

**AGAPE HOUSE OF WORSHIP
WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY**

Topic: Our convictions, not our circumstances, define who we are.
Text: Daniel 1:3-13,17-19 (CSB)

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Date: December 6th 2023

Introduction:

We have all assimilated to some degree the culture we live in. Our understanding, customs, and traditions all grow out of our culture. That's not necessarily bad, but it becomes an issue when those customs and practices conflict with the biblical standards to which God calls us. In the book of Daniel, we find a man who had convictions and lived out those convictions in a culture that called for a different standard.

OPENING QUESTION: How has our culture affected us personally?

1 Samuel 16:7 *“The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”*

Daniel 1:3-7

3 The king ordered Ashpenaz, his chief eunuch, to bring some of the Israelites from the royal family and from the nobility—4 young men without any physical defect, good-looking, suitable for instruction in all wisdom, knowledgeable, perceptive, and capable of serving in the king's palace. He was to teach them the Chaldean language and literature. 5 The king assigned them daily provisions from the royal food and from the wine that he drank. They were to be trained for three years, and at the end of that time they were to attend the king. 6 Among them, from the Judahites, were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. 7 The chief eunuch gave them names; he gave the name Belteshazzar to Daniel, Shadrach to Hananiah, Meshach to Mishael, and Abednego to Azariah.

Notes: The world expects us to conform to its expectations.

1. Worldly expectations come with a false sense of enticement and esteem (verse 5).
2. Worldly expectations can change our identity.
3. Worldly expectations in Daniel's time are similar to expectations in today's culture. What are some of those expectations?

Question – Discuss some practices in our culture that are kind of subtle and have pagan roots?

Daniel 1:8-13

8 Daniel determined that he would not defile himself with the king's food or with the wine he drank. So he asked permission from the chief eunuch not to defile himself. 9 God had granted Daniel kindness and compassion from the chief eunuch, 10 yet he said to Daniel, “I fear my lord the king, who assigned your food and drink. What if he sees your faces looking thinner than the other young men your age? You would endanger my life with the king.” 11 So Daniel said to the guard whom the chief eunuch had assigned to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, 12 “Please test your servants for ten days. Let us be given vegetables to eat and water to drink. 13

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Then examine our appearance and the appearance of the young men who are eating the king's food, and deal with your servants based on what you see."

Notes: Draw the line where you will not compromise.

1. God's faithful should be able to recognize where culture stands at odds with God's standards.
 - a. "The food might be fit for a king, but in Daniel's judgment it was not fit for a servant of the King of kings." (*unknown*)
2. God's faithful should be able to take a stand while seeking to maintain peace with others.
3. God's faithful should be willing to take a risk in order to live holy lives.
 - a. What were the risks of Daniel's plan had they not succeeded?
 - b. Was Daniel defiant or calm, cool and collected? How would you have handled this situation?

Daniel 1:17-19

17 God gave these four young men knowledge and understanding in every kind of literature and wisdom. Daniel also understood visions and dreams of every kind. 18 At the end of the time that the king had said to present them, the chief eunuch presented them to Nebuchadnezzar. 19 The king interviewed them, and among all of them, no one was found equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. So, they began to attend the king.

Notes: Serve and stand for the Lord no matter what the culture does.

1. God's blessings flow to those who walk in obedience to Him.
 - a. We abound in knowledge, skills, discernment, and wisdom when we put our trust in God.
2. God's faithful can stand with confidence before anyone.
 - a. God equips those who are faithful to Him with what they need to serve Him.
 - b. God will honor those who choose to live with uncompromising convictions of faith in Him.
 - c. We can be involved in the culture around us in a godly way without being absorbed by it.

How do we look to heaven while living on earth? 2 Corinthians 5:1-10

Notes:

1. **As Christians, there are two major things we face daily, living in this world while yearning for more than this world.**
2. **It's amazing that God doesn't ask us to make the decision about when to go to heaven, He decides on when its time. Would anyone rather have it any other way?**
3. **We are in this world but not of this world, we are missionaries on earth.**

Rom 12:2 NLT, Phil 1:21-26, Col 3:2

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Credits: Dr. Ron Brown writer of Advanced Bible Study.