

MESSAGE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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Pastor Bill Search kicked off our new series, *The Next Right Thing*, with a teaching from the first chapter of the book of Daniel in the Old Testament. This story is often cited in Christian homes and youth groups, and for good reason. It is a testimony to the integrity of young men who are in step with the Lord, who are led by their convictions, who desire to bring honor to God, and who, in turn, are blessed by God. At a place and age when standing out is often the last thing you want to do, Daniel and his friends resolved to do the next right thing—they put their trust in God.

SCRIPTURE

DANIEL 1:1-17

¹ During the third year of King Jehoiakim's reign in Judah, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. ² The Lord gave him victory over King Jehoiakim of Judah and permitted him to take some of the sacred objects from the Temple of God. So Nebuchadnezzar took them back to the land of Babylonia and placed them in the treasure-house of his god.

³ Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, his chief of staff, to bring to the palace some of the young men of Judah's royal family and other noble families, who had been brought to Babylon as captives. ⁴ "Select only strong, healthy, and good-looking young men," he said. "Make sure they are well versed in every branch of learning, are gifted with knowledge and good judgment, and are suited to serve in the royal palace. Train these young men in the language and literature of Babylon." ⁵ The king assigned them a daily ration of food and wine from his own kitchens. They were to be trained for three years, and then they would enter the royal service.

⁶ Daniel, Hananiah, Mishaël, and Azariah were four of the young men chosen, all from the tribe of Judah. ⁷ The chief of staff renamed them with these Babylonian names:

Daniel was called Belteshazzar.

Hananiah was called Shadrach.

Mishaël was called Meshach.

Azariah was called Abednego.

⁸ But Daniel was determined not to defile himself by eating the food and wine given to them by the king. He asked the chief of staff for permission not to eat these unacceptable foods. ⁹ Now God had given the chief of staff both respect and affection for Daniel. ¹⁰ But he responded, "I am afraid of my lord the king, who has ordered that you eat this food and wine. If you become pale and thin compared to the other youths your age, I am afraid the king will have me beheaded."

¹¹ Daniel spoke with the attendant who had been appointed by the chief of staff to look after Daniel, Hananiah, Mishaël, and Azariah. ¹² "Please test us for ten days on a diet of vegetables and water," Daniel said.

¹³ "At the end of the ten days, see how we look compared to the other young men who are eating the king's food. Then make your decision in light of what you see." ¹⁴ The attendant agreed to Daniel's suggestion and tested them for ten days.

¹⁵ At the end of the ten days, Daniel and his three friends looked healthier and better nourished than the young men who had been eating the food assigned by the king. ¹⁶ So after that, the attendant fed them only vegetables instead of the food and wine provided for the others.

¹⁷ God gave these four young men an unusual aptitude for understanding every aspect of literature and wisdom. And God gave Daniel the special ability to interpret the meanings of visions and dreams.

¹⁸ At the end of the time set by the king to bring them into his service, the chief official presented them to Nebuchadnezzar. ¹⁹ The king talked with them, and he found none equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; so they entered the king's service. ²⁰ In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters in his whole kingdom.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What stood out from Bill's message?
2. Read Daniel 1:1-5. Who is King Nebuchadnezzar, and what were his orders to his staff?
3. Read Daniel 1:6-8 in several translations. How is Daniel described?
4. Read Daniel 1:9-20. What were the results of the resolve of the four young Hebrew men? (Go verse by verse)
5. Go through the text again and highlight each time God, or the Lord, is mentioned. How did God control, or influence, the key events of this story?
6. Think of your current circumstances, where is God stirring in your conscience? Where is God inviting you to trust him?
7. How have you been influenced by someone's faith, how they honor God? How are you influencing others?
8. How can we pray for you?

PRAYER

Thank God for his Spirit that guides you and gives you wisdom when you ask, and then ask for that wisdom. Ask the Spirit to stir in your conscience the next right thing to do considering your past experience, your current circumstances, and your future hopes.