

# DANIEL 1

Daniel was a winner! His story stands out in the Bible as one of a great hero who didn't seem to goof (we know he was a sinner like us). In one sense Daniel was unique among the characters of Scripture. In another sense however, he is meant to be typical of God's family. God wants to strategically gather and place thousands of men and women with hearts for Him who will be agents of change in their culture. He has always placed a clear alternative among humankind to the self-indulgent, relentless pursuit of prosperity and glory that obsesses us. Yahweh has always been gathering a people for that purpose.

Process the first chapter of Daniel more by thinking about the questions below. Then engage the "High-Yielding Followup" to help you find your way in becoming like Jesus to those around you, as Daniel did in Babylon.

1. In verses 3-4, the king lists the qualifications for Ashpenaz to look for in the search for the new key leaders he wanted. It is a classic human way to promote. What is legitimate about this? What is the liability of such a list? What are the things that you hold to that help you avoid holding EXCLUSIVELY to such criteria in your people choices?
2. In verse 8 it is said of Daniel that he "resolved" ("made up His mind" in NASB, Literally "set upon his heart"). What do you think the author was trying to tell us by using that expression?
3. As you look at your past and think about the Elder's call to us to engage 21 days of prayer and fasting, what do you think the Lord is "setting on your heart"?
4. Daniel demonstrates what we could call a "kind and respectful conservatism." How might that instruct us in the current political climate of our culture? What might God use in us to "give us favor?"

5. The good guys win in this story. The stories in the Bible don't always end like Daniel's. When God became a man His own story didn't appear to be that of a winner. However, why do you think God thought this story was so essential for us to have and know and remember?

## **A HIGH-YIELDING FOLLOWUP**

Psalm 119 is one that we should often return to for inspiration in our spiritual journey. It gives us hundreds of insights into who we are and who we can become with Yahweh's help. This week read carefully verses 33-40. Then go back and take a verse or two each day. Think about the words God inspired. Think about what they tell you about how you can hear from Him. Think about the things the author is asking God to do inside him.

Then "set your heart" on capturing some idle moments for the purpose of godliness. Write a verse or two of this cluster of verses on your phone. Look at these verses during the day. Reflect on them instead of whatever else tends to come to your mind. Do this instead of using technology for something more earthy. It's a "fast" that will change your life and yield fruit for all of eternity!