

Title: Lessons from the lives of teenagers in the bible meant to help teenagers with life today!

Who was Daniel? Daniel was a man of the Old Testament who really needs no introduction. He was captured as a high schooler by King Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel was brought into a completely new culture. He was to be brainwashed and schooled for three years in the religion, language, and culture of Babylon. Daniel had to take a stand for God. His life is relevant for us today. **In a culture of Compromise, Daniel stood for his convictions.**

As Daniel began the king's program with a few fellow Hebrews, he was quickly confronted with a moral dilemma...the King provided them with food that did not align with the laws of Israel. If he ate the food, he would be endorsing the false gods that they believed in. Daniel and his friends had a decision to make: would they remain completely faithful to God, or would they compromise to satisfy the new king? As a high schooler, we are going to see how Daniel held fast to his convictions in the midst of great risk.

Daniel 1:8 "But Daniel **made up his mind** that he would not defile himself with the king's choice food or with the wine which he drank."

He had made up his mind about what he believed and how he was going to behave. Making up your mind is like drawing a line in the sand and saying this is what I believe.

Convictions: "A conviction is a belief that is considered true and worthy of maintaining regardless of the consequences."

Firm in Your Convictions

- The Babylonians could change his home, his diet, his name, but they could never change his heart! If you are firm in your convictions, you won't fall to the culture.
- I believe, like Daniel, there are two things we face today that make sticking to our **convictions a challenge.**
 - **Popularity:**
 - He had decided that they were going to serve the Lord, whatever the cost!
 - **Pleasure:**
 - In this passage (Daniel 1:5-16) we see that they had the privilege of eating the best food in the whole of Babylon. But they refused to eat it. It would have been easy for Daniel to justify why he thinks eating the king's food was okay.
- Daniel didn't lower his standards for the sake of fitting in. Make up your mind in advance so when the temptation comes to prioritize convictions over pleasure and popularity. **Even if your environment changes your conviction won't.**

Follow Gods Lead

"And God **gave** Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the chief of the eunuchs," Daniel 1:9 This Babylon official who should treat Daniel poorly and be his enemy. Shows compassion on him. Daniel looked to God for his approval, and not man.

"The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the Lord; he turns it wherever he will." Proverbs 21:1 Daniel willingly put his faith to the test because of his confidence in God. (Pause) I don't know where you are at right now but if you feel alone or tired of trying to fit in. I pray you would understand that you already have Gods approval. You don't have to try and fit in to feel known.

"To these four young men God **gave** knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning. And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds." Daniel 1:17

When they took a stand, they were rewarded with wisdom. This should be a compelling motivation for you. **When you take a stand, you are taking advantage of the opportunity God has for you...**maybe it's taking a stand personally against an area of sin in your life....and say I'm not going to keep doing that. I'm going to put it off and replace it with what's right. As you take a stand God is going to empower you with wisdom to keep going. (Trust God in a decision, walking away from a sin in your life, or speaking up about a decision your friends are making).

Heroic Principle: God supports those who stand for him. Daniel sought to honor God in a world that doesn't. God gave support to Daniel, because he stood for his convictions.

Conclusion: The convictions Daniel made as a high schooler set the course for the rest of his life. He decided to honor the Lord even when it meant going a different direction than the crowd. **Every day of your life you will come across a line in the sand.** You will have a decision to make if you are going to follow culture or follow your convictions. Whenever you face situations like this, please remember the example of Daniel. Decide what you are going to stand for.

Discussion:

1. When was the last time you found yourself torn between obeying God's Word and following the culture around you? Would you do anything different today?
2. Do you have any convictions in your life that you are committed to keeping regardless of the consequences?
3. What convictions can you make in your life now, that will help you endure in moments of temptations later?