

“Surviving a Declining Culture”

Daniel 1:1-9

Introduction

How do we avoid society’s deterioration and thrive amid a declining culture? Daniel demonstrates a crucial step: make a decision. The Bible says, “Daniel made up his mind” (Dan 1:8). We cannot expect to impact the secular society around us if we have not first decided to remain committed to God. This commitment, however, is not a walk in the park. The pressures that a secular society places on Christians are enormous. We may face these pressures in our education system, our government and even in the way we conceive our individual identity. That is why the decision to follow the Lord is so crucial. If we allow ourselves to drift from God, we can expect to face the negative influences of a culture that has abandoned God without His strength and help.

The proper response to cultural decline demands that we focus on these three things. First, our relationship with God must be our top priority. Only divine intervention can reverse cultural decay. Therefore, we need to be connected to God to have His favor. When God gives us His favor, He also gives us opportunities to benefit the culture. Second, Scripture shows us where we draw the line between what we can and cannot do. Society will try to secularize us and wear us down, eroding our principles. Relying on Scripture gives us the wisdom we need to combat the social pressure that tries to draw us away from God. Third, we must pursue discipleship. We should be disciples of the Lord who are unapologetic about following Him and reject the idolatry our culture finds acceptable.

Our culture needs disciples who are passionate about God if we are to have any hope of surviving and reversing its decline. Renew your passion for God and be ready to see what He will do.

Getting Started

1. What resonated with you the most in this week’s message?
2. What events in recent history can you think of where we have seen a country or a group of people turn away from God? What was the aftermath?

Let’s Get Personal

1. In what ways has the secularization of our culture affected how you think, act and live?
2. Have you ever felt convicted because you had an opportunity to share God’s perspective on a matter, but you caved to social pressure and stayed silent?
3. Take a look at Daniel 1:8-9. Why did Daniel receive God’s favor? What are the steps required for us to experience God’s favor?

Take the Next Step

1. In what areas of your life do you need to commit wholeheartedly to God? Have you lost your fire for God in any of those areas? What can you do to regain that fire?
 2. Think of two or three people that you can influence and encourage this week to help them begin to reignite change in the culture around them. In what ways can you inspire them to stand for God in the middle of a secular and sinking society?
 3. Think of the public arenas where believers need to proclaim our faith to help prevent cultural decline and discuss with your group. Reflect on a passage of Scripture that will encourage you and your group to proclaim your faith boldly in these arenas and commit that passage to memory this week.
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4. Want to go deeper? Take time to look at the following passages: Daniel 1:8-21; 3:1-30; 6:1-28; Jeremiah 29:7; 2 Chronicles 7:12-15; 15:3-6.

Renew Your Mind

“But Daniel made up his mind that he would not defile himself with the king’s choice food or with the wine which he drank; so he sought permission from the commander of the officials that he might not defile himself.”

Daniel 1:8
