

**Welcome to the
Common Ground Café!**



Sunday, January 7, 2018

**Daniel's New Year's Resolution
A Study of Daniel 1:1-21**

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What was your first experience being away from home? What was it like? What were you feeling? Did you face any tests and how did you grow from the experience?

Daniel was probably in his late teens when he was exiled to Babylon with other members of the noble families. In chapter 1 we see how he resolved to keep his spiritual identity while in exile. Today we'll discuss how to respond to the **pressure around us** by having a **purpose within us** and trusting God's **providence above us**.

The Pressure Around Us

Before we look at the *Old Testament* story of Daniel, let's look at the *New Testament* description of Christians. Read 1 Peter 1:1, 1:17, and 2:11. What words does Peter use to describe us?

What are some ways the Christian life might make us feel like "foreigners" and "exiles" in our own country?

Read Daniel 1:1-7. [Note, some Bible apps can play a recording of these verses for you. If your group isn't comfortable reading the unfamiliar names, try playing a recording from a Bible app.]

In Texas high school football, "blue chip boys" refers to the top talent sought by college football programs. What phrases in verses 3-4 show us that Daniel and his friends were "blue chip boys"?

Describe the following ways Babylon sought to assimilate Daniel and his friends:

- A new home
- A new education
- A new name
- A new diet

It's obvious from verses 1-7 that Daniel's exile didn't mean he was suffering in a dreary concentration camp. One Bible teacher referred to all the impressive privileges Daniel was offered as "golden handcuffs." What are some golden handcuffs offered by our world today?

A Purpose Within Us

Read Daniel 1:8-14.

By resolving not to eat from the king's table, was Daniel concerned about his *physical* health or his *spiritual* health? Why would he have considered the food "defiling"?

From the following sentences, choose the one that best reflects the Daniel's decision. Explain why you chose the sentence you did, and explain why you did *not* choose the other sentences:

- Daniel organized a public protest against the meal plan to pressure the Babylonians to meet his demands
- Daniel complained loudly and sarcastically to the chief official about the disrespect he felt
- Daniel quietly negotiated, agreeing to the concerns of the chief official, and suggesting the man test Daniel's plan before deciding

In wartime, what is a "conscientious objector"? In a way, you could think of Daniel as a "conscientious objector" when it came to the king's food. Are there some areas in our culture where a Christian may need to be a "conscientious objector"?

Read Daniel 1:15-21. What was the opinion the Babylonians had of Daniel and his friends after the 10-day test and then their 3-year training?

Daniel was committed to living two principals at the same time:

- ❖ The first principal was to obey God's command to bless their city of exile. Read Jeremiah 29:1-2, 4-7.
- ❖ The second principal was to obey God's command to keep their spiritual identity as people who belonged to God. Read Deuteronomy 14:2.
- ❖ Some of us may pursue only one principal but not both. If a Christian tried to follow these two principals today, what would that kind of life look like? Are there some good examples of that kind of Christianity in politics, sports, business, the arts, etc?

God's Providence Above Us

Read Daniel 1:2. What did *God* do?

In the big scheme of things, was Daniel in his situation because of an enemy invasion or because of God's sovereign will?

By seeing God as sovereign over all that happens, how does that help us to stay faithful to him through hardship?

Read Daniel 1:9. What did *God* do?

When we hear of persecution, we tend to pray for our Christian brothers and sisters. If God causes non-believers to have favorable attitudes toward his people, shouldn't we also be praying for God to change the hearts of persecutors around the world?

Read Daniel 1:17. What did *God* do?

Earthly success is not just the result of our talent and drive, but of God providing opportunity and favor for certain people. Can this view make us *humble* in prominent positions? How? Can this view make us *less bitter* if we never get to rise into prominent positions? How?



Close with praise reports and prayer requests