

Small Discussion Guide:

Daniel 1 – Faith in Babylon – Part 1



Warm Up

Opening Prayer & Icebreaker

Icebreaker Question: What's one thing from your childhood or upbringing that has significantly shaped who you are today?



Know It

Sermon Overview

This week we began a 12-week journey through the book of Daniel, exploring how to maintain faith in a world that constantly pressures us to conform. Daniel and his friends were taken from everything they knew at age 15 and placed in Babylon, where the culture systematically tried to make them forget their identity as God's people.

Central Question: *What do you do when the world you knew is gone and everything around you is designed to make you forget who you are?*

Key Takeaways

God is Sovereign Even in Difficult Circumstances

- Daniel 1:2 says "The Lord handed" Jerusalem over to Babylon
- God allowed this discipline, but He remained on His throne
- There are boundaries around what can touch us—God is still in control

Three Ways the World Pressures Us to Conform:

- **Isolation** - Separating us from family, faith, and foundation
- **Indoctrination** - Teaching us different values, language, and worldview
- **Identity Theft** - Changing our names/identity to reflect the world's values

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Daniel Determined Before the Pressure Hit

- Daniel 1:8: "Daniel determined that he would not defile himself"
- He made his decision about who he would be BEFORE facing the test
- This was a heart, soul, and mind decision

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Text

- What stands out to you most about Daniel being only 15 years old when taken to Babylon? How might that age make his faithfulness even more remarkable?
- Why do you think the pastor emphasized that "the Lord handed" Jerusalem over (v. 2)? How does God's sovereignty in difficult situations change our perspective?
- The Babylonians changed Daniel and his friends' names from Hebrew names (honoring God) to Babylonian names (honoring false gods). Why was this significant? What does it teach us about identity?



Share It

Personal Reflection

- Which of the three pressures to conform (isolation, indoctrination, or identity theft) do you feel most strongly in your own life right now? Share an example.
- The sermon mentioned that algorithms and social media are designed to influence and shape our thinking. Have you noticed this in your own life? How?
- When have you felt pressure to compromise your faith for the sake of fitting in, advancing your career, or keeping peace with others?

Going Further

- Pastor Todd shared that only 5% of people who say they attend church regularly actually do. What factors do you think contribute to this gap? What pulls people (or you) away from consistent church attendance?

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- Daniel "determined" before the pressure hit. What decisions can we make NOW about how we'll respond to future pressures or temptations?
- Joshua 24:15 says, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." What would it look like for you to "draw a line in the sand" in your life today?



Live It

Application Questions

- **For Parents:** How can you be more intentional about knowing what your children are being taught—in school, through friends, and online? What's one practical step you can take this week?
- **For Everyone:** Where do you find your primary identity—in Christ, or in your roles (job, parent, spouse, hobbies, sports)? How can you shift toward finding your identity first in Christ?
- Pastor Todd mentioned we have six days a week for hobbies and sports, but often sacrifice the one day for worship and spiritual foundation. How does your weekly schedule reflect your priorities? What might need to change?

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge:

Choose ONE of the following to put into practice:

- **Determine Your Line:** Write down 2-3 specific areas where you will not compromise, regardless of cultural pressure. Share this with an accountability partner.
- **Family Meeting:** If you have children, hold a family meeting to discuss your family's values and commitment to Christ. Consider creating a family mission statement based on Joshua 24:15.
- **Digital Audit:** Review what you're consuming online this week. Check your screen time, social media follows, and content. Ask: "Is this shaping me toward Christ or away from Him?"

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- **Education Check:** If you're a parent, schedule time to review your child's curriculum, meet with teachers, or have a conversation with your kids about what they're learning.
- **Prioritize Worship:** Evaluate your Sunday morning routine. What changes could you make to prioritize gathering with God's people? (Remember: grace, not legalism—but intentionality matters.)
- **Identity Reminder:** Each morning this week, remind yourself: "I am a child of God. My identity is in Christ alone, not in what I do or what others think of me."

Memory Verse

Daniel 1:8a - "Daniel determined that he would not defile himself with the king's food or with the wine he drank."

Challenge: Memorize this verse as a group and text it to each other during the week as encouragement.

Closing Questions

- What is one thing God is calling you to do differently after this discussion?
- How can we pray for you this week as you seek to stand firm in your faith?



Prayer

Prayer Focus

- Pray for strength to determine our identity in Christ before pressure comes
- Pray for parents to be engaged and aware of what's influencing their children
- Pray for our church family to be faithful in gathering and growing together
- Pray for courage to draw lines in the sand and live countercultural lives for God's glory
- Pray for anyone struggling with where to find their identity

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Looking Ahead

Next week we'll continue in Daniel, exploring how Daniel navigated the tension between honoring authority and staying faithful to God. Come prepared to discuss how we can be "in the world but not of it."