

HOW TO STAND IN A FALLEN WORLD

(Daniel 1)

Christian editor Dave Goetz wrote about how **his wife, Jana, an experienced nurse**, got a job with a new medical practice. On the first day of her job, a mother came in for a physical for herself and a routine vaccination for her 18-month-old son. After vaccinating the boy, it was time for the mother's physical. Suddenly, Jana looked down at the vaccination vials and realized she had not given the woman's son the correct vaccine. She became horribly afraid. As she thought about this situation, she stepped out in the hall and told herself:

"No one will ever know. No harm done."

"I can't tell the doctor."

"This is my first day on the job."

"The doctor will think I'm incompetent."

"It can't hurt him, can it?"

"It doesn't hurt to be immunized twice for the same thing."

"But he needs the right vaccine."

"What will the mother say?"

The predicament that this nurse found herself in was not a unique one. **As far back as Adam and Eve**, God's people have always been under the gun to give in to temptation, especially when things like money, a good-paying job, or social standing are at risk. Jana Goetz faced this temptation, all of you have faced **this temptation, and so did Daniel and his friends.**

Title: How to Stand in a Fallen World

(Prayer)

We all learn from an early age that if we are **to move from one grade to the next** in school, we can't do so unless we pass the majority of our tests. Tests are expected. **The same is true for us in God's school of life.** We are confronted with situations which test our courage, sometimes, our honesty. But we are confronted regardless. Unfortunately there are many believers, who are still stuck in a spiritual junior high or elementary school ... and they've been that way for a long time.

In Daniel 1, we see Daniel being tested. And this reminds us this morning that:

1. All of us will face circumstances which will test our loyalty to God

Now, what are some of the ways in which Daniel was tested?

a. A new home

V. 1 tells us:

...Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it.

Removed from godly influences in Israel, Daniel and his friends would face the test of their lives 500 miles from home.

b. A new worldview

Daniel & his friends would hear and learn things that they have never heard before. Vv. 3-4 tell us:

³ Then the king instructed Ashpenaz, the master of his eunuchs, to bring some of the children of Israel ... ⁴ **whom they might teach the language and literature of the Chaldeans.**

(Comments on this indoctrination.)

c. A new diet

⁵ **And the king appointed** for them a daily provision **of the king's delicacies and of the wine which he drank,** and **three years of training for them,** so that at the end of *that time* they might serve before the king.

What is most likely happening here is that Daniel and his friends are being asked to eat foods that are prohibited by God's Word (or that were connected with idol worship and false gods in some way).

This is another huge spiritual test for D & his friends.

(If God were to test **your** spiritual diet, would you pass or fail? **What is your brain consuming?** The Word of God or the ways of the godless world?)

d. A new name

The godless leaders in Babylon decided new names were in order (another way of changing their godly worldview).

Daniel, whose name means "God is my judge," is now named, v. 7:

"Beltshazzar"
May the Lady protect the king
 = the wife of the false god Bel

The devil and the world around us do NOT want us to see and to **think of ourselves as the people of the Most High GOD!!!!** They want to change our identity.

Not only that, **they want boys to believe** they are girls and vice-versa. They want men to be with men and women to be with women sexually. This is being pushed incessantly by evil people in high places, and Satan is behind all of it! Therefore, we must all do our part to pray for and teach the next generation what God has decreed and what God expects of them.

So the first lesson that we see here is that all of us (in one way or another) will face circumstances which will test our loyalty to God:

1 Corinthians 10:13 (NLT)-----¹³ The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure.

God will help you to say no to temptation and to pass the tests He brings your way.

Now when we get to the next section of Daniel 1, what we see is that the Babylonians could change Daniel's **home**, his **textbooks**, his **diet**, and his **name**, but one they could **NOT** change was his **mind!** V. 8:

⁸ But **Daniel purposed in his heart** [or, made up his mind] **that he would not defile himself**
with the portion of the king's delicacies, nor
with the wine which he drank...

Daniel took a stand for God. He was only 15 years old, but he knew that what the king wanted him to do was wrong.

And this leads us to our next lesson today:

2. When tested, we must decide that we will do what God wants, even though it may involve great risk

Daniel made up his mind, and no one was going to change it. He knew that he might lose his life. Babylon didn't mess around with rebels. It was do or die. (You may not be called on to die, but there are other risks you face in being loyal to God—losing your job, being ridiculed by friends, being rejected because you aren't willing to do what others want you to do.) There are all kinds of risks.

So Daniel wisely goes to the king's chief of staff and makes the request found in v. 8b:

...**therefore** he requested of the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.

"Say, is there a chance that I might be able to eat something else?"

Notice God's sovereignty here in v. 9:

⁹ Now **God had brought Daniel** into the favor and goodwill of the chief of the eunuchs.

But in v. 10, the king's chief of staff tells Daniel, *"No way, Jose. The king told me to feed you this way and that is what you are going to eat. I'm not losing my head over this!"*

Does Daniel give up? Does he throw in the towel? No. Look at what he does in v. 11:

¹¹ So Daniel said to the steward...

¹² *"Please test your servants for ten days, and let them give us vegetables to eat and water to drink. ¹³ Then let our appearance be examined before you, and the appearance of the young men who eat the portion of the king's delicacies; and as you see fit, so deal with your servants."*

¹⁴ So he consented with them in this matter, and tested them ten days.

Daniel made up his mind to not eat the king's food, but he was also wise, and asked those in charge if it might be possible to eat something different.

Here's why this is wise. **If they say no**, Daniel has already decided he would do what God wants, and that is what is most important. **But if they say yes**, Daniel won't have to risk being beaten or killed.

So if you find yourself in circumstances in which you can make an appeal to a boss or superior, do it! Don't unwisely say, *"Well, I guess I'm just gonna have to obey God and lose this job..."* You might be able to obey God **AND** keep your job! The Bible tells us...

Proverbs 21:1 (NLT)

The king's heart is like a stream of water directed by the LORD;
He guides it wherever He pleases.

God did this for Daniel. God touched the heart of that steward and

allowed Daniel and his friends to eat vegetable soup instead of the king's caviar!

And what happens is seen in vv. 15-21:

V. 15: After 10 days, D & his friends look better than all those who ate and drank the king's provisions!

[Did we get a picture of any of the guys who ate the king's food?]

V. 17: Daniel and his friends are given knowledge and skill from God, and Daniel is especially blessed: God gave Daniel the ability to interpret visions and dreams!

And...v. 19:

¹⁹ Then the king [Nebuchadnezzar] interviewed them, and among them all none was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; **therefore they served before the king** ... he found them **ten times better** than all the magicians *and* astrologers who *were* in all his realm. ²¹ Thus Daniel continued until the first year of King Cyrus. [a long life---appr. 85 yrs.]

This is an amazing victory for Daniel and his friends. What could have resulted in their death led to them becoming the right-hand men of the king! And this leads us to our third and final lesson this morning:

3. **Taking a stand for God leads to reward from God**

Sometimes here on earth (as in the case of Daniel), **ALWAYS** in eternity.

God will remember all you have done for Him and will reward you!

Daniel and his friends (v. 19) "served before the king."

And in the book of Revelation, Jesus makes us this promise:

Revelation 3:21-----²¹ Those who are victorious **will sit with me on my throne**, just as I was victorious and sat with my Father on his throne.

If we stay faithful to the Lord until our dying breath, we will, like Daniel, "serve before the king"—we will rule with Him in his eternal kingdom!

Is this **YOUR** goal in life? To stand for God so that you might rule with Him? Is it?

As you all know I didn't come to Christ until I was nearly 19. Every weekend involved a lot of drugs and alcohol. I nearly overdosed on drugs twice and came within a hair's breadth of going to hell forever and ever. After I became a believer (it will be 41 years this Saturday!!!!!!) on June 20, 1979, I still hung out with my old friends on the weekends. But after a couple of weeks, I quit bringing a six-pack of beer and just brought a six-pack of Pepsi. Immediately, my friends were asking: "What's up with the Pepsi?" I told them without shame that I had received Christ as my Savior and that I was a new man. They began to give me grief. One of my friends said that if I kept going to church, they would start telling me that I had to give up all kinds of things and that, because of that, they were never going back. I had only been saved maybe two or three weeks (maybe not even that long!) but I will never forget what I told that roomful of friends standing there with beers in their hands. I told them something like, **"Well, I don't know about all of that, but I do know this, you can live however you like, but I'm going forward for God!"**

41 years later, I have NO REGRETS! I have taken a stand for God and laid up treasure in heaven for over four decades---and I wouldn't trade that for all the riches in the world!

You are going to be tested (and it may be very risky!) But the rewards are out of this world!

Are you ready today to say, "I'm ready to quit waffling!
 I'm ready to quit walking the fence!
 From this day forward,
 I'm choosing to stand for God!"

(Invitation)