

Extraordinarily Normal 3: Daniel

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The life of Daniel teaches us that this world's system and its culture are not a playground, but a battleground.

Daniel teaches us to live in the world, without the world living in us.

Daniel shows us that we can live and work in a culture contrary to our values, but still keep our values, thrive, and be blessed by God!

Daniel was taken into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar.

Daniel 1:3-4 – ³ Then the king instructed Ashpenaz, the master of his eunuchs, to bring some of the children of Israel and some of the king's descendants and some of the nobles, ⁴ young men in whom there was no blemish, but good-looking, gifted in all wisdom, possessing knowledge and quick to understand, who had ability to serve in the king's palace, and whom **they might teach the language and literature of the Chaldeans.**

Daniel was given the name Belteshazzar.

Daniel was immersed into the culture of Babylon and he never let it govern his life.

We are called to do the same!

Romans 12:1-2 – *The Message* - So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him.

Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God.

You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its

level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.

Daniel 6:10 - Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days.

A Night in the Lion's Den

Daniel 6:18-27 – ¹⁸ Now the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; and no musicians were brought before him. Also his sleep went from him. ¹⁹ Then the king arose very early in the morning and went in haste to the den of lions. ²⁰ And when he came to the den, he cried out with a lamenting voice to Daniel. The king spoke, saying to Daniel, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?" ²¹ Then Daniel said to the king, "O king, live forever! ²² My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths, so that they have not hurt me, because I was found innocent before Him; and also, O king, I have done no wrong before you."

²³ Now the king was exceedingly glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no injury whatever was found on him, because he believed in his God. ²⁴ And the king gave the command, and they brought those men who had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions — them, their children, and their wives; and the lions overpowered them, and broke all their bones in pieces before they ever came to the bottom of the den. ²⁵ Then King Darius wrote: To all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you. ²⁶ I make a decree that in every dominion of my kingdom men must tremble and fear before the God of Daniel. For He is the living God, And steadfast forever; His kingdom is the one which shall not be destroyed, And His dominion shall endure to the end. ²⁷ He delivers and rescues, And He works signs and wonders. In heaven and on earth, Who has delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.

How do I live like Daniel?

How do I live for God without the culture of this world dominating my life?

How do I let God's ways for my marriage, family, job, money, relationships and dating govern my life?

John 15:5 - "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

The branch cannot boast of anything, as its life comes from the vine.

When you “boast in the branch,” you are trying “bear fruit” without being connected to the tree. The power is in the root, not in the branch. The branch is where the fruit appears.

No matter how hard this branch tries it cannot live without the root.

Don't think I am just the branch; I'm not important. No—you are where the fruit grows.

Abide in Him... bear much fruit.

Galatians 5:22-23 – ²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

Romans 12:2 - And do not be conformed to this world, don't let it squeeze you into it mold, but be **transformed by the renewing of your mind**, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.