

THE POWER OF INTEGRITY

(How To Choose Right When The Environment Is All Wrong)
Daniel 1:1-21



DANIEL STANDS TALL

- ◆ His Predicament
- ◆ His Purpose
- ◆ His Promotion

*“But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself”
(Daniel 1:8)*

Bill Kirk

“THE POWER OF INTEGRITY”

(Message #2)

Text: Daniel 1:1-21

Subject: “The Power of Integrity” (Or, The Value Of An Undivided Heart)

Introduction

(The theme of Daniel chapters 1-6 is summed up in 2 verses:)

- ◆ Daniel 5:12, “Forasmuch as an **excellent spirit** was found in Daniel”, (and)
- ◆ Daniel 6:3, “Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes because an **excellent spirit** was in him”.

Question: What is an excellent spirit?

Answer: It is the spirit of Daniel revealed in Daniel chapters 1-6.

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

Last Week We Laid The Foundation

(The six characteristics of an **excellent spirit** from chapters 1-6)

Question: What are the characteristics of an excellent spirit (that bring blessings and great reward?)

- ◆ In chapter 1 – A willingness to choose right when the environment is all wrong. (an **integrity spirit**)
- ◆ In chapter 2 – A willingness to thank God when blessings come your way. (a **grateful** spirit)
- ◆ In chapter 3 – A willingness to choose companions who fear the Lord above every other opinion. (a **courageous** spirit)
- ◆ In chapter 4 – A willingness to speak the truth in love even when it hurts. (a **secure** spirit)
- ◆ In chapter 5 – A willingness to not use God for personal gain. (a **Servanthood** spirit)
- ◆ In chapter 6 – A willingness to pray and seek God in the midst of a crisis or a calm. (a **devotional** spirit)

Question: How many of you want an **excellent spirit** instead of a mediocre spirit?

Today; characteristic #1 of an excellent spirit: A willingness to choose right when the environment is all wrong!

(In Chapter 1 –(3 Revelations of truth surround an integrity spirit)

I. Daniel’s Predicament

Question: Pastor, what predicament did Daniel find himself in?

Answer: It was a hostile environment to say the least.

- ◆ In V. 1, Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem.
- ◆ In V. 2, Nebuchadnezzar gathers his treasures and hostages and heads for Babylon.
- ◆ In Vs 3 & 4, The king chooses the most gifted princes to train for political leadership.
- ◆ In Vs. 5-7, Daniel finds himself facing two great temptations and battles.

Question: Pastor, how is Daniel tested? #1. Is the **food** test and #2. Is the **name** test.

#1. The Food Test Of (Verse 5)

“And the king appointed them a daily provision of the kings meat, and of the wine which he drank.

- ◆ The “meat” refers to the food of the pagans.
- ◆ It included unclean animals that Daniel (as a Jew) was forbidden to eat under the Mosaic Law. (Leviticus 11:44-47)
- ◆ If Daniel and his teenage friends were Nazarites, wine was forbidden in Numbers 6:3.

#2. The Name Test Of (Verses 6 & 7)

- ◆ (V. 6) describes Daniel and his 3 friends.

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- #1. Daniel (whose name means, "God is my judge")
- #2. Hananiah (whose name means "The Lord is gracious")
- #3. Mishael (whose name means "One come from God")
- #4. Azariah (whose name means "The Lord is my helper")

Question: What happens to these 4 teenagers who were raised by godly parents and trained in godly character?

Answer: The prince of the eunuchs (in v. 7) gives new names to the 4 in deference to the pagan gods:

- #1. Daniel is renamed Belteshazzar, (which means: "worshipper of Baal)
- #2. Hananiah is renamed Shadrach, (which means: "inspiration of the sun")
- #3. Mishael is renamed Meshach, (which means "One who belongs to the goddess Sheshach").
- #4. Azariah is renamed Abednego, (which means: "servant of Nego the morning star").

Question: Pastor, what do you do when you find yourself in a hostile land, and are tempted by pagan culture, pagan food, pagan wine and pagan labels?

Question: Pastor, what do you say when someone hands you an Old Milwaukee or a Bud Light?

Question: What do you say when someone hands you a joint, a pipe, some weed or powder?

Question: What do you do when someone wants to have sex with you outside of marriage?

Question: What do you say, how do you respond, what is the secret to making life choices that bring blessings and not curses? **(Good Question)**

II. **Daniel's Purpose (Vs. 8-16)**

(V. 8) "But" (everybody say "But") (V. 8) "But Daniel" (did what?)

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

Question: How does Daniel respond to his superior, his culture, his temptations, and his cool-dude friends in the pagan court?

Question: Is Daniel soft, does he want to be popular, will he yield to the Babylonian diet?

Question: Will Daniel and his 3 close friends accept their Babylonian name labels, and eat like Babylonians, dress like Babylonians and think like Babylonians?

Question: Pastor, how does Daniel (and how do I) overcome temptation that wants to stimulate my mind to make wrong choices and steal my divine potential in life?

◆ (V. 8) But Daniel (did what?) "He purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself"

Question: What does it mean to "purpose in my heart" pastor?

Answer: It means...

- #1. To purpose ahead of time before the temptation and enticement comes.
- #2. To purpose and resolve beforehand to say "yes" to God's will for your life.
- #3. To purpose in your heart that you'll not sell yourself for any price to another, (and thereby defile yourself).
- #4. To purpose in the house of God (now), that you will honor God outside the house of God (later).

Fact: Daniel was true to his conscience!

Fact: Daniel was true to his family!

Fact: Daniel was true to his brethren!

Fact: Daniel was true to his God!

Question: Why did the king start with food, then wine, and especially a name change?

Answer: Because the devil destroys us through slow enticements one by one. (Are you weakening in any area of your life today?)

Question: Where did Daniel purpose at?

Answer: (V. 8) "In his heart"

Question: Why the heart?

Answer: Because Proverbs 4:23 says: "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life".

(Which Means:)

- ◆ Guard and protect your heart, for that is the place where God speaks to you, the very place you receive divine direction for your life.

(Which Means:)

- ◆ If we fail to guard our heart, we will be unable to discern God's will when He speaks to us.
- ◆ **Question:** But pastor, doesn't God forgive us when we sin? **Yes!**... (But forgiveness doesn't cancel consequences)
- ◆ Adam and Eve were forgiven, (but they still could not enter the garden again).
- ◆ Moses was forgiven, (but he was still not allowed into the promised land).
- ◆ David was forgiven, (but he still suffered greatly because of his sin).

Question: Pastor, why must I purpose in my heart not to defile myself with sin? Because...

#1. Sin never **satisfies** the one who sins:

- ◆ "The eyes of man are never satisfied". (Proverbs 27:20)
- ◆ Sin is addictive because it is pleasurable.
- ◆ Sin is powerful because it is stimulating and fun.
- ◆ Sin always leaves its victim with the feeling of being unclean, ungratified, discontent and empty.
- ◆ Sin thrills (then kills) it fascinates (then assassinates).

#2. Sin always leads to **more** sin:

- ◆ "The evil deeds of a wicked man ensnare him; the cords of his sin hold him fast". (Proverbs 5:22)
- ◆ Sin's power pulls us to the next sin when we give it a foothold.
- ◆ Temptation may come sparingly, but when you give in, its like feeding a fire.
- ◆ The very nature of sin is to strengthen its grip the longer it is entertained.

#3. Sin **enslaves** the one who sins:

- ◆ Sin enslaves to the flesh nature.
- ◆ When we habitually sin, addictions are created and fleshly cravings come alive with vengeance.
- ◆ Sin puts you on the side of the devil and under his control.

#4. Sin always **humiliates** the sinner:

- ◆ It steals your respect and reputation.
- ◆ It pollutes, stains and contaminates your name.
- ◆ It mars all the good deeds you've done.
- ◆ It ruins and defiles all of your achievements.

"Dead flies putrefy the perfume's ointment, and cause it to give off a foul odor. So does a little folly to one respected for wisdom and honor". (Ecclesiastes 10:1)

#5. Sin robs you of all **joy** and **confidence**:

- ◆ Sin bursts the bubble of joy because it breaks communion with the Father, (our source of all joy).
- ◆ Sin drives the presence of God away!
- ◆ Sin steals the lift from your heart and faith from your soul.

"If I regard iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear me". (Psalm 66:18)

#6. Sin hurts the sinner's **family** and **friends**.

- ◆ The consequences of sin go far beyond the sinner.
- ◆ Our lifestyle and conduct influence a multitude of people around us.
- ◆ Think of the impact on your family and friends if you blew it. (How sobering)

#7. Sin hurts **Jesus** more than you know:

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- ◆ His costly blood was shed to save us.
- ◆ His sacrificial death was my substitute.
- ◆ His redemption has made it possible to live free from sin's dominion.
- ◆ Willful sin disgraces the very one who called us to holy.

#8. Sin robs us of God's **anointing**:

- ◆ Sin renders the anointing ineffective.
- ◆ Sin gradually drives the Spirit away.
- ◆ Sin dulls your heart and makes you insensitive to gradual backsliding.

#9. Sin offends the **weaker** conscience:

- ◆ Sin damages the confidence other people have in Christ and His church.
- ◆ Sin steals the trust of people and lets them down.
- ◆ Sin robs others of hope in God's power to save them.

"But when you sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ". (I Corinthians 8:12)

#10. Sin may cost you your **salvation**:

- ◆ Unrepented sin leads further into bondage.
- ◆ Unrepented sin moves one further from God.
- ◆ Unrepented sin brings death both now and down the road.
- ◆ Hell is full of people who failed to stop the train of sin in its early stages.

"Let's Refuse To Negotiate Our Integrity":

- ◆ In the **secret** place. (In Private) ◆ In the **dwelling** place. (At Home)
- ◆ In the **market** place. (In Public) ◆ In the **holy** place. (In Church)

Question: Why purpose ahead of time? (**Because:**)

- #1. Every **evil thought** is sin in its embryo stage.
- #2. Sin that is destroyed in our **minds**, will not become a part of our **history**.
- #3. The longer I **resist** the calling voice of God, the **harder** it becomes to hear that voice again.
- #4. The longer **stay** where I do not belong, the harder it becomes to **exit** that place.
- #5. Our will becomes **weaker** the longer we **entertain** an evil imagination.
- #6. Little sins **never** stay little, (they will grow and be exposed).
- #7. We cannot sow **wild oats** all week and then expect a **bumper crop** on Sunday.
- #8. No clever arrangement of **bad** eggs ever made a **good** omelet.
- #9. Moths that investigate burning candles, singe their wings **for life**.
- #10. Every temptation is a **lie**, promising you something that it **cannot** deliver.

(Remember: The Devil Will...)

- ...Take you **further** than you want to **go**. ...Keep you **longer** than you want to **stay**.
- ...Make you **pay** more than you want to **pay**.

III. Daniel's Promotion (Vs. 17-21)

Question: What happened when Daniel dared to take a stand against the majority in a pagan culture?

(v. 15), The Lord vindicated his integrity by increasing his physical health. **(In Other Words)**

- ◆ You lessen the stress within you when you live with a clear conscience before God.

(On The Flip Side)

- ◆ You increase the stress within you (and ruin your health) when you live with a divided heart.

(V. 20)The king found Daniel and friends 10 times wiser than those who had tempted them to sin. (Why?)

- ◆ Because God rewards those who serve with courage, conviction and commitment!

AMEN! (Altar call)

Pastor Bill Kirk

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