

WHY DO WE NEED TO STAND STRONG? The world is changing fast. And not just politics, technology, and communication but our whole culture, morality, and attitudes. Christians living in Western culture have enjoyed the benefit of being in a world that largely shared our assumptions about what is fundamentally right and wrong. We can no longer assume this. Increasingly, believers are finding themselves as the misunderstood minority and feeling at odds with where the world seems to be heading.¹

We are all exiles. We have moved from a culture that affirmed and more or less agreed with Christianity to one no longer aligns with Christian values and in some ways is actively hostile to it.

Daniel faced decisions, made decisions, and responded based on his convictions.

DANIEL 1:8-10 **8** But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way. **9** Now God had caused the official to show favor and compassion to Daniel, **10** but the official told Daniel, "I am afraid of my lord the king, who has assigned your food and drink. Why should he see you looking worse than the other young men your age? The king would then have my head because of you."

We all have decisions to make when it comes to our engagement in and acceptance of today's culture. **Daniel chose differently so that He would honor God and not defile himself.**

DANIEL 1:11-14 **11** Daniel then said to the guard whom the chief official had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, **12** "Please test your servants for ten days: Give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink. **13** Then compare our appearance with that of the young men who eat the royal food, and treat your servants in accordance with what you see." **14** So he agreed to this and tested them for ten days.

We don't ever put God to the test, but people are always testing us to see if Godly living actually works. They are testing us to see how deep our beliefs run. They are testing us to check the level of our integrity. They are testing us to see if we are any different or are just the same with a religious cloak. Every time they test us. They are testing God. So we must stand strong.

So, how did Daniel and his friends do? How did their 10-day fast work?

DANIEL 1:15 **15** At the end of the ten days they looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who ate the royal food.

This wasn't about the food. It was about their faith to do things God's way even in a foreign land with foreign gods and zero encouragement and even limited permission to do things God's way.

DANIEL 1:16-17 **16** So the guard took away their choice food and the wine they were to drink and gave them vegetables instead. **17** To these four young men God **gave knowledge and understanding of all kinds** of literature and learning. And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds.

WHAT DID DANIEL HAVE THAT YOU AND I NEED TO STAND STRONG? CONVICTION: Daniel pushed away from the King's table because of His devotion to God. He pushed away from the royal food, royal wine, and the royal way of living and thinking.

Where do we need to push away from the table? **Where do we need to live with conviction?**

Headlines So Much To Talk About

¹ The Porn Problem, Vaughn Roberts

- **Value of People:** Open Borders Compassion for Migrants; Roe v Wade Protection of Unborn
- **The Perspective of People:** Gender is fluid based on the person. Gender is fixed by biology.
- **Politics of People:** You are a Marxist. You are a Fascist.
- **Then the ultimate:** You are woke. Your conservative moral high ground is a joke.

All of these pressing issues of our day point to the ultimate battle of our day.

The Ultimate Battle of Our Day - The Battle for Objective Truth

The battle of our day isn't for *freedom, expression, and personal identity*. It is for objective truth.

- Objective truth = truth that is true for all people at all times
- Relativism (The most practiced religion lived in the US today) = my truth is determined by me.

What does relativism look like?

- **Deny Divine Creation:** 40 years ago, worried about teaching evolution in schools. That's not the issue today. The issue today is God's formation of MEN and WOMEN in HIS IMAGE.
- **Deconstruct Foundations:** new expressions of societies' core - deconstructed marriages
- **Redefined Morals:** new meaning to old words - removing morals - Did God actually say...

Everything that God established in the Garden before the fall is being redefined, deconstructed, and denied because of the consequences of the Fall.

As 21st-century believers, we must stand for truth. **Truth isn't political. Truth is truth. Truth isn't generational. Truth is truth. Truth isn't personal. Truth is truth.**

1 Timothy 3:15 15 if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the **pillar and foundation** of the truth.

If objective truth is undone, then our society no longer has a basis of law and morality. If objective truth is undone, then we no longer have a God-defined measure of sinfulness. If objective truth is undone, we don't have a way of salvation from our sins and no rescue from our problems.

The battle of our day isn't for freedom, expression, and personal identity. It is for objective truth. Here's the problem with that: Living with no objective truth is a hopeless life. We need to truth that God doesn't love us subjectively. He loves us personally. We need the truth that our sin separates us from God and deserves death. We need the truth that God gave us Jesus to pay the penalty

With no objective truth there is no bad news and even worse there is no good news. **If you are here today**, believe the bad news and the good news.

With no truth, there is no hope!

AS SUCH Truth Demands: *We REFUSE TO DEFILE OURSELVES because unbiblical ideology will lead to ungodly, hopeless living.* BUT...as exiles never forget:

1. **My battles aren't with people I see but with evil forces at work in our world.**

The exiles in Daniel never attacked. They never even defended themselves. Why?
Our battle is an unseen one with very seen consequences.

EPHESIANS 6:12-13 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. 13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.

Our battle is an unseen one with very seen consequences so we must stand with COMPASSIONATE CONVICTION. The evil influence of our world is **only hurting those it's influencing**. We must respond with COMPASSION. Sin multiplies and worsens with every generation so we must have CLEAR CONVICTIONS. The most loving thing we can do is to know and live our convictions in a way that doesn't attack but helps the hurting.

We are not fighting a **CULTURE WAR**. We are part of a **SPIRITUAL BATTLE!**

We must resist from a position of worship, devotion, and commitment. This is standing strong in the Spirit. If we stand strong in the flesh, we will fail. If we stand strong in the Spirit, protected and properly engaged then we will have and experience victory. Here's why:

Our only hope isn't this cultural moment. Our only hope is our living hope in the living Lord Jesus. We have hope because we know who is by our side and who wins in the end. This is a hope that no philosophy, ideology, or political party can provide or remove from our lives.

Losing hope? [Check to see who you are trusting and the way you are fighting the battle.](#)

We never use the **ENEMY'S TOOLS** when **ON MISSION WITH JESUS**.

We never give others ammo to **ACCUSE** US of wrong by the way we **TREAT THEM**.

Daniel and his friends never dishonored the kings or those who were in authority over them. They lived their quiet gentle lives and everyone saw their Godliness and felt their influence.

IF WE ARE STANDING UP FOR JESUS, THEN WE MUST STAND UP LIKE JESUS!

We aren't trying to win an **ARGUMENT**.

We are trying to win someone to **CHRIST** and to **HIS WAY OF LIVING**.

Big Idea #1: [We stand strong in the unseen battle in a way that others can experience the goodness and the kindness of God through us.](#)

2. My convictions are informed by Scripture, not my experience.

Daniel knew what he believed about living a pure life in a Godless land. He chose not to defile Himself. He didn't shift his convictions based on the moment. He set his convictions before the moment so he was ready to stand strong.

JOHN 8:31-32 **31** To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. **32** Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

According to Jesus, a disciple is one who has believed and is following Him through His teachings.

If your experience changes your conviction, it's time to push away from the relativistic truth that is trapping you and turn to the Word of God that frees you.

Know this: [Every command in Scripture that we think is limiting is actually for our freedom.](#)

With our choices unchecked, we will enslave ourselves to wrong thinking, wrong living, and all of the wrong outcomes.

As the church of Jesus Christ, we refuse to trade truth for our own broken, defiled thinking.

Big Idea #2: [When we live Biblical convictions, we show that life God's way truly is better for us and best for those around us.](#)

3. My life stands out and stands up for God's truth.

What was the result of Daniel's fast? He showed that God's way is best. Daniel wasn't trying to fight for or against food. He was standing up. Refusing to defile himself. And you know what, it worked. Not because he only ate veggies, but because he stood up and stood out for God's truth.

Today, we as believers need to live as Daniel lived - with Biblical convictions and Godly outcomes because we are doing this God's way. We need to work out - live out - what we believe and be a part of accomplishing God's good purposes in the world. Listen to how Paul put it in Philippians 2.

PHILIPPIANS 2:12-13 **12** Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—**continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling**, **13** for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose. (We must join God in His work in our world and not oppose the work of God by mistreating people or mistreating truth.)

PHILIPPIANS 2:14-16 **14** Do everything without grumbling or arguing, **15** so that you may become blameless and pure, “children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.” **Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky** **16** as **you hold firmly to the word of life**. And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor in vain.

Big Idea #3: We shine the light of Jesus despite the darkness of the world.

KNOW THIS: The world's darkness doesn't dim your star! In fact, as the world grows darker, our light only shines brighter.