

Questions for reflection, application, and discussion

1. As our culture becomes more secular, it is easy for Christians to become discouraged and even defeated, concluding that evil is winning, and God and his truth have been defeated.
  - a. Have you ever felt this? What are the dangers of believing this to be true?
  - b. Daniel and his friends clearly had reason to feel this to be true. What is the significance of the statement in Daniel 1:2 that, "*The Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with some of the vessels of the house of God?*"
  - c. How can we be reminded of God's sovereign control and divine purpose in our time, even as it often feels as if evil is winning?
2. Most historians agree that Daniel and his friends were likely taken into captivity when they were between 13 to 15 years old. Understanding that, what does their knowledge of and conviction in God's word suggest about how they were taught and prepared by their parents?
  - a. What does their knowledge and their strength of conviction suggest about how their parents raised them?
  - b. If you have children or grandchildren, what are you doing to raise them with a foundation of faith that will enable them to stand strong in a hostile culture? How well prepared are your children now? What else should you do to prepare them?
  - c. Read Deuteronomy 6:4-9. What is this passage calling you to do to pass on your faith to your children?
3. Daniel 1:3-7 records how The Babylonians tried to indoctrinate Daniel and his friends into the philosophies and values of their culture. What can we learn from this story to understand and defend ourselves against our culture's efforts to indoctrinate us into its philosophies and values?
  - a. Which of the strategies used by Babylon, and described in verses 3-7 do you see our culture using most effectively today?
  - b. Which of these strategies are you most susceptible to? How are you and/or can you defend yourself against this strategy?
4. Daniel and his three friends all had names that included the name of God, identifying them as people of God.
  - a. What was the significance of their names?
  - b. How can and should we do as parents and grandparents to give our kids a name and identity that roots them in a God-defined identity?
  - c. To what degree do you understand your name and identity as a follower of Christ?
5. While Daniel said no to the king's food, he did not say no to the king's education or the king's job. Even though he refused to compromise, he at the same time found great success and was promoted in the king's Court.
  - a. As followers of Christ, how can we know what we should say no to, and what we should participate in? How do we live in the world without being of the world?
  - b. How do you understand Daniels success in the secular court of Nebuchadnezzar while refusing to compromise his faith? What lessons can we learn from his example?