

#2 - Standing Up in a Smackdown World

8/31/2008 - Jim Johnson/Daniel 1:8-16

What does a person do when their authority pressures them to do something that their conscience will not allow? Daniel has some answers.

A. Daniel _____ the order. - 8a

The King had arranged to feed Daniel and his friends from his own table. But the food of a King was not fit for Jewish boys. It was not kosher according to the Laws God gave at Sinai, and the meat and wine would have been offered to idols as sacrifices before it was consumed. Also not acceptable.

The pressure of authority said “**eat it**” but Daniel’s conscience said “**don’t.**” Daniel made up his mind that he would not defile himself with the king's choice food or with the wine which he drank. There were many ways that he could have argued away the truth of God’s Word. But Daniel and his friends knew what it said and they decided that they could not and would not disobey. They simply made up their minds not to do so.

This was a serious problem for the order came down from the King himself and was issued through his trusted servant Ashpenaz. To refuse was to defy the King and to defy the King was to earn the death penalty.

The lesson for us: When pressured to compromise we need to reject the order

B. Daniel _____ the authority - 8b-9

Once he made his mind, he approached Ashpenaz who was in charge and he “*sought permission from the commander of the officials.*”

Daniel recognized that he was a young man under authority. Part of righteousness was honoring and respecting that authority. Therefore he was not ugly or belligerent but was quite respectful. He sought permission. It’s all about attitude. Daniel wanted the king to know that he was not rejecting him or defying him or trashing his authority. The way he communicated that was by humbly asking for permission to be excused.

God saw his obedience and his respect and stepped in and gave him favor in the eyes of his authority. (9) At the human level we find that when Daniel asked in such a wise and respectful way, he touched that soft spot in Ashpenaz. When we foster an ugly defiant attitude towards our authorities we invite persecution and rejection. We provoke that authority to deal harshly with us.

Daniel teaches us - **When pressured to compromise we need to reject the order and yet still respect the authority** (Rom 13:1-2)

C. Daniel _____ a better way. - 10-13

Once Aspenez was approached, he responded. His head was on the line and therefore was sympathetic but not so helpful. But Daniel had a plan. (11) He sought out the man who was their direct overseer and asked him in they might be put on a vegetable diet. He approached the matter as if he was at fault for creating the situation and offered then a solution. He suggested that they be put on a vegetable and water diet for ten days, and be tested. At the end of the test the overseer was free to do what he wanted with the situation.

Daniel knew that the point of the food was to nurture healthy young men. That's what was needed. That is ultimately what the King was after. So he proposed a plan that would protect their integrity and yet give the King what he wanted as well. (this plan would enable them to bypass the unclean foods and the meat and wine sacrificed to idols.) If God were gracious, they would still be as healthy as if they had.

Daniel did not treat this as if it were the boss's problem. He treated it as if it was his problem and he therefore came up with a solution.

We learn here that: **When pressured to compromise we need to reject the order, respect the authority and then recommend a better way.**

D. The Lord _____ his obedient servants - 14-16

The overseer listened. He most likely included Ashpenaz in on the deal and they approved the test. (14) At the end of the 10 days Daniels and friends appeared to be more prosperous than the others who used the King's diet. (15)

When Daniel and his friends stepped out in faith, and risked the wrath of the King in order to do what was right, God met them and helped them overcome the odds. He gave them what they needed to succeed.

It doesn't always work out this conveniently in life. But it is always true that God will honor those who honor Him. He will prove himself strong to those whose hearts are completely His. He will stand with His obedient child.

APPLICATON

We once lived in a world that penalized us if we compromised. Today we are pressured to do so. What can we do about it?

When pressured to _____ - reject the order, respect the authority and recommend a better way.

FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION

Use this section in your personal or family devotions to better apply the truth.

1. Can you think of a time when your authority pressured you to compromise your faith?
2. What did you learn from the experience back then?
3. What can you learn from Daniel's example?