

Committed to Our Faith and Faithful To Our God*Daniel 1:1-21*

This week we learned from the Book of Daniel about the challenges Daniel and his friends faced as they tried to remain committed to their faith and faithful to their God as exiles in Babylon.

Opening Question: Can you think of a time when you or someone you knew had to deal with challenging circumstances that made staying faithful to God difficult? What was the experience like, and how did it make you feel or what did you learn about your relationship with God?

Read Daniel 1:1-7

1. How might the people of Judah feel about God and their faith after they were conquered and made captives of Babylon?
2. Why do you think the Babylonians taught their captives a new language, had them learn about the Babylonian culture, and gave them new names?

Read Daniel 1:8-14

3. In 1:8 Daniel asks to be excused from eating the food offered by the king. What is Daniel worried about? What danger did he see that we must also be able to identify and understand when considering how to remain committed to our faith and faithful to the one true God in our own lives?
4. Sam said:

It can be hard for us today to imagine what giving into the authority of a king might be like, because there's really no contextual similarity for us to place ourselves in. We don't have kings, and we certainly don't have any problem disagreeing with or even cutting loose of our political leaders. So let me suggest a slight twist, for the sake of understanding, and swap king for culture. There are, within our culture, many ways in which seemingly benevolent things are offered to us in exchange for getting a little closer to a bad situation -- things that daily challenge our faith and tempt us to consider habits and activities that are less about being faithful to God and more about pursuing the false promises of pleasure and happiness that our culture assures us can only be found apart from God.

Can you think of some things that are culturally acceptable but might lead us to drift from depending on and being faithful to God? Do you struggle in particular with anything like this?

Read Daniel 1:8-14

5. Do you think it was easy or difficult for Daniel and his friends to pursue what they thought was right? Have you ever had to stand up for what you believe to be right while others doubted you or made it difficult for you? (Or have you been someone making it difficult for others?)

6. Sam said:

But Daniel (and his friends) understood that sometimes being committed to their faith and faithful to the one true God was going to require living a harder life. A life of faith will make demands on what you do and what you do not do, and those demands can be difficult to follow and obey because our sin makes the ways of the world -- the ways of our culture -- seem so much more rewarding and so much easier. But we, like Daniel, should not expect ourselves to be exempt from the hard parts of life and faith. We've got to be committed to our faith and faithful to our God, even and especially when it's tough.

What do you think of hardship and perseverance as part of a life faithfully lived for God? What might help you, or what has helped you, the most when things get tough?

Read Daniel 1:15-21

7. God came through for Daniel and his friends -- their faithfulness was rewarded, and they were blessed to be recipients of God's faithfulness. In what ways has God been faithful to you during the hard times of your life? In what areas are you still hoping to see him faithfully work and help you?

8. Do you believe God is and will continue to be faithful to those who believe in the Gospel of his Son, Jesus Christ? In what way is remaining committed to your faith and faithful to God made easier by Christ's promises to help and save his people?

(Optional Additional Scriptures: Matthew 10:22; Matthew 16:14-26; John 11:25-26)