freely”.

- ◆ It is an unselfish spirit.
- ◆ It serves God for God’s benefit, (not its own).
- ◆ It is a healthy spirit that builds people and churches.
- ◆ It is ministry as opposed to merchandizing.

**Question:** How was Daniel rewarded by God?

**Answer:** (V. 29), God promoted Daniel because he sought first the Kingdom of God!

**#6: The final Characteristic: (Of an excellent spirit) A willingness to pray and seek the Lord daily in the midst of a crisis or a calm.**

- ◆ (V. 10), What does Daniel do when jealousy causes the co-workers to set a trap to sink him?
- ◆ Does he plot back and wrestle with flesh and blood?
- ◆ (Vs. 4-9), Jealousy schemes and plots against the godly man Daniel.
- ◆ (V. 10), Daniel knows what’s going on, and does what? (Builds his altar and prays through to God).
- ◆ (V. 16), It cost David a night with lions.
- ◆ (Vs. 20 & 21), Daniel is honored for his praying (which overcame his intimidation) which brought help from heaven).

**Question:** How did God reward Daniel?

**Answer:** (Vs. 25 & 26), A decree was made to honor the God of Daniel!

**Question:** Do you want an excellent spirit or a mediocre spirit?

**A Mediocre Spirit In A Person Is...**

- ◆ ...A person that drives thru McDonalds and throws the trash out the car window on the way home.

- ◆ ...A person that parks in the handicap spot when they are not handicapped at all.
- ◆ ...A person that opens their car door and cares less about slamming the car next to them.
- ◆ ...A person that puts their groceries in the car and sends the shopping cart down the parking lot.
- ◆ ...A person that is always late for appointments and steals other people's time.
- ◆ ...A person that never replaces the toilet paper when it runs out, (Their motto is "Let the next person deal with it").
- ◆ ...A person that leaves the motel room with all the lights on because it's not their electric bill.
- ◆ ...A person that spits out their gum on the sidewalk for someone else to step in.
- ◆ ...A person that brushes the crumbs on the floor when they clean off the table.
- ◆ ...A person that butts in line at Wal-Mart and feels they have a right to do so.
- ◆ ...A person that borrows their neighbor's wheelbarrow and never returns it.
- ◆ ...A person that doesn't pick up the hanger when it drops on the closet floor.
- ◆ ...A person that consistently uses the copy machine at work for personal use and never pays for the paper.
- ◆ ...A person that kicks the clothes under the bed.
- ◆ ...A person that steals time from their employer on long lunch breaks.
- ◆ ...A person that pouts when someone else doesn't do what they want.
- ◆ ...A person that doesn't care about changing, (but still wants the reward of *an excellent spirit*).

**Application:**

In Daniel chapter 1, some of you are facing temptation in your environment and need grace to say "NO" like Daniel did.

In Daniel chapter 2, are you willing to deflect all praise and thanks to God for every blessing?

In Daniel chapter 3, some of you have to let go of companions and close friends that are pulling you down. (Why?)

They are not walking in the fear of the Lord.

In Daniel chapter 4, are you willing to speak the truth in love, even when it hurts?

In Daniel chapter 5, do you serve God for His benefit or just for your own benefit?

In Daniel chapter 6, is your devotional life up to date, so when the crisis comes you don't Panic and make poor decisions?

**AMEN!**

Altar call  
Bill Kirk, Pastor