

Dare To Be Like Daniel

TEXT: Various

THESIS: Follow after the examples God left us.

INTRODUCTION:

1. We need to learn how to enjoy success without compromise.
2. The Bible is filled with accounts of many godly men and women who are worthy of our aspiration.
3. One such person is Daniel, a man who obtained preeminence and power in his lifetime:
 - a. He started out preeminent among the children of Israel.
 - b. When we look at: Daniel 1:3-6, when Nebuchadnezzar separated the youth from their families and conquered Judah, he instructed Ashpenaz, the chief of his court officials, to separate the young men of royalty or nobility from the others and to bring them into the king's palace.
 - i. And, these leading young men had to meet three qualifications:
 - (1) They had to be strong and healthy, without any defect whatsoever.
 - (2) They had to be handsome.
 - (3) And, they had to be intelligent and quick to learn, demonstrating the ability to learn every subject and to develop the poise that would be needed to serve as leaders in government service.
 - ii. And so, Daniel was given preferential treatment of royal housing, food and Babylon's royal academy of math, law, business, architecture and many other things.
 - iii. And, then his name was change from "God is my Judge" (Daniel) to "Bel protects his life (Beltshazzar).
 - c. Now, Daniel also gained preeminence among the wise of men of Babylon.
 - i. In Daniel 1:17-20, we learn that God gave the four young students a special intellectual ability.
 - (1) And, as Daniel studied, he was not only given special understanding and knowledge, but also the ability to understand visions and dreams.
 - ii. So, when his training was ended, he was brought before Nebuchadnezzar where they were interviewed and Daniel was found to be far superior to other students and promoted him along with three friends to leadership positions in his government.
 - d. And then, Daniel was given power over all of Babylon.
 - i. In Daniel 2:48-49, we understand that Daniel was made ruler over the province of Babylon and also the chief counsel over all the king's advisers, which included the occult advisers.
 - (1) This was because Daniel had demonstrated an unusual understanding of history and a very special gift in understanding the future and also, since Daniel had been the only royal adviser

- who was able to help the king in his moment of distress, it was only natural for Daniel to be promoted over the province of Babylon and to be appointed the chief counsel to the king.
- (2) And so, Daniel remained in the royal palace while they, apparently, oversaw the day-to-day affairs of the province.
- ii. Likewise in Dan. 5:29, Daniel's interpretation of the handwriting was not a warning to King Belshazzar, but rather a pronouncement of judgment.
 - (1) It was a sentence because the king had gone too far in his sinful behavior, beyond the point of ever repenting.
 - (2) As a result, the Lord had to judge him.
 - (a) Belshazzar was to immediately feel God's hand of judgment falling upon him.
 - (3) Now, in most cases, a king would order the execution of an advisor who pronounced such judgment.
 - (a) But surprisingly, Belshazzar gave Daniel the reward he had promised and had Daniel proclaimed the third highest ruler in the kingdom.
 - (b) Apparently Belshazzar was somewhat fearful about harming Daniel.
 - e. Well, we also see that Daniel received similar powers over the Medo-Persian empire.
 - i. In Daniel 6:1-28, Darius appointed Daniel to be one of his top three officials in the new Persian government.
 - (1) And, within a brief period of time, Daniel again distinguished himself as a diligent worker, an excellent administrator.
 - (2) He was an honest, superior servant of the government—a rarity then and down through the centuries.
 - (3) And, his exceptional qualities impressed Darius so much that the ruler planned to place him over the entire kingdom by making him prime minister.
4. But, how was Daniel able to reach these positions of power and influence without compromising his position as a godly man?
- a. I want to look close into the book of Daniel and reveal his secrets and show how we too can be successful without selling our souls.

DISCUSSION:

I. DANIEL WAS A MAN OF PURPOSE

- A. In Daniel 1:8, it tells us, "**Daniel purposed in his heart** that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself."
 1. As a young boy in a strange land, Daniel was immediately faced with a challenge to violate God's law by eating the king's food.

2. But, Daniel nobly refused to eat them.
 - a. Instead, He asked if he and his friends could eat vegetables and drink water instead.
 - b. Ashpenaz, the chief of the eunuchs (not understanding Jewish customs nor their God), was horrified at this idea, noting that his own head would be endangered if the plan didn't work!
 - (1) After all, he was responsible for them.
 3. So, despite his youth and the obvious pressures to conform, Daniel "purposed in his heart" to uphold the law of God, no matter the cost.
 - a. And, because of his willingness to put God first, God granted Daniel favor in the sight of others.
 - b. Daniel 1:9 tells us that, "God had brought Daniel into favour and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs."
 4. Now, exactly how God did this is not explained, but this is not the first time we see this.
 - a. In the case of Joseph, we read in Gen. 39:1-4 about how Joseph was prosperous in the house of Potiphar and found grace in his sight because Potiphar saw that the Lord was with him.
 - b. Again, we see this favor in Gen. 39:21-23.
 5. So, by putting God first, God blessed Joseph and Daniel in such a way that favorably impressed others.
- B. With us, every child of God needs to be a person of purpose.
1. No one respects a "wishy-washy" person, someone with no direction in their lives.
 2. Whereas a strong sense of purpose often breeds respect and admiration in others.
 3. But, what should be the "purpose" of the Christian?
 - a. It should be the same as it was for Daniel.
 - b. In Matthew 6:33, Jesus tells us to, "seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness . . ."
 - c. Thus, if we will put God's interests first in our lives, if we are concentrated on doing and accepting His will, if we have such a great love, no matter what the circumstances are, we will drive away every other concern and be focused on him.
 4. And, as Jesus promised, this will guarantee God's favor toward us and in turn likely gain us favor in the eyes of those around us.

II. DANIEL WAS A MAN OF PRINCIPLE

- A. He refused to compromise his convictions meaning, he was unshakable in his beliefs.
1. As a young man, by refusing to eat the king's meat or drink his wine, he was not going to defile himself (Daniel 1:8).
 - a. And, he would not become like the outside world and forget about God, making him impure.
 2. Why, even as an old man, he still held to his principles by refusing the gifts of Belshazzar.
 - a. Look at Daniel 5:16,17.
 - b. Daniel did not want nor desire to receive any gift this king could give.
 - c. He was a man whose heart was not swayed or controlled by greed and he never would say that things came to him by his might or by the power of his hand that he had gotten wealth.
 - d. Daniel did what he did to bring glory to God because he was the servant of the Most High God, a servant who had been called to help people, not to fleece them.
- B. Why even under the threat of persecution, by refusing to obey the decree of Darius, Daniel did not change.
1. In Dan. 6:10, it is recorded there that, “when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.”
 2. Here we see that Daniel stood alone.
 - a. Although he knew about the law against praying to anyone except the king, he continued to pray three times a day as he always had.
 - b. Daniel had a disciplined prayer life.
 - (1) And, he made no attempt to hide his daily prayer routine from his enemies in government, even though he knew he would be disobeying the new law.
 - (2) So, Daniel continued to pray because he could not look to the king for the guidance and strength that he needed during this difficult time.
 - (a) Only God could provide what he really needed.

- C. You know, people admire persons of principle.
 - 1. Outwardly they may ridicule them, but inwardly they wish they had the same intestinal courage and strength of mind to be convicted in such ways.
 - 2. And when they need someone that can be trusted and depended upon to carry through with an assigned task, whom do you think they will turn to?
 - a. But, they are not the only ones who admire people of principle.
 - b. God also admires individuals who will stand by their principles, and by their words.
 - c. Look at Psalm 15.
- D. Our society is in great need of people with principle.
 - 1. And, those who “Dare To Be Like Daniel” and demonstrate by example the value of being led by “principle” rather than by “price,” are not only highly valued by God but also by their fellow man.

III. DANIEL WAS A MAN OF PURITY

- A. His enemies could not find any fault in his daily life.
 - 1. He was faultless when it came to the management of his business affairs.
 - 2. When we look at Dan. 6:1-4, we discover that Daniel was so strict that people could not find any mistakes in him, no blunders, nothing done amiss.
 - a. He was faithful and upright, prudent and discreet, exact and careful, that the most watchful observers of him, his enemies, could find no fault.
 - b. Even in his religion, they could find no fault in the matter of the law of his God or in his worship of God.
 - c. And, he would never compromise or change any part of his devotion to God just to suit his own needs.
 - 3. Well, this would help to explain his rise to positions of great responsibility and power.
 - a. Of course, his purity in business affairs was related to his overall purpose which was to please God first.
 - b. It is an excellent thing, and much for the glory of God, when those who profess religion conduct themselves so inoffensively, not contradicting what they believe by their actions.
 - c. And also, for Daniel, the fact that he was a man of principle meant he could be trusted.
- B. The Christian is also to maintain purity of conduct.
 - 1. Whether young or old Matt. 5:8 tells us, “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.”
 - a. That is, whose minds, motives, and principles are pure; who seek not only to have the external actions correct, but who desire to be holy in heart, and who are so.

- b. Man looks only on the outward appearance, but God looks on the heart.
- c. Yet, our outward actions dictate what our heart looks like.
- 2. And, people who maintain purity in their dealings with others are often given positions of great responsibility and privilege, because they can be trusted to use them wisely, like Daniel.

IV. DANIEL WAS A MAN OF PRAYER

- A. In Dan. 6:10, we find a glimpse of his prayer life.
 - 1. It states, “when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.”
 - 2. Daniel was truly a man of prayer and it was a big part of his life.
 - a. The text says that he knelt in prayer which was a demonstration of his humility.
 - b. He prayed three times daily which demonstrated his continual dependence upon God.
 - c. He gave thanks in the midst of persecution demonstrating his gratitude and the fact that he had not lost sight of God's blessings.
 - d. His prayers were a “custom since early days,” demonstrating his persistence and faithfulness in his service to God.
 - 3. Thus, is it likely that his “custom” to pray so diligently helped him to remain a man of purpose, principle and purity, despite his rise to power and preeminence over the empire.
- B. Likewise, all Christians would do well to follow Daniel’s example.
 - 1. All throughout the Bible, God’s people have been a people of prayer.
 - 2. As Christians, we too are to pray often:
 - a. To, “pray without ceasing” (1 Thess. 5:17) because we need fellowship and communion with God which brings about a greater knowledge and understanding of him.
 - b. And, if our efforts to live purposeful, principled, and pure lives are not what they should be, could an undisciplined “prayer life” be the reason?
 - (1) Are we willing to “Dare To Be Like Daniel” in regards to prayer?

V. DANIEL WAS A MAN WHO PERSEVERED

- A. Look at Dan. 6:7, “All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counsellors, and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions.”

1. Daniel could not escape that den.
2. He was going to be faithful even if it meant facing a den of lions.
- B. What would you and I have done?
 1. Would we have been blameless before God?
 2. Would we have trusted in the Lord to deliver us?
- C. You know, when we look at vs. 16, we see because of Daniel's refusal to give up or to accommodate others by conceding or yielding in one point, this pagan king encouraged Daniel that the God whom Daniel served **continually** would **deliver** him.
 1. It is beautiful to see how even unbelievers will sometimes pick up on the faith and morals of consistent believers whom they observe at close hand.
 2. Sadly, only too often Christians fail their unsaved friends and relatives by *not* having as high standards of faith and practice as the world expects from God's people.
- D. Nevertheless, Daniel was one who shined because he persevered.

CONCLUSION:

1. There is a false assumption that to "get ahead" in this world one must conform to the sinful practices of the world.
 - a. However, we do not need to fashion ourselves as the world does by lying or wearing a mask to fit in.
 - b. You do not need to:
 - i. Follow the fellowship of the world.
 - ii. Fashion yourself after worldly lust.
 - iii. Take after the course of this world.
 - iv. Follow after the false securities of this world nor the deceitfulness of their riches.
 - v. Follow the crowds nor the god of this world which is Satan.
2. Even today there are many Christians who demonstrate that when one "dares to be like Daniel," they can succeed in the affairs of men without selling their souls to the world.
3. But, will you "Dare To Be Like Daniel" by becoming a person of:
 - a. Purpose?
 - b. Principle?
 - c. Purity?
 - d. Prayer?
 - e. Perseverance?