

## DANIEL'S RESOLVE



Answer the questions and return to SIMCamps | 14202 N 73<sup>rd</sup> Ave. | Peoria, AZ 85381. Please print legibly.

First and Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Text Number: \_\_\_\_\_

When Daniel and his friends were taken as captives to the Babylonian court, they did something to set themselves up for success in their stand against culture: they resolved.

### QUESTION

- What was the last goal or New Year's resolution you made?

### WHAT THE BIBLE HAS TO SAY ABOUT IT

Having a meaningful relationship with Jesus isn't about making one big decision; it's about making lots of small decisions that make a big difference. If we hope to be the kind of people who boldly stand up for our faith, we need to make little, everyday decisions that prioritize God. So, before you ever find yourself in a tough spot, you need to decide how you will respond. You make the decision ahead of time so that when your faith is challenged—and it will be challenged—you already know how you'll respond.

Daniel and his friends, along with the rest of Jerusalem, were captive to a Babylonian king named Nebuchadnezzar. The Babylonians had different beliefs and lifestyles than the Israelites. Specifically, they worshiped different gods. It was inevitable that the Babylonian and Israelite cultures would clash.

In what seems like a fortunate turn of events, Daniel and his three friends were chosen to enter a training program that would educate select youth in "the literature and language of the Chaldeans," (Dan. 1:4). It was a three-year program that would train the young men to eat and act like Babylonians so they would be fit to serve the king. Not a bad gig, right? If you're going to be kidnapped from home, you might as well live like royalty if you can. One problem: the food the king ate was considered unclean by Jewish standards and had been sacrificed to idols. For Daniel, this wasn't a difficult decision, he had decided what to do long before this moment.



**Read Daniel 1:8–21.**

<sup>8</sup> But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way. <sup>9</sup> Now God had caused the official to show favor and compassion to Daniel, <sup>10</sup> but the official told Daniel, "I am afraid of my lord the king, who has assigned your<sup>[a]</sup> food and drink. Why should he see you looking worse than the other young men your age? The king would then have my head because of you."

<sup>11</sup> Daniel then said to the guard whom the chief official had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, <sup>12</sup> "Please test your servants for ten days: Give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink. <sup>13</sup> Then compare our appearance with that of the young men who eat the royal food, and treat your servants in accordance with what you see." <sup>14</sup> So he agreed to this and tested them for ten days.

<sup>15</sup> At the end of the ten days they looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who ate the royal food. <sup>16</sup> So the guard took away their choice food and the wine they were to drink and gave them vegetables instead.

<sup>17</sup> 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.

<sup>18</sup> At the end of the time set by the king to bring them into his service, the chief official presented them to Nebuchadnezzar. <sup>19</sup> The king talked with them, and he found none equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; so they entered the king's service. <sup>20</sup> In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters in his whole kingdom.

<sup>21</sup> And Daniel remained there until the first year of King Cyrus.

In this chapter, we see Daniel's small decision had a big impact on the guard and his friends in the Babylonian court. This, however, is just the beginning. This is the same Daniel who will go on to interpret dreams for a king, boldly prophesy the fate of nations, and come out of a lion's den unharmed. His friends will go on to publicly deny an earthly king, be thrown into a fiery furnace, and then walk out un-scorching. Their resolution to not defile themselves was a small action that impacted the rest of their lives, not just this one chapter.

**Resolve**

The word "resolve" is an odd one; you don't hear it very often unless it's in the context of a political speech or on New Year's Day. And New Year's resolutions have become a bit of a joke since so few people keep them! In fact, one commonly cited statistic shows that only 9% of American citizens follow through on their resolutions. It's easy to resolve to lose weight, save money, or whatever, but it's hard to make the little decisions—like passing up dessert or stopping yourself from shopping online—needed to make resolutions a reality.

Think about the athletes, screenplay writers, and musicians we admire. Do you think they found success by skipping out on the little, daily decisions that impacted their goals? It's doubtful. An athlete decides to go to the gym instead of sleeping late, to eat grilled chicken with veggies instead of a pizza, and to go to practice instead of playing video games with friends. A writer chooses to create characters and plots instead of social media profiles and memes. A musician chooses to practice instead of binge-watching something on Netflix. Those little decisions add up over time.



In the same way, nobody wakes up and says, "I want to be a drug dealer when I grow up." It's a series of small decisions that leads to an undesirable lifestyle: bad friends, parties, temptations, and people-pleasing. Little things become a big deal over time.

The same principles are true in our walks with Christ. Rarely does anyone wake up thinking, "I want to fit in more than I want to serve God." It's the little decisions we make that build and reveal our resolve...or lack of it.

*Questions:*

- What's something you have accomplished because you made a series of smaller decisions?
- What small decisions seem to trip you up most?
- What small decisions can you make every day to help build your resolve in faith?
- What situations or challenges are you facing where you need to strong resolve to follow God?
- When is being stubborn a good thing?

## **THE BIBLE IN YOUR LIFE**

Despite being Jewish captives in Babylon, Daniel and his three friends were chosen for an elite training program that would mean social and career advancement. Instead of caving into peer pressure, these teenagers resolved to follow God even in the small decisions, like what to eat and how to behave. These small decisions helped build the kind of strong resolve they'd need to face even bigger challenges to come.

**Read Daniel 1:8–21 again, then answer the following questions.**

*Discuss:*

- What had Daniel resolved to do to honor God?
- What small decisions did he make to support his resolve?
- What have you resolved to do to serve God that may be counter-cultural?
- What small decisions will you need to make to build your resolve?
- We all need help following through on our resolutions, and that's why God gave us each other! Who can you help follow through on his or her resolution to follow God? Who can help you?

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**A QUOTE TO THINK ABOUT**

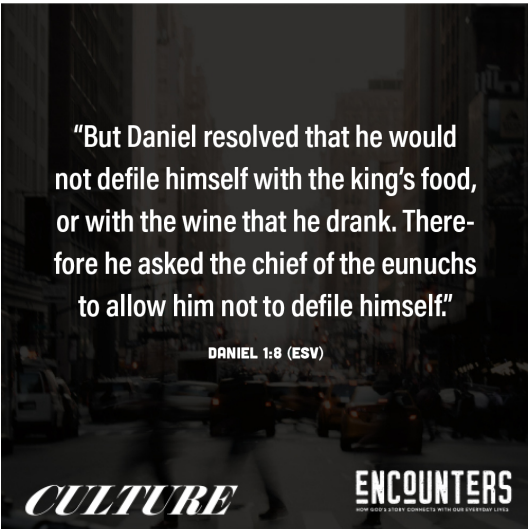
“Resolution One: I will live for God. Resolution Two: If no one else does, I still will.” – Jonathan Edwards

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**THE TAKEAWAY**

Standing firm against culture takes a strong resolve built by many small decisions to follow God.

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“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.”

DANIEL 1:8 (ESV)

**CULTURE**

**ENCOUNTERS**  
THE GREAT FIRST MOVIE OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE



Disciples of Christ  
anticipate challenges  
and resolve to obey God.

