

FAMILY DEVOTION

MARCH 22, 2020

DANIEL 1

BACKGROUND

The book of Daniel is set during the Babylonian exile (Dan 1:1–3). When King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon defeated the Egyptians at the battle of Carchemish (605 BC), Judah came under his authority. He then entered Jerusalem and took many prominent citizens to Babylon, including Daniel and three of his friends. Several years later, Nebuchadnezzar again deported people from Judah to Babylon (597 BC; see 2 Kgs 24:11–16). These captives included the prophet Ezekiel. A decade after that, a final rebellion by King Zedekiah brought the full weight of Nebuchadnezzar's wrath against Judah. Jerusalem and its temple were destroyed, and the remaining population was taken to Babylon (586 BC; see 2 Kgs 24:18–25:21). Daniel spent his entire adult life in Babylon—even after the Babylonians were conquered by the Persians in 539 BC (Dan 1:21; 10:1).¹

FOCUS VERSE

Daniel 1:8 (ESV) But Daniel resolved that he would not defile himself with the king's food, or with the wine that he drank. Therefore he asked the chief of the eunuchs to allow him not to defile himself.

KEY LESSON

God wants us to obey his instruction for our lives

DEVOTION

Daniel and the other young men from Judah were in a difficult situation. Either they would obey God by ignoring the king's command or they would obey the king by violating God's law. Though the circumstances look much different in our lives, we are often faced with a similar decision. We are faced with the choice to obey God or to give in to the pressures of this world. Daniel 1 teaches us that God honors our obedience. God may not remove us from every difficult trial that we face, but he is always faithful to his promises, even in the midst of our most difficult situations. If we will choose to honor and obey God, we will experience his blessing, just as Daniel and his friends did (Dan 1:15).

QUESTIONS

1. Imagine that you were in Daniel's situation—captured by a foreign king and taken far from your home. How do you think you would have felt?
2. Has there ever been a time when you have been scared or uncertain of what to do? What do you think God wants you to do when you feel this way? (See Ps 56:3 for the answer)
3. Why do you think Daniel and his friends made the decision to eat and drink differently than the other young people in their situation?
4. Do you think this was a difficult choice for them to make? What do you do when you face difficult choices?
5. How might what we chose to eat or drink be a decision that honors God?
6. When you are faced with a choice to obey God or to obey someone else, what do you think you should do?
7. How can you know what God wants you to do in any situation?

¹ John D. Barry et al., *Faithlife Study Bible* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012, 2016).