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ALWAYS READY FOR LIFE'S MOMENTS

Daniel 1:8-21

Daniel was a boy of (high school age) when he was carried away in the Babylonian captivity and put into the paganism of the Babylonian court.

Here he demonstrated that it is possible with the help of God to live a pure, godly life in an impure (environment.)

His life was like a (tiny candle) which made light in this dark world.

By the grace of God he survived and actually thrived in the wicked court -- like a white water (lily) lifting its white face to the sun.

Here he grew in spiritual stature - reputation, as a living monument to God.

He demonstrated that the outcome of your life is determined by faith in God.

His (pattern) of character was not only for the high school age but for all ages up to 90 years and over.

At different levels his life was hazzarded for God.

(As) a teen-ager he cried to God, in middle life he took his stand for God, as an aged saint he triumphed.

Whatever your age is (tonight), or your circumstances you are unique and

needed in (God's plan). He says I have a place for you and I need the best qualified person, I have set eternity in your heart. Let me work through your life. This is your big moment. Daniel chose God above all else in the world!

Background - one brief word about the history surrounding this young man.

The Jewish King refused to serve Egypt and let Pharaoh pass through her dominion. A battle at (Megiddo) and the King slain.

Jehoiakim took the throne and Nebuchadnezzar marched against Egypt and defeated them. Thence he proceeded directly to Jerusalem, which he took after a short siege. Jehoiakim was captured and made a vassal of his empire.

He took the most valuable vessels that were in the temple of Jehovah and carried them away.

He ~~took~~ ^{also} served young men, belonging to the principal families of Jerusalem. That they might be hostages for the good behavior of the rest of their countrymen.

Jehoiakim - 3 years later rebelled and was slain during a siege and given an unhonored burial of an ass, according to the prophet Jeremiah.

Zedekiah took over in Jer. and he was stubborn. He was sieged, his children slain in his sight, then his eyes put out and led away blind to a foreign land. Another large group of citizens were removed from Jer.

Dan. was among those who were first removed and there were also 3 like minded young men with him of high integrity.

Dan. must have been of tender age; perhaps 14. It is supposed he lived the 70 years of the captivity in Babylon and the time of one of his last visions is reported to be 87 years.

Under training, instructed in all of the learning of the Chaldeans.

The finest and most capable of the young men were sent to the palace and were in school in the palace. Taught the Turkish language, clad neatly and well. They slept in dormitories, military discipline, customs -- trained for the high court offices.

This is the time to begin -- in youth - Daniel was ready with clean hands - a pure heart - a clear vision and a fixed purpose.

Daniel's character was already formed. He did not need to run back to the laboratory to make up deficiencies or repair flaws in his character.

Like Joseph, sold in slavery, he withstood the crucial testings in the courts of Pharaoh.

Daniel could be trusted everywhere.

Did Daniel know Joseph? He had the same lofty ideals.

Daniel was expected to conform. Yet he did not. How did he escape?

He was not exempt - subjected to testing.

(Early beginning) made possible the victory.

Some young people waste life in early years.

Turn to Lord - middle years. Try to make up - compensate.

Pillars of the church are those who largely depended on the Lord nearly almost all their lives. They entered his service in childhood or youth.

Growth in Christ enabled them to escape damaging sins and backslidings.

Trees that stand tall and straight are not undernourished or stunted in early growth.

Not redeem a tree.

Crops planted when the normal planting time has past cannot bring forth a full harvest. The first frost will ruin the plants.

An early beginning makes possible a happy journey. The one great sorrow of many people is that waste the first part of their lives.

Dan. devotion to the Lord was complete.

V. 8 - In His Heart - Not superficial or casual or tentative.

When the heart is right all else is right.

Out of the heart are the issues of life. Prov. 4:23.

As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he. Prov. 23:7.

The Lord looketh on the heart. I Sam. 16:7.

Purposing - Evidence of completeness.

Risks was involved.

No small matter that he would turn down the royal wine. He was in a selective group. His position was at stake. Life was in jeopardy.

Think of his decision in these terms.

1 - He dared to be different - if he had gone along with the Babylonians. He would have faded into their environment. Not even his name would be known to us today.

2 - If he had stood in his own strength, would have been quickly defeated.

Question - which cost more - to be a Christian or not to be a Christian?

The halfway Christian misses the best and does not even know what he has missed.

V. 21 - Dan devotion was life long -- "continued even unto the first years of King Cyrus."

We know this - approx. 90 years. - Cast into Den of Lions - 6:16. Dared to be different.

Look at his resources.

Every crisis - (found him ready) - moved to higher ground.

At least 5 times this was illustrated in his life.

I. CRISIS OF THE MENU

The king had a diet for these young men. Food was supplied from the royal table.

According to Jewish law only certain animals were accounted as clean. Meat sacrificed to idols was not be part of the diet.

Strong drink was off his list.

A matter of conscience and he was determined to follow his conviction.

Admire them - take into account their youth. Their condition as captives, and what might happen for disobedience.

Spoke well of home training - of character.

Might have been laughed at by fellow students - silly boys.

They felt nothing could make it necessary for them to sin. Convicted it would be wrong.

It is always right to do right. Away from home, at college, business, left to your own resources. Stand and appeal to God.

Value in temperance in eating and drinking.

Luxurious living out.

Use intoxicating drink as a constant beverage.

Some will say alcohol is no problem to me. The man who thinks he stands is the one who needs the most help.

Abstinence from strong drink is an insurance you will never become a drunkard.

They were in a city of greatness - capitol - Babylon.

Built in a square 14 miles on each side.

Massive walls - Chariots could drive abreast on top of it.

50 miles circumference - 100 gates of bronze.

River Euphrates flowed through the city.

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Palaces and hanging gardens;

The first crisis was at the table.

"Appeal to his appetite" - Eve in Garden!

Nebuchadnezzar had best wine, meats, and dainties, peacocks, phasants,
rare birds from India, fish from distant seas, swine fed on acorns.

Dan. far from home. Hebrew monarchy at an end. "In Babylon let us do
as Babylonians."

It was an invitation to ridicule.

What about his future.

Dan. decided when he was first confronted with the crisis.

Suppose they had talked it over - we better go along tonight -- saying
no, might get us into trouble.

Time to get the advantage of temptation is when it first appears - to
postpone is fatal.

Not hard for Dan. to say no - already committed himself to loyalty to
God.

Mark that he would not defile himself!

After all we are a long ways from Jerusalem, our opportunity is gone, lets do as Babylonians do, what difference does it make if I do get drunk.

V. 18 - Dan used the weapon in his hand and this was a great no

Many lives are stained and blasted for lack of a no.

What was the result?

Promoted to great honor - respect.

Corrupt wicked world high respect for man who takes a stand for principle.

What was the secret of the victory of Dan?

Must have been prayer - we know that when other crises arose he strengthened himself by prayer.

Dan made an (immediate) decision. If he had postponed he would have lost.

Christ - not debate with Satan - it is written "get thru behind me Satan".

II. SECOND CRISIS - Interpret Dream for Nebuchadnezzar.

Took courage.

Faithful to God's word. (Need go back, in order to begin right - Not go along with new ideas)

2:12 - N. was furious. Forgotten.

What God says about sin

Told him he driven out from his Kingdom to eat grass like oxen, that his body be wet with dew of heaven, his hair grow like eagles feathers, his nails like birds claws until he learned that the heavens do rule.

2:28 - Gave glory to God.

III. THIRD CRISIS - Interpret Handwriting for Belshazzar.

Not go with crowd - Sober - Banquet - Drunken Lords and Concubines.

Dan not shrink telling the doom that the hand had written.

5:5-9

10-16 - Dan equal to the situation.

IV. FOURTH CRISIS - King Darius made Demand - No prayer to God.

30 days - No prayer to God except the King.

Penalty - Den of Lions - Enemies.

6:26.

Morning - Noon - Evening. Prayed - Towards Jer.

God send Angels, closed mouth of Lions.

V. FIFTH CRISIS - King Cyrus

1:21

10:1 - Captives return to home land.

2 Chro. 36:22-23

Ezra 1:1-4

What did Cyrus know about the Lord God of Heaven?

Explanation - Dan. had stood so long and witnessed to Cyrus and influenced him. Everybody knew about Dan.

Dan. survived hardship, God was with him. Because he was always ready
for life's big moments when they came.

Early - Complete - Long Life.

The God of Dan still lives.

The rules of the road which guided Dan have not changed.

X Every sincere believer is a potential Dan.

No wonder youth are confused - such terms as relevance, involvement
~~the~~ dialog of we, do your thing, happenings -
Most questions youth has today are the same
"What wrong with that?"
whole pitch - "How worldly can I be & still be a Christian?"
Why doesn't someone Ask -
How much like Christ can I be & how little
like the world?

Whole approach is wrong -
off on wrong foot -

People who really want to follow Jesus aren't forever
asking "Why can't I drink the King's wine, dance, etc -

We must become positive & major on what
Christ wants done - Too many are out to hinder & not do!
Wesley revival people changed -