

Small Leader Guide:

Daniel 1 – Faith in Babylon – Part 2



Warm Up

Icebreaker Question:

- What's one decision you made in advance that helped you stand firm when pressure came later?

Leader Tip:

- Go first with a brief, concrete example (e.g., a pre-made decision about media, dating, finances, etc.). This sets the tone and helps people understand the kind of answer you're looking for.



Know It

Sermon Overview

This week, Pastor Todd explored Daniel 1:8-21, focusing on how Daniel lived in Babylon without letting Babylon live in him. The sermon emphasized the importance of wisdom, godly fear, and making decisions before pressure arrives.

Leader Tip:

- Ask one or two people to share a sentence on what stood out to them from the sermon. This re-engages anyone who may have missed or forgotten details.

Key Takeaways

- Conviction comes before pressure - Daniel resolved in his heart how he would live before facing temptation.
- Wisdom is skill for living - It's not just knowledge, but the practical application of truth.
- The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom - True wisdom starts with awe and respect for God.
- Tact matters - How we communicate God's truth is as important as the truth itself.
- We can live in the world without the world living in us - Like Daniel in Babylon.

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Leader Tip:

- Consider reading these slowly and asking, “Which of these five is most needed in your life right now, and why?” Let a few share briefly.

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Text

Read Daniel 1:8-21 together. What stands out to you about Daniel's approach to his situation?

Leader Tip:

- Have different people read small chunks (2–3 verses each) to keep engagement high. After reading, allow some silence; people often need a moment before they speak.

Daniel was only 15 years old when taken captive. What makes his response so remarkable given his age and circumstances?

Leader Tip:

- Draw younger members into this question intentionally. Affirm that teens and young adults can have deep conviction and influence.*

How did Daniel show both conviction AND wisdom in verses 8-14? Why is this combination important?

Leader Tip:

- If the group struggles, point out:
 - Conviction: He “resolved” not to defile himself.
 - Wisdom/tact: He “asked permission,” proposed a test, respected authority.
- Then ask, “Where do we tend to be strong on conviction but weak on wisdom—or the other way around?”

Applying Wisdom

The sermon defined wisdom as "skill for living" and "the ability to apply truth correctly." How is this different from just having knowledge or information?

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Leader Tip:

- Invite examples (e.g., “I know I should forgive, but wisdom is how and when I take steps toward that person”). Keep it practical, not theoretical.

In what areas of your life do you have knowledge but struggle to apply it with wisdom?

Leader Tip:

- This can get vulnerable. Model appropriate honesty yourself, but keep the group from over-sharing sensitive details. You can say, You don’t need to name people—just the area (marriage, anger, money, purity, etc.).

Pastor Todd mentioned that in our AI age, information is at our fingertips instantly. How does this make godly wisdom even more crucial today?

Leader Tip:

- If conversation stalls, ask: What are some dangers of having information without godly character? and How can we practically seek wisdom beyond just Googling things?

Fear of the Lord

Proverbs 9:10 says "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." What does it mean to "fear" God in a healthy way?

Leader Tip:

- Clarify that this is not terror of an abusive person, but awe, reverence, and taking God seriously. If needed, contrast “unhealthy fear” (running from God) with “healthy fear” (running to God in humility).

How does your personal reverence and awe of God (or lack thereof) impact your daily decision-making?

Leader Tip:

- Encourage self-reflection over self-condemnation. You can ask, “Where do you see that when you forget who God is, your choices drift?”*

Living in Babylon

What are some "Babylon" influences in our culture today that pressure us to compromise our faith?

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Leader Tip:

- Guide the group away from just complaining about “the world.” Help them identify specific pressures (sexual ethics, money, success, entertainment, social media, etc.) and how those tempt personally.

The sermon emphasized that Daniel "asked permission" and showed tact (v. 8). Why is HOW we stand for truth just as important as THAT we stand for truth?***

Leader Tip:

- If people lean toward harshness, ask, What happens to our witness when we're right but rude? If they lean toward timidity, ask, What happens when we're kind but never clear? Emphasize both grace and truth.

Share an example of when you've seen someone take a stand for God in a gracious, tactful way. What was the result?

Leader Tip:

- If no one has an example, be ready with one (from your life, church history, or a missionary story). Point out specific words/attitudes that showed tact.



Share It

Personal Application

What decisions do you need to make NOW (before pressure comes) about how you'll live for God?

Leader Tip:

- Encourage one or two specific pre-decisions (e.g., “I won’t date unbelievers,” “I won’t lie at work,” “I won’t watch X type of content”). Invite people to write these down. They can share them if they’re comfortable.

Daniel had a 70-year testimony of faithfulness. What kind of long-term witness are you building in your workplace, neighborhood, or family?

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Leader Tip:

- Ask, “If people who know you best described your faith after 10 more years, what do you hope they would say?” This moves thinking from short-term to long-term.

The sermon mentioned that no "how-to" book will help if we don't fear God. What practical steps can you take this week to deepen your reverence for God?

Leader Tip:

- Press for specifics: “What will you do? When will you do it? Where?” (e.g., set a daily time of worship, memorize a verse on God’s character, spend time in nature reflecting on His greatness).



Live It

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge - Choose ONE of the following to practice this week:

Option 1: Wisdom Builder

- Commit to 15 minutes daily in God's Word with this question: How does this apply to my life TODAY?
- Journal one practical application each day

Leader Tip:

- Ask who wants to choose this option and when/where they’ll do it. Encourage them to bring one application back to share next week.

Option 2: Pre-Decide

- Identify one area where you're likely to face pressure this week
- Decide NOW how you'll respond in a way that honors God
- Share your decision with an accountability partner

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Leader Tip:

- You can pair people up in the group or encourage them to text a friend outside group.
 - Check in briefly next week about how it went.

Option 3: Tact Practice

- Identify a truth you need to communicate to someone
- Pray for wisdom on HOW to say it with grace and respect
- Ask a trusted friend to help you think through your approach

Leader Tip:

- Remind them that sometimes tact also means timing—waiting for the right moment. Encourage them not to vent in the name of “truth-telling.”*

Option 4: Fear of the Lord

- Spend time meditating on God's attributes (His holiness, power, love, faithfulness)
- Write down ways this should change how you live
- Implement one change this week

Leader Tip:

- Suggest using a Psalm (e.g., Psalm 19, 27, 33, 145) as a starting point for meditation on who God is.



Prayer

Prayer Focus

Pray for each other in these areas:

- Wisdom to apply God's truth in daily situations
- Courage to make godly decisions before pressure arrives
- Grace and tact in how we communicate truth
- Protection from "Babylon" influences that seek to compromise our faith

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- A deeper reverence and awe of God
- Long-term faithfulness like Daniel's 70-year testimony

Leader Tip:

- Break into smaller groups of 2–3 if your group is large. Encourage short, honest prayers rather than long speeches. You might assign each pair one or two of the bullet points to focus on.

Looking Ahead

Next week we'll continue in Daniel 2, where Daniel interprets Nebuchadnezzar's dream. Come prepared by reading Daniel 2:1-49.

Preparation Question: When have you seen God show up in an impossible situation?

Leader Tip:

- Text your group midweek with this reading reminder and the question. It helps them come ready to share.

Closing Thought

Daniel lived in Babylon, but Babylon didn't live in him. We can live in this world today, but this world doesn't need to live in us. We need to live for His honor and for His glory.

Leader Tip:

- Consider ending with 1–2 minutes of silence for personal reflection on this line before you close in prayer.

Additional Resources

- Read Proverbs 1-4 this week for more on wisdom
- Consider starting a "Daniel Fast" approach to an area where you need discipline
- Reflect on Ephesians 6:10-18 regarding spiritual warfare mentioned in the sermon

Leader Tip:

- Don't overwhelm the group. Suggest just one of these as a "bonus" step for those who want to further their study