

08

DANIEL 1:8-21

INTEGRITY MATTERS

THIS WEEK'S **focus**

We have all experienced peer pressure at some point or another. This might have been in small ways, like feeling pressure to wear certain clothes or talk a certain way, or in bigger decisions like drinking alcohol or compromising who you are. Whether it's peer pressure from friends or just trying to keep up with the culture around you, sometimes it can feel like a pressure cooker. At times, it can also feel like we have to lay aside our faith to have a seat at the table. Jesus warned us that the world would hate us for our faith in Him. Daniel and his friends experienced that as they were subjected to Babylonian rule while trying to remain faithful to their God. They were an example that when tempted to compromise our faith, God strengthens us to live with integrity.



CENTRAL **truth**

Even when we are tempted to compromise our faith, God helps us live with integrity.

DAILY devotions

MEMORIZE DANIEL 1:8a

7 ARROWS FOR BIBLE READING



What does this passage say?



What does this passage tell us about God?



What did this passage mean to its original audience?



How does this passage change the way I relate to people?



What does this passage tell us about man?



How does this passage prompt me to pray?



What does this passage demand of me?

day 1

DANIEL 1:8-10

DWELL

It would have been simple for Daniel to take the easy road and just eat the food that was offered to him. After all, he was in the palace of an enemy nation, a nation that did not worship his God or follow his religious practices. But he knew that doing so would dishonor the God he served, and he was unwilling to compromise. God had already provided for Daniel and his friends by granting them favor with the palace official, so he trusted that God would continue to provide for them as they asked for special dietary treatment.



Why was the chief eunuch hesitant to go along with Daniel's suggestion? What does this teach us about who they were each ultimately following?



What are some areas of your faith that you are most tempted to compromise on? Why?

MEMORIZE

- Use a phone or computer to record yourself reading Daniel 1:8a aloud. Listen to this recording throughout the week.

PRAY

- Pray that God would give you wisdom to see when you are being tempted to compromise and follow the world's ways rather than His.

day 2

DANIEL 1:11-16

DWELL

↑ If Daniel's plan succeeded, what would it prove? How would it show God honor and glory?

↔ What does it communicate to the people around you when you hold firm to your faith and refuse to compromise?

Daniel didn't make a scene—he didn't throw a tantrum and refuse to eat the food that he was being given. Instead, he suggested a plan that would allow him to quietly honor God. Not only would he be faithfully serving his Lord, but if the test went well, the eunuch would also have the chance to see God's power at work in the four young men. If Daniel had chosen to simply disobey, it could have caused trouble for the eunuch—maybe even costing the official his life—and could have incurred the king's wrath. God had bigger plans for Daniel and his friends, and those plans required impressing the king, not angering him.

MEMORIZE

Write Daniel 1:8a on a note card and place it in a folder or binder where you will see it frequently. Read it to yourself each time you see it this week.

PRAY

Ask God for the strength to follow Him faithfully, even when it would be easier to compromise.

day 3

DANIEL 1:17-21

DWELL

Even though the young men were under the power of a foreign king, surrounded by foreign customs, they didn't stray from following God, and He rewarded their faithfulness with wisdom and gifts beyond any of the king's current advisors. The king's plan had been to force his enemy's children to adopt Babylonian culture and religion, but God was protecting these four young men and had given them exactly the gifts He wanted them to have, including Daniel's ability to interpret dreams and visions.

↑ What does this teach us about how God can use any circumstance for His own purposes?

↪ How might this verse prompt you to pray when you find yourself in challenging circumstances?

MEMORIZE

Break Daniel 1:8a into 3–5 smaller parts and try to recite a different part to yourself from memory throughout each day.

PRAY

Thank God that you can trust in His faithfulness in the midst of any situation you find yourself in.

day 4

JOB 27:2-6

DWELL

The Book of Job gives us another example of a man who was tempted to take the easy road, but instead chose to cling to his integrity. Job had lost everything that mattered to him: his family, his livelihood, his wealth, and his health. Even his wife told him to give up and curse God (2:9)! But even in the midst of grief, doubt, confusion, anger at God, and increasing pressure from the people closest to him, Job chose to remain faithful.



How did Job demonstrate that he was choosing to trust in God, even as he struggled with anger and bitterness?



When you are angry or confused about a situation in your life, how can you grow closer to God instead of pulling away from Him?

MEMORIZE

Draw Daniel 1:8a on a piece of paper using colored pencils or markers, using a different color for the most important words and phrases. Hang it in your room or locker.

PRAY

Pray that God would draw you nearer to Him in faith when you are angry or confused about how He is guiding your life.

day 5

MATTHEW 22:15-22

DWELL

The Pharisees believed they were righteous because of their strict following of Jewish laws—including some not commanded by God. They claimed to follow God, but in reality were following man-made rules. The question they asked (v. 17) sounded reasonable—they even put on a show of humility, respectfully calling Jesus “Teacher” and pointing out His integrity. But really they were trying to trick Him. They hoped He would say something that indicated He approved of the Roman occupation, or that He would say something that would make Him guilty of treason against Rome. But Jesus saw through their plan and called out their hypocrisy. They thought they were righteous, but their real priority was maintaining their power.



How do these verses give us examples of false humility, hypocrisy, and integrity?



How can we encourage each other to live out our faith with integrity—showing that our words and our actions line up?

MEMORIZE

Practice reciting Daniel 1:8a aloud from memory with a friend or family member. They can prompt you with the next word if you need help remembering.

PRAY

Ask God to guard you from hypocrisy and to guide you in living with true humility.