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## In Babylon, Daniel 1:8-16

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### Introduction

- We're beginning a new series called "Courageous Faith" looking at the book of Daniel.

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### The World's Strategy

- Ned sacked Jerusalem, raided the temple, and took their best and brightest youth. He destroyed their present and future (Dan. 1:3-5).
  - The young men were trained and indoctrinated for three years to serve the king. The goal was to get them to talk like they talk, think like they think, and behave like Babylonians behaved.
    - The enemy continues to work this way today.
- **Point:** The enemy's strategy is to make you think, talk, and behave in any way that separates you from God.
  - He doesn't have to get you to commit any major sin if he can just get you to talk small steps away from God and into the world.
    - "You will say that these are very small sins; and doubtless, like all young tempters, you are anxious to be able to report spectacular wickedness. But do remember, the only thing that matters is the extent to which you separate the man from the Enemy. It does not matter how small the sins are provided that their cumulative effect is to edge the man away from the Light and out into the Nothing. Murder is no better than cards if cards can do the trick. Indeed the safest road to Hell is the gradual one – the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without signposts."<sup>1</sup>
  - It's impossible to be a "sort-of Christian" or "cultural Christian" and have any spiritual success.

- It'd be like saying can you workout once a year and be in good physical condition. Therefore, how do we respond?

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## The Courageous Response

- The chief official gives the young men new diets and new names (Dan. 1:6-7).
  - They are around 12-15 yrs old. Their old names were tied to the worship of Yahweh. Their new names were tie to the Babylonian gods.
  - Their food was the food prepared for the king. However, that food was dedicated to the pagan gods.
- **Point:** The courageous response to the world's strategy is faithful resistance.
- Daniel doesn't make a public protest. He respects the authority and proposes a plan.
  - Daniel and his friends stood out at every meal every single day.
    - You can stand out for the right things in the right way or you can stand out for the wrong things in the wrong way.
  - After the king's examination, he found no other student comparable to Daniel and his friends.
    - If they would have blended in, then no history would have been made.
  - We are called to take a stand for God.
    - "Put on the full armor of God so that you can *stand against the schemes of the devil*. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this darkness, against evil, spiritual forces in the heavens. 13 For this reason take up the full armor of God, so that you may be able to *resist* in the evil day, and having prepared everything, *to take your stand*." -- Ephesians 6:11-13
  - Craig Groschel, "If you are never standing out and you're always blending in, then you are not truly committed to follow Jesus."
- What is the key to their success? **Daniel 1:8**.
  - He made a pre-determined resolution to stand for God. He didn't wait until the food was before him. He might have rationalized it in the moment.

- If you want to stand out for God, so much of your success will be pre-determined by decisions you make ahead of time.
  - “I will always do...”
  - “I will never do...”
- Don’t wait until you are in the moment of temptation or situation.
  - Sexual purity in dating. Fidelity in marriage. Conversations at work. Being at church.
  - Sometimes your actions can make a statement without you intending to.

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## Conclusion

- We stand out because Jesus stood for us.
  - You cannot be a part-time Christian and stand out and have victory.

## End Notes

<sup>1</sup> C.S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters*. Harper San Francisco, 1996, p. 60-61.