

HOW TO LIVE A GODLY LIFE IN BABYLON

Daniel 1, 6, and 10

Babylon captured Judah around 605 B.C. Captives like Daniel were taken into the heart of this idolatrous evil kingdom. How did they survive and stay true to God? How will we stay true in our modern day Babylon?

1. RESOLVE TO FOLLOW GOD NO MATTER WHAT – Daniel 1:8

- Daniel, a teenager (“youth”), is taken captive to Babylon and forced to go to a three year “Reeducation Camp featuring Cultural Sensitivity Training”. But he resolves not to defile himself even with foods – Daniel 1:8. He could not control much, but he could try to control what he ate. He is respectful, asking not to defile himself. But he is ready to pay the consequences. God intervenes on his behalf– Daniel 1:9, 17. Daniel’s stand impacts others, beginning with his three friends.
- In the midst of utter confusion of morality, we must stand uncompromisingly for God’s truth. Followers of Christ must resolve not to defile ourselves with the idols and twisted thinking of our world. Our idols include consumerism, sexual freedom, entertainment, SELF, etc.

2. SPEAK THE TRUTH IN LOVE – Daniel 4 and 5

- Daniel is given a message which is not going to be pleasing to the King – Daniel 4:19. But Daniel gives it to Nebuchadnezzar anyway – Daniel 4:24-27.
- Later Daniel pronounces judgment on Belshazzar – Daniel 5:20-28.
- *“In a time of universal deceit, telling the truth is a revolutionary act.” – George Orwell.* We cannot soften God’s message or His gospel. There is an offense of the cross no matter how “gentle” we are in delivering it – 1 Corinthians 1:18. We empty the cross of its offence when we say other religions can bring us to God or that works can help save us. Our responsibility is not to change someone’s heart, but to be faithful in sharing the Message – Ephesians 6:19,20. YOU MUST BELIEVE, TEACH, AND PREACH WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS IS TRUE, NOT WHAT YOU WANT THE BIBLE TO SAY IS TRUE. *“It is better to be accused of being harsh than it is tell lies with hushed tones of compassion, love, care, and thoughtfulness.” – Erwin Lutzer, The Church in Babylon.*

3. BE A PERSON OF UNQUESTIONABLE INTEGRITY – Daniel 6:4,5

- Daniel was faithful in his work and government service. His enemies could not find anything wrong with his work – Daniel 6:4,5. Integrity is “who you are in the dark when no else is looking.” Integrity is also doing what is right even when it hurts – Psalm 15.
- Don’t be one who compromises even in little things. Daniel’s allegiance to God was more important than everything else. Daniel was in Babylon, but not of Babylon. We are in the world, but not to be of the world. Resist peer and cultural pressure. Keep an eternal perspective.

4. HUMBLE YOURSELF AND PRAY! – Daniel 10:10-12

- Set your heart to understand. We must admit we don't know or understand all that God is doing. But we must seek to understand what He has said in His Word.
- Humble yourself. Daniel humbled himself under the sovereign hand of God. So must we. God is in control always for His glory and our good.
- Pray! Daniel's words had come before God. So should ours. Daniel's prayer in chapter 9 is full of repentance and confession – Daniel 9:3-7, 19. We must admit our own sins and failures as the church of Jesus – Revelation 2:20,21. *“We must be far harder on ourselves in gracious, humble repentance, then we are on the unbelieving culture around us. That was a major lesson for the exiles and for us. Our first response should be repentance. We should be very understanding toward people who have failed to believe in Christ because of the weakness of the Church's testimony...A lot of what is happening in our culture may be more our fault than we are willing to admit.”* – Tim Keller, *Exiles in a Foreign Land*.
- By God's grace and power we can finish well even in Babylon – Daniel 12:13.
- *“Numerous are the waves, and great the tossing of the sea, but we have no fear of going down, for we stand upon the Rock. Let the ocean rage as it will, it is powerless to break the Rock. Let the waves roll, they cannot sink the bark of Jesus. Tell me, what should we fear? Death? To me to live is Christ and to die is gain. Is it exile perchance? The earth is the Lord's and the fullness of it. Is it confiscation of property? We brought nothing with us into the world, and it is clear we can take nothing away with us. I despise what the world fears, and hold its good things in derision. I do not fear poverty, nor do I desire riches. I am not afraid of death; I do not pray to live, if it be not for your good. This is why I speak of what is now taking place, and exhort your charity to be of good cheer.”* – Chrysostom, A.D. 400's, to his congregation when he was facing arrest and exile.

Concluding Applications:

- Are you influencing others for Jesus or living under the influence of the world? - Romans 12:2. Be a man of His Word.
- What's a father to do? Begin with yourself – are you following Christ and growing in Him? Seek understanding, humble yourself, and pray. Seek a healthy relationship with your child. Be watchful for what your child is learning and seeing in school or with friends. *“We are watching as the unthinkable becomes thinkable right before our eyes.”* – Erwin Lutzer, *The Church in Babylon*. We must prepare our children for the battles they face by talking about issues and sharing our own struggles. Realize only God can change the hearts of our kids. Don't give up!