

A Mighty Redwood/ Daniel – Stability of Mind

STAYING TRUE WHEN IT MATTERS MOST

Lesson 12

12/6/15

A Mighty Redwood knows its purpose and does not waiver in growing straight and tall.

Principle: *“Convictions – the handful of truths we would die for – are the hidden foundation on which all of our lives rest. When they are tested, then it will be demonstrated what, and how much, we believe.”- Fran Sciacca*

“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.” – Martin Luther King, Jr.

Bible Character: DANIEL

Background: When Nebuchadnezzar conquered the region of Jerusalem Daniel was among the promising young men he deported to Babylon. Just a teenager, God picked him for a leading role in the history of His people.

Daniel’s life demonstrates one of the clearest examples in the bible of what **solid convictions** really consist of, and the powerful ways they find expression in the lives of those who love God. His life also shows us that what is most precious to God is very costly to us. (Taken from *To Stand and Not Be Moved* by Fran Sciacca.)

Scripture: Daniel 1, 3, 6 (NIV, selected verses)

- 1:4 young men without any physical defect, handsome, showing aptitude for every kind of learning, well informed, quick to understand, and qualified to serve in the king's palace. He was to teach them the language and literature of the Babylonians.
- 8 But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine.....
- 17 To these four young men God gave knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning. And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds.
- 3:16 Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter.
- 17 If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king.
- 18 But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up."
- 28 Then Nebuchadnezzar said, "Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants! They trusted in him and defied the king's command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God.
- 6: 3 Now Daniel so distinguished himself among the administrators and the satraps by his exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom.
- 4 At this, the administrators and the satraps tried to find grounds for charges against Daniel in his conduct of government affairs, but they were unable to do so. They could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent.
- 5 Then these men said, "We will not find any ground of accusation against this Daniel unless we find it against him with regard to the law of his God."
- 10 Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before.
- 11 Then these men went as a group and found Daniel praying and asking God for help.
- 16 Then the king gave orders, and Daniel was brought in and cast into the lions' den. The king spoke and said to Daniel, "Your God whom you constantly serve will Himself deliver you."
- 22 My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his sight. Nor have I ever done any wrong before you, O king."
- 23 The king was overjoyed and gave orders to lift Daniel out of the den. And when Daniel was lifted from the den, no wound was found on him, because he had trusted in his God.

Examination: *Integrity* doesn't just happen. It is cultivated, planned, and performed until it becomes ingrained in a person's nature. Is it yours? Are you modeling it to your children and others?

Resolution

What does resolution mean? When I attend planning commission meetings my goal is for them to pass a resolution with clear language in support of the project I represent. Approval of the resolution grants permission to proceed with the project.

Possibly the clearest statement about the foundation of Daniel's life that never weakened during his trial is in Daniel 1:8, "...*Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine...*" His resolution contained specific things that he would not do. He had clarity of thought; God's standards were prominent in his mind. He determined to turn away from anything that would compromise God's plan for him.

► *Have you resolved to "put the Lord continually before you" (Ps. 16:8)? Make this resolution today!*

Reputation

Daniel was in his eighties by the time Darius became king (5:30-31). There is a richness of insight in Daniel 6 showing the nature of his heart and life. There are two striking features of Daniel's reputation:

Daniel 6:3-4 ³ Then this Daniel began distinguishing himself among the commissioners and satraps because **he possessed an extraordinary spirit**, and the king planned to appoint him over the entire kingdom.⁴ Then the commissioners and satraps began trying to find a ground of accusation against Daniel in regard to government affairs; but they could find no ground of accusation or evidence of corruption, inasmuch as he was faithful, and **no negligence or corruption** was to be found in him.

Daniel 6:5, 16 ⁵ Then these men said, "We will **not find any ground of accusation against this Daniel** unless we find it against him with regard to the law of his God."
¹⁶ Then the king gave orders, and Daniel was brought in and cast into the lions' den. The king spoke and said to Daniel, "**Your God whom you constantly serve** will Himself deliver you."

► *What principles can you see in this incident about being a person of conviction with a godly reputation?*

Integrity

The last phrase of Daniel 6:10 reveals a key factor in his integrity. "*Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before.*" Spiritual integrity is thus established.

Small Group Discussion

1. Single Minded: Perhaps being close-minded (not compromising) can be a good thing sometimes.

- What was David's "one thought"? (see Psalm 27:4)
- What do you think was Daniel's "one thought"?
- Do you have "one thought"? If so, what?

2. Word Study

Commitment

Normally verbal. It's something we say or affirm. We tend to merely *talk* about our commitments.

Conviction

It tends to be non-verbal and motivational. It causes us to act! We tend to *live out our lives* by our convictions.

- What commitment have you made in the past month that has been "merely talk"? What would it take to turn this into a conviction?
- Select one conviction that you intend to see your children, grandchildren or others adopt as their own. What is one thing that comes to mind that you can do to improve the quality of your teaching of this conviction to them?

Be a Mighty Redwood!
Provide shelter for many, beginning with your family members.