

The Bible is filled with examples of godly men and women who are worthy of our emulation and Daniel is certainly one of the characters. We remember Daniel as the one tossed into the lion's den, but there is much more about the life of this young man. Daniel was a man who obtained preeminence and power because he remained faithful to God. Even as very young man, most likely a teenager, he stood out from the majority of the children of Israel had been taken captive by the Babylonians and he was handpicked to be trained to the serve the Babylonian king. We can read about this in Daniel 1:3-6. ***(6) Now among these were of the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah:***

Not only did Daniel and his 3 friends stand out from the children of Israel we find out that they even stood out from all of the wise men in the land. ***Daniel 1:17 As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams. ... 20 And in all matters of wisdom and understanding about which the king examined them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers who were in all his realm.***

Another thing we learn about Daniel is that he gained great power over all of Babylon after he interpreted King Nebuchadnezzar's dream. Now keep in mind that this was probably a teen-ager. ***Daniel 2:48 Then the king made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon.***

Some years later, although short lived, Daniel also received power over the kingdom under Belshazzar (**bell-shaz-zur**) King Nebuchadnezzar's son. ***Daniel 5:29 Then commanded Belshazzar, and they clothed Daniel with scarlet, and put a chain of gold about his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him, that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom.***

Then finally as he began to age, Daniel received similar power over the Medo-Persian empire. ***Daniel 6:1-3 It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty princes, which should be over the whole kingdom; (2) And over these three presidents; of whom Daniel was first: that the princes might give accounts unto them, and the king should have no damage. (3) Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm.*** Keep this passage in mind as it will play an important role in the events of Daniel's life that we are about to examine.

So as you can see from his youth and beyond, Daniel managed to gain positions of power and influence in Godly way to those around him without ever compromising his faithfulness to God. For the next few minutes we are going to look at some qualities in his life that allowed him to do this and hopefully will teach us as Christians today how we can be successful without selling our souls to the devil.

The first thing I want to point out is that even as a very young man Daniel was a **MAN OF PURPOSE**. *Daniel 1:8 But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.* Now think about how brave and dedicated Daniel was at this time. Here he was a young boy in strange land and now he faced a dilemma. Should he stand his ground and abide by God law or should he violate that law and eat the king's food?

Well despite his youth and the tremendous pressure to conform, Daniel "purposed in his heart" to uphold the law of God, no matter what the cost and because of his willingness to put God first, God granted Daniel favor in the sight of others as, *Daniel 1:9 Now God had brought Daniel into favour and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs.* Exactly how God did this is not explained.

This same thing happened in the case of Joseph as well after he was sold into slavery by his brothers. In Gen 39 we learn that Joseph had been taken by the Ishmaelites down to Egypt where he was sold to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh. But The LORD was with Joseph, and Potiphar saw that the LORD *was* with him. Then we are told in v 3 that the LORD made all that Joseph did to prosper in his hand. So Joseph found favor in Potiphar's sight, and served him. Soon Potiphar made him overseer of his house, and he put all that he had under his authority.

Here we see that even as a slave, God was with Joseph and made him successful. Then because of Potiphar's wife lies about Joseph trying to attack her that he finds himself in prison; yet the Lord is still with him. *Genesis 39:21-23 But the LORD was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison. (22) And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that were in the prison; ... (23b) because the LORD was with him, and that which he did, the LORD made it to prosper.*

You see by these two young men purposing in their heart to put God first in their lives, God blessed them in such a way that they were successful and had favorably impression on others. Likewise, every child of God needs to be a person of purpose. No one respects a "wishy-washy" person. When someone has a strong sense of purpose, people will respect

them and admire their qualities because they are reliable and trustworthy. Jesus makes it very clear what the purpose of every Christian should be. *Matthew 6:33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*

As Christians we should always try and seek Gods bidding first regardless of the circumstance and just as Jesus promised, we will find favor in the site of God and most likely gain favor in the eyes of those around us. So, will you dare to be a Daniel and be a person with a purpose? No matter how young or old you may be, it is never too late to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness"!

(NO. 2) Not only did Daniel have a strong sense of purpose, he was also **A MAN OF PRINCIPLE** because he refused to compromise his convictions. For example as we read earlier in Dan. 1:8 as a young man, he refused to eat the king's meat or drink his wine. Also later as an older man, he refused the gifts of King Belshazzar (**bell-shaz-zur**) the son of King Nebuchadnezzar.

In Daniel 5 a hand appeared and wrote on the wall and the King Belshazzar (**bell-shaz-zur**) offered up a lot gifts and power to whoever could tell him what the writing meant, but Daniel interpreted it for free. Daniel was brought before the king to interpret the meaning of the writing. The king already knew of Daniel. His lifestyle preceded him. **Daniel 5:14 "I have heard of you, that the Spirit of God is in you, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom are found in you.** The king asked if he could interpret the strange writing. **17 Then Daniel answered, and said before the king, "Let your gifts be for yourself, and give your rewards to another; yet I will read the writing to the king, and make known to him the interpretation.**

Daniel was even a man of principle when his life was in danger as he refused to obey the decree of Darius (**duh-rye-us**). In Daniel 6, he learned of the decree not to pray, but he was not to be dissuaded by man's law and opened his window toward Jerusalem and prayed three times a day as usual. He *prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime. (Daniel 6:10)*

Here is a young man with principles and it didn't matter what the circumstance was, Daniel would not compromise his principles and we certainly need more people like that today. People may ridicule you, but inwardly they admire a person of principles, and when they need someone they can trust that's dependable, they will turn to a person with principles.

God also admires individuals who are willing to stand by their principles, and by their words as David says in, *Psalms 15:1-3 LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? (2) He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. (3) He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour.* Our society is in great need of people with principles and who "**Dare To Be A Daniel**".

(No. 3). But having purpose and principle is not all that we need. Another element for true success is seen in Daniel **WHICH IS PURITY**. This is where we go back to that passage in chapter 6. No matter how hard they tried, his opponents of Daniel could not find any fault with him. For one thing, he was faultless when it came to managing his business affairs. *Daniel 6:4 Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him.* This certainly helps explain why he rose to positions of great responsibility and power. His purity in his business affairs was always related to his purpose to please God first and the fact that he was a man of principle meant that he could be trusted. We are also taught as Christians that we are people of purity in our conduct whether we are young or old. Notice what Paul says, *1 Timothy 4:12 Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.*

So far we have noticed that Daniel was a man of purpose, principle, and purity and how the world needs more like him. But the element that tied all of these other elements together making it possible for Daniel to be successful as a faithful servant of God is the fact that (No. 4) Daniel was a **MAN OF PRAYER**.

Once again lets revisit *Daniel 6:10 Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.*

Now in this chapter we have already learned that Daniel had been promoted to one of the top governors and the king even thought about putting Daniel over everything, and this made the people mad and jealous and since they couldn't find anything wrong with Daniels service as Governor they had to get creative. So they fooled King Darius (duh-rye-us) into signing a decree that no man could petition anyone except the king for the next 30 days or they will be cast into the

lion's den. This meant that Daniel could not pray to God for thirty days. Well, these men tricked the king and by their laws once the king signed a law not even the king himself could change it. These men knew that Daniel would pray to his God and so they thought they found a solution to their problem and sure enough Daniel prayed to God as it was his custom to do. We see him kneeling in prayer three times daily as was a "**custom since early days**", demonstrating his persistence and faithfulness in his service to God.

Even though Daniel knew that he was putting his life in danger, he trusted in God as he prayed and of course we know how the story ends. Daniel is thrown into the lion's den but God shuts the lion's mouth and Daniel is spared. So surely we can see that Daniel's consistent prayer life helped him to remain a man of purpose, principle and purity. We would do well today to follow Daniel's example and be people of prayer.

The NT teaches us over and over again the importance of prayer. For instance, Paul tells us to **1 Thessalonians 5:17-18 Pray without ceasing. (18) In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.** If we find ourselves falling short of living with purpose, principle, and purity, then it may be that we are failing because we have an undisciplined prayer life. So are we willing to "**Dare To Be A Daniel**" in regards to prayer?

There is a false assumption that says in order to get ahead in the world you must be willing to conform to the deceitful practices of the world. However as we consider Daniel we can see that this simply is not true. In fact there are many Christians today who dare to be a Daniel that continue to be successful in this world without selling their souls to the devil.

How about you? Will you "Dare To Be A Daniel" by becoming a person of: a. PURPOSE? b. PRINCIPLE? c. PURITY? d. PRAYER? These are qualities of a Christian. Have you become a Christian as outlined in your NT?

Invitation