

## In the World, But Not of the World (8/20/23)

**Main Verses:** Daniel 1:3-6, 8, 17 (Teacher: If you haven't already, it's helpful to read the entire chapter.)

**Key Verse:** Daniel 1:17

**'Takeaway':** Daniel's example reminds us that because the world offers us both helpful & hurtful things, we must trust God's guidance above all (including guidance for **when to say "no"**).

**Getting Started:** Have you ever had to say "no" to something that sounded really good to you?

**READ (or have older kids help read):** Daniel 1:3-6, 8, 17

Some **QUESTIONS** to consider:

Toddler/PreK:

- Where are Daniel & his friends?
- What does the king want to do with them?
- What choice do they make & why? How does God respond to their choice?
- Where did their "learning" & "wisdom" come from?

Elementary:

- Why are Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, & Azariah in exile?
- What does it mean to assimilate? Why does King Nebuchadnezzar want to assimilate Daniel & his friends?
- What does Daniel decide to do, & why?
- How does God honor Daniel's choice?
- Where did their "learning" & "wisdom" come from?

Here are some **IMPORTANT IDEAS** we discover in these verses:

Toddler/PreK:

- Daniel & his friends are in exile in Babylon because the people had not followed & obeyed God.
- King Nebuchadnezzar wants them to become like the people of Babylon, receiving new names relating to their gods, learning about their culture, & eating from the king's table.
- While God can help us learn in & from the world, he wants us to **keep his word first** in all things.
- When Babylonian ways keep Daniel from God's ways, he chooses to follow God's ways instead. And God makes a way for him & his friends to be able to do so.
- Because of their faithfulness, God took care of them & made them successful in their captivity.
- Like Daniel & his friends, God asks us to live in this world, but to keep our hearts & eyes focused on him alone (to be in the world, but not of the world).

Elementary:

- Daniel & his friends are in exile in Babylon because the people of Judah had not followed & obeyed God.
- King Nebuchadnezzar wants them to become like the people of Babylon (assimilate), receiving new names relating to their gods, learning about their culture, & eating from the king's table.
- While God can help us learn in & from the world, he wants us to **keep his word first in all things** (notice it's God who gives Daniel both success in Babylonian "literature & wisdom", & "visions & dreams).
- Daniel does not want to defile himself by not following God's commands. When Babylonian ways keep Daniel from God's ways, God makes a way for Daniel to be able to remain faithful to him; & God preserved them & saw that they were promoted in their captivity.
- The kingdoms of this world, no matter how powerful or extensive they seem to be, are not permanent; only God's kingdom is everlasting.
- Like Daniel & his friends, God asks us to live in this world, but to keep our hearts & eyes focused on him alone (to be in the world, but not of the world). God helps us to focus on what is eternal through faith in Jesus.
- In John 17:14-15, Jesus prays for his followers affirming that we are in the world, but not of the world. He prays for our protection & preservation in this world.

An **ENCOURAGEMENT** in light of God's word:

(Toddler/PreK) Talk to God. Thank him that he is always with us & will help & guide us. Ask him to help you to turn to him to know what is good & right to do in this world, especially when there are so many "things" around us that look good to us. Ask God to help you listen to him, & to remember that, unlike all the kingdoms of the world, his kingdom is forever.

(Elementary) Talk to God. Thank him that he is always with us, helping us & guiding us. Talk to him about how confusing it can be in the world (in school, on social media, on tv, etc) where it's hard to know which things are helpful to us & which things are hurtful for us. Ask God to give you wisdom to listen to & obey him when you're unsure. Ask him to help you remember that only his kingdom is forever.

