

DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

Daniel 1
Stand Strong Series
February 24/25, 2018

Main Idea:

Sometimes our faith requires us to take a stand on something in spite of the consequences.

Discovery Questions

1. What's your favorite snack of choice—the food that you're most likely to indulge in (and least likely to say no to) if it's offered to you?

This week, we start a new series from the book of Daniel in the Bible. The book of Daniel was written during the darkest time in the history of the Israelites, just after the Babylonian empire had invaded Israel, took captive its citizens, and deported them into exile. Among those taken into exile were a group of young men who God used to display his sovereignty to the most important people in Babylon.

For the next several weeks, we will go through this great book chapter-by-chapter. We begin by looking at Daniel 1, a famous story about the principled stand that Daniel and his friends took, and the reward God gave them as a result.

2. Read Daniel 1. What do we learn from this passage about being unwilling to compromise in the face of outside pressure? Observe as many things as you can.

3. a. How and in what areas do you see Christians in America today feel pressure to compromise their faith?
b. When have you seen someone boldly take a stand on something in regards to their Christian faith? What was the outcome of that?

4. In his commentary on Daniel, pastor and scholar Iain Duguid writes, "As citizens of heaven, Christians live as aliens and strangers in a land that is not their own, and there are times when the world enmity of the people of God become evident. The hostility of the world is often shown in the efforts it makes to squeeze us into its mold... We have to choose daily whether to be a part of this world in which we live, or to take the difficult path of standing against it."

- a. How and in what ways have you personally felt pressure to be "squeezed into the mold" of the world, to bend or bow to culture and risk the compromise of your faith?
b. When faced with that pressure, how have you responded? What results have you seen to your response?
c. Is there an area right now where you feel that God may be asking you to take a "difficult path of standing against" something? What is that area, and what truths would help you to take that stand? What would hold you back from doing what God has laid on your heart?

DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

5. Though Daniel and his friends took a stand against the food, they did allow their names to be changed and they did allow themselves to receive the Babylonian education. Is there an area in your life where you are struggling to discern whether something is or isn't a compromise? Share that with your group and allow them to speak into your situation. What criteria can we use to help us in these kinds of situations?

Leader Guide Starts on Next Page

DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

Leader Guide

1. What's your favorite snack of choice—the food that you're most likely to indulge in (and least likely to say no to) if it's offered to you?

This is a "lighter" question designed to get the conversation going. Spend about 5-7 minutes on this question.

This week, we start a new series from the book of Daniel in the Bible. The book of Daniel was written during the darkest time in the history of the Israelites, just after the Babylonian empire had invaded Israel, took captive its citizens, and deported them into exile. Among those taken into exile were a group of young men who God used to display his sovereignty to the most important people in Babylon.

For the next several weeks, we will go through this great book chapter-by-chapter. We begin by looking at Daniel 1, a famous story about the principled stand that Daniel and his friends took, and the reward God gave them as a result.

2. Read Daniel 1. What do we learn from this passage about being unwilling to compromise in the face of outside pressure? Observe as many things as you can.

There are many things to observe. These are just a few:

- *Though Daniel did draw the line at not eating the food, he did allow his name to be changed and to learn the culture of the Babylonians; we need not resist everything, therefore, that comes our way with which we may disagree (Daniel 1:7-8)*
- *Daniel's unwillingness to compromise began with a resolution; he resolved to not eat the King's food (1:8).*
- *This resolution came as a result of God's command to the Israelites in the Old Testament not to "defile" themselves with food not prepared according to God's standards (1:8).*
- *Daniel and his friends were respectful in how they compromised, though firm, they did discuss it with their superiors (1:9-14).*
- *Daniel proposed an experiment that would allow him to go about living out his resolution; he was smart in how he negotiated it (1:11-14).*
- *God rewarded Daniel for his faithfulness (1:15-17).*

Spend 10-12 minutes on this question.

- 3. a. How and in what areas do you see Christians in America today feel pressure to compromise their faith?**
- b. When have you seen someone boldly take a stand on something in regards to their Christian faith? What was the outcome of that?**

DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

For part “a,” there are many areas: the pressure to laugh at an inappropriate joke, the pressure to compromise our integrity to get ahead in our jobs or finances; the pressure to back down from the Bible’s teaching about marriage, etc.

Spend 7-10 minutes on this question in its entirety.

4. In his commentary on Daniel, pastor and scholar Iain Duguid writes, “As citizens of heaven, Christians live as aliens and strangers in a land that is not their own, and there are times when the world enmity of the people of God become evident. The hostility of the world is often shown in the efforts it makes to squeeze us into its mold... We have to choose daily whether to be a part of this world in which we live, or to take the difficult path of standing against it.”

- a. **How and in what ways have you personally felt pressure to be “squeezed into the mold” of the world, to bend or bow to culture and risk the compromise of your faith?**
- b. **When faced with that pressure, how have you responded? What results have you seen to your response?**
- c. **Is there an area right now where you feel that God may be asking you to take a “difficult path of standing against” something? What is that area, and what truths would help you to take that stand? What would hold you back from doing what God has placed on your heart?**

For part “b,” we observe that sometimes God responds to us like he responded to Daniel, and rewards us in this earth for our decision to stand strong. Sometimes, however, it doesn’t always turn out well, and we face ridicule and ostracization for our beliefs. However, God will always reward us in heaven for our commitment to honor him. For part “c,” we want to go back to one of the fundamental teachings of Daniel: the sovereignty of God. If God is sovereign in all circumstances, we know that our allegiance comes to Him before anyone else.

Spend about 10-12 minutes on this question in its entirety.

5. Though Daniel and his friends took a stand against the food, they did allow their names to be changed and they did allow themselves to receive the Babylonian education. Is there an area in your life where you are struggling to discern whether something is or isn’t a compromise? Share that with your group and allow them to speak into your situation. What criteria can we use to help us in these kinds of situations?

God’s Word is always to be our first resource; we are called to obey what God has instructed us to do and the ways in which we should live. Beyond that, there will be some “grey areas,” and we need to trust the Holy Spirit to lead us and give us certain convictions in these uncertain areas. And sometimes, God will give a person one conviction, and another person a different conviction about the same issue. As Paul says in Romans, “each [one] should be fully convinced in their own mind” as to how to respond.

Spend 7-10 minutes on this question.