



## Purpose in my Heart

Pastor Daren L. Barron | March 24, 2024

### Daniel 1 Easy-to-Read Version

1 Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and surrounded it with his army. This happened during the third year that Jehoiakim was king of Judah. 2 The Lord allowed Nebuchadnezzar to defeat Jehoiakim king of Judah. Nebuchadnezzar took all the dishes and other things from God's Temple and carried them to Babylon. He put those things in the temple of his gods. 3 Then King Nebuchadnezzar ordered Ashpenaz, the man in charge of his officials, to bring some of the boys into the palace to train them. He was to include boys from among the Israelites, from important Judean families, and from the royal family of Judah. 4 King Nebuchadnezzar wanted only healthy boys who did not have any bruises, scars, or anything wrong with their bodies. He wanted handsome, smart young men who were able to learn things quickly and easily to serve in his palace. He told Ashpenaz to teach these young men the language and writings of the Chaldeans. 5 King Nebuchadnezzar gave the young men a certain amount of food and wine every day. This was the same kind of food that he ate. He wanted them to be trained for three years. After that they would become servants of the king of Babylon. 6 Among those young men were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah from the tribe of Judah. 7 Ashpenaz gave them Babylonian names. Daniel's new name was Belteshazzar, Hananiah's was Shadrach, Mishael's was Meshach, and Azariah's was Abednego. 8 Daniel did not want to eat the king's rich food and wine because it would make him unclean. So he asked Ashpenaz for permission not to make himself unclean in this way. 9 God caused Ashpenaz, the man in charge of the officials, to be kind and loyal to Daniel. 10 But Ashpenaz told Daniel, "I am afraid of my master, the king. He ordered me to give you this food and drink. If you don't eat this food, you will begin to look weak and sick. You will look worse than other young men your age. The king will see this, and he will become angry with me. He might cut off my head. And it would be your fault." 11 Then Daniel talked to the guard who had been put in charge of Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah by Ashpenaz. 12 He said, "Please give us this test for ten days: Don't give us anything but vegetables to eat and water to drink. 13 Then after ten days, compare us with the other young men who eat the king's food. See for yourself who looks healthier, and then decide how you want to treat us, your servants." 14 So the guard agreed to test Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah for ten days. 15 After ten days, Daniel and his friends looked healthier than all the young men who ate the king's food. 16 So the guard continued to take away the king's special food and wine and to give only vegetables to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. 17 God gave these four young men the wisdom and ability to learn many different kinds of writing and science. Daniel could also understand all kinds of visions and dreams. 18 At the end of the three years of training, Ashpenaz brought all the young men to King Nebuchadnezzar. 19 The king talked to them and found that none of the young men were as good as Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. So these four young men became the king's servants. 20 Every time the king asked them about something important, they showed great

wisdom and understanding. The king found they were ten times better than all the magicians and wise men in his kingdom. 21 So Daniel served the king until the first year that Cyrus was king.

### Purpose in my Heart

- We know nothing particular about Daniel's upbringing. However, when he was young, his Godly parents must have taught him to fear God and honor the Bible. It seems that he chose to put God first in his life. This was so deeply ingrained in his heart that even when as a teenager, when he was captured, made a eunuch and taken to Babylon as a slave, he remained faithful to God.
- We learn in verse 3, that Daniel was either of the king's seed or of the princes of Judah. Thus, he was of royal blood. Verse 4 explains that he had no physical blemishes, he was well favored, skilled in all wisdom, cunning in knowledge, understanding in science and capable of standing in the king's palace.
- Our text says, Daniel "purposed". This word means to set something in its place. Sometime in his youth, Daniel had made a firm decision to set loyalty and honor to God first in his heart above all else. **I want to show you five facts about Daniel's decision that can help you develop the same purpose in your heart.**
  - It was a Pre-Meditated Decision
  - It was a Biblical Decision
  - It was an Applied Decision
  - It was a Personal Decision
  - It was a Lived Decision

### It was a Pre-Meditated Decision

- Daniel purposed this decision in his heart. It was pre-meditated. It was not a feeling or emotion; it was a conviction deep within his heart. Daniel had settled his convictions in his heart years earlier. **He knew what God said, and he knew what he must do.**
- **See yourself in the future; using your faith, take action, make decisions today that will create what you see in your future.**
- The time to settle your convictions is before you face a temptation.
- If you wait until you face a difficult challenge to purpose in your heart, you will often make the wrong choice.
- Daniel thought this decision through before making it. He knew it was not a popular decision, even among his own people.
- David's prayer in Psalms 19:14, is one that Daniel may have prayed. "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer."

## It was a Biblical Decision

- Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself. How did he know what defiled a person? Perhaps in his youth, he heard the OT scrolls read at the temple. Perhaps his parents taught him the scriptures and posted the scriptures around his home. In some way, he knew God's Word and based his purpose on the Bible. This is when knowing the promises of God makes all of the difference!
- **When your decisions are based on what God's Word says, you create an opportunity for Faith to be realized.**
- We base some of the things we do or don't do on feelings, emotions, preferences, education, environment, our up-bringing or on general society. Those foundations may not be wrong, but they may not be righteous, or they might not be foundationally sound.
- Convictions based on the Bible are foundationally sound. As you study the Bible, take time to note things that God desires from you. Sometimes they will be in the form of commands. Other times they will appear as principles learned from how God responds to the obedience and failures of Bible characters.
- The food set before Daniel may have been skin fish, pork or food and drink first offered to idols. **Daniel knew what God expected from him**, and he set that expectation down in his heart as an unchanging rule. Perhaps he had memorized Psalm 119:11: "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee."
- What does God expect from you as a Christian? Here are a few ideas to get your thoughts going.
  - Love God, ourselves and others (Matthew 22:37-40)
  - Be led by Holy Spirit (Romans 8:14-17)
  - Live by faith (2 Corinthians 5:7)
  - Make God your priority, put Him first (Proverbs 3:6, 2 Corinthians 5:21)
  - Make Disciples, baptize in the Spirit, teach others the Word of God (Matthew 28:18-20)

## It was a Personal Decision

- **Daniel purposed in his heart that he...**Daniel made this decision himself.
- Remember, Daniel's parents were probably killed in the siege of Jerusalem when Daniel was taken captive.
- In Babylon, he had no parents, religious teachers, and only three Godly friends.
- No one was forcing or even urging Daniel to honor God.
- **When you truly trust God it is extremely personal, and so your decisions reflect that.**
- Daniel spoke up when he was ordered to eat and drink things that he knew God forbid.
- Speaking up took courage. It could have cost him his life.
- He was a slave. Slaves have no rights. He had many excuses. He would never see his homeland again.

- No one was around to make Daniel feel ashamed if he gave in. He was by himself in this decision.
- Despite all these excuses, Daniel made this personal decision in his heart. He would do right till the stars fell.
- No one can force you into purposing to put God first in your life. It was a voluntary personal choice.

### It was an Applied Decision

- He applied it to the portion of the king's meat, and the wine which he drank.
- **It's one thing to make a decision, it's another thing to consistently do a decision.**
- He applied the general commands and principles learned from the Bible to this specific situation.
- He did not look for loopholes.
- God wants us to be ready to apply our convictions to situations in everyday life. This includes things we say and do, places we attend or avoid, beliefs we accept or reject, etc.
- It is most difficult to apply our convictions when we are alone or opposed. With Daniel, his convictions were so settled in his mind and heart that he was compelled to make Godly applications.

### It was a Lived Decision

- In Daniel's situation, it would have been easy for him to do as many of the other Jewish captives did and just eat what the king placed before him. After all, he was a slave.
- Daniel purposed in his heart that he might not defile himself; which led him to request the same from the prince of the eunuchs.
- At the risk of losing his life, Daniel requested to be excused from eating and drinking things he knew God forbid him to partake in.
- His request took great courage and trust in God.
- **There is a peace in faith when your mind and heart is ingrafted in Christ; that takes a Want to, consistent Word and Wisdom/Understanding.**
- If you purpose to set God first in every area of your life, you too will be tested. Peers will test you. Lusts and pleasures will test you. The world, the flesh, and the devil will test you. Family may test you. Carnal Christians will test you. Employers may test you. The government may one day test you. God urges us to stand fast. 1 Cor 16:13 MSG: "Keep your eyes open, hold tight to your convictions, give it all you've got, be resolute, and love without stopping."
- As Christians, God challenges us to live our convictions. 1 Corinthians 15:58 MSG: "With all this going for us, my dear, dear friends, stand your ground. And don't hold back. Throw yourselves into the work of the Master, confident that nothing you do for him is a waste of time or effort."

## Conclusion

- Have you purposed in your heart to put God first in every area of your life? Have you established certain convictions based on the Bible regarding what you will and will not do? If you have not so purposed in your heart, you will give in when peer pressure, pleasures, temptations, and persecution get strong.
- Eph 6:13-18 MSG: **“Be prepared. You’re up against far more than you can handle on your own. Take all the help you can get, every weapon God has issued, so that when it’s all over but the shouting you’ll still be on your feet. Truth, righteousness, peace, faith, and salvation are more than words. Learn how to apply them. You’ll need them throughout your life. God’s Word is an indispensable weapon. In the same way, prayer is essential in this ongoing warfare. Pray hard and long. Pray for your brothers and sisters. Keep your eyes open. Keep each other’s spirits up so that no one falls behind or drops out.”**