



## Sermon Notes and Study Questions

### Picking Up the Pieces

<sup>3</sup> Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, chief of his court officials, to bring into the king's service some of the Israelites from the royal family and the nobility—<sup>4</sup> young men without any physical defect, handsome, showing aptitude for every kind of learning, well informed, quick to understand, and qualified to serve in the king's palace. He was to teach them the language and literature of the Babylonians. <sup>5</sup> The king assigned them a daily amount of food and wine from the king's table. They were to be trained for three years, and after that they were to enter the king's service.

<sup>6</sup> Among those who were chosen were some from Judah: Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. <sup>7</sup> The chief official gave them new names: to Daniel, the name Belteshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abednego.

<sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup> Now God had caused the official to show favor and compassion to Daniel,

<sup>10</sup> 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."

<sup>11</sup> Daniel then said to the guard whom the chief official had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, <sup>12</sup> "Please test your servants for ten days: Give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink. <sup>13</sup> 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." <sup>14</sup> So he agreed to this and tested them for ten days.

<sup>15</sup> At the end of the ten days they looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who ate the royal food. <sup>16</sup> So the guard took away their choice food and the wine they were to drink and gave them vegetables instead.

Daniel 1:3-16

**Notes:**

Introduction: A Picture is worth...

- Framing the Picture: Squeezed
- A Picture of what we are fighting for

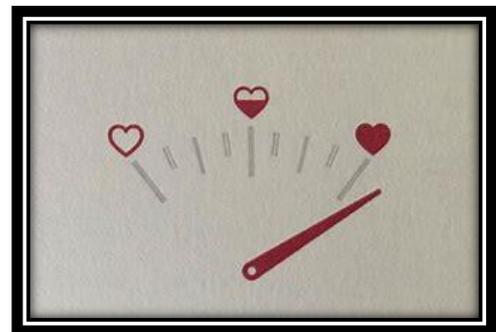


Question 1: Do you know what your friends and especially your family want from you more than anything else?

- Why they hold the rock...
- What the rock can end up saying...

Question 2: What are those closest to you feeling right now?

- What if everybody had a gauge?
- Between a Gauge and “Nothing!”



- Maybe this is the conversation you need to have with someone in your life today.

## Daniel's Dilemma: Who has ultimate loyalty?

- The question of loyalty - food vs. time

## Learning from Daniel

- It begins with a decision
- It's not an easy decision...
  - Battling "what if and what about"
- After the decision comes the Plan... Daniel had a bad plan
  
- Remember the "Now God" factor

## Conclusion

## Connecting Questions

1. Ralph shared a picture (sharing a meal) of the good life we are fighting to experience. What are some pictures of the good life that you think are worth fighting for?
2. Food has an amazing ability to provide a little comfort and protection for people to open up and begin sharing life. What is your comfort food? If there is story behind it, consider sharing with your Life Group.

## Discussion Questions:

1. Do you tend to find you have too much time or not enough time and how does this present a challenge for you to follow Jesus?
2. What are ways that our society encourages us towards being over-committed?
3. The Bible presents a grand banquet as one of the pictures of our salvation (e.g., Matthew 22 and Isaiah 25). Why do you think the Bible uses this as a picture of the blessings of eternal life?
4. Ralph proposed that what our family and friends want from us, more than anything else, is to feel our love. In practical terms, to feel that we cherish and have them as a top priority in our life. What is your response to this idea?
5. This is the picture of holding the rock: When we keep asking our loved ones to wait while we attend to other matters (e.g., work, tasks, working-out, and personal hobbies) and do not show them they are more important than these other commitments, their willingness to wait because they love us tends become feelings of rejection and frustration. What is your reaction to this picture?
6. Ralph offered the example of Gary Chapman's *The Five Love Languages* as a helpful metaphor for talking about the state of a relationship. [e.g., "How is your love tank?"] What are ways that you have learned to talk with friends and family about the state of your relationship? What is your reaction to these sorts of conversations (e.g., awkward, positive, unsure, open)?

7. Consider the following commitments and rank them in order of priority.

(Children, Church Family, Country, Extended Family, Friends, Hobbies, Parents, Self, Spouse, Work)

- |    |     |
|----|-----|
| 1. | 6.  |
| 2. | 7.  |
| 3. | 8.  |
| 4. | 9.  |
| 5. | 10. |

Share what informed the way you ranked these different commitments.

On a scale of 1 to 10 with 10 being excellent, rate how you are living out of your priorities and if you are comfortable share why you gave this score.

8. How do you think Jesus would rank the 10 priorities from question 7?

9. If you were in Daniel's shoes, (a fifteen year old boy who had been plucked out of his conquered capital and now a slave in the service of a conquering king) what do you think you would have done in his situation?

10. How did God speak to you through Daniel 1 and the message?

## Going Deeper into Scripture

Read Daniel 1

11. What do you think it would have been like to have been forced to change your name? What were the meanings of Daniel and his three friends Hebrew names and what were the meanings of their Babylonian names?

12. What can we learn from Daniel's attitude to Babylonian education and culture?

How might this be helpful in giving guidance to a Christian going off to university?

13. What was the purpose of the Old Testament food laws?

14. Read Mark 7:18-20. Why do the food laws no longer apply to Christians?

15. While all foods are clean, in 1 Corinthians 10:19-22, Paul warned about participating in ceremonies where we eat food sacrificed to idols. Does this have any application for Christians today?

16. What can we learn about protesting the power of the state from this passage?

17. What type of witness for his God was Daniel to his surrounding culture? What were key aspects of his witness and how might we follow his example today?