



January 19-20, 2021

**Series:** BASIC

**Message:** Daniel

**Teacher:** Michael Farrell

**The Main Thing:** *Like Daniel, will you choose ordinary or extraordinary?*

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS:

**Icebreaker:** Do you know what your name means?

**Have you felt at all like Daniel lately, that everything you once knew has been stripped away?**

If so, how are you dealing with it? What is keeping you strong right now?  
What/who do you tend to cling to when life gets hard?

**What are some of the reasons Daniel didn't eat the King's food?**

Which one do you think was most important?

**God wasn't trying to restrict their behavior, He was trying to protect them.**

Have you ever questioned rules or restrictions in your life?  
What do you think the real reason for them is?  
What are some "rules" God has given us to keep us safe/protect us?

**God brings people into our lives to help just when we need it.**

Who have some of those people been for you?

**Daniel and his friends decided to be obedient.**

What things will you choose to be "heroically obedient" in?  
Are your best friends people who spur you on towards God?  
Or are they people who pull you away from Him?

**Do you ever sacrifice your holiness so that friends will accept you?**

In what area do you need to risk something in order to share your faith with others?

**What are some specific ways you can "set your heart on things above" this week?**

**Scriptures Referenced:** Daniel 1; Colossians 3:1-2; Philippians 2:8; Hebrews 12:2

**Bible Background Notes:** Daniel 1

1:1 Nebuchadnezzar (605-562 B.C.) was the second ruler of the Chaldean kingdom in Babylon. He reigned for 43 years, rebuilding Babylon after it declared independence from Assyria. He was known as a great builder.

1:2 The year was 606-605 B.C. Judah was exiled to Babylonia for disobeying God's word regarding covenant-keeping, the sabbath years, and idolatry.

1:4-5 The training the young men would receive would prepare them for royal service, serving members of the royal household, or scholarly experts serving the king. One person could be trained in multiple disciplines. They picked the best and brightest of the next generation to train to benefit them rather than their enemies. The traditional language of Babylon was Akkadian, a complex language written with cuneiform symbols, requiring special training. Aramaic was also used for everyday communications and was easier to learn. Training in literature may have been in a wide range of disciplines or in the special literature used by the diviners, such as dreams or astronomical observations.

Receiving rations from the king's table meant they were dependents of the state. Royal food was sent by the king to friends of the crown. It was most likely a baked bread from barley and wheat, along with wine.

Training was for 3 years and included language, specialized literature, math and music.

1:7 "To change someone's name is to exercise authority over them and their destiny." The goal was assimilation into the Babylonian culture, so that name would be appropriate. Names often made statements about deity, so these names would subtly acknowledge the Babylonian gods.

1:8 Sharing the king's food implied allegiance to the king. Jewish laws rendered meat unclean, but did not prohibit wine. The finest meats and wine would have come from temples, where they had been offered to idols. Ceremonially unclean animals were used and were not killed or prepared according to Jewish regulations. "At this point, the Babylonian government is exercising control over every aspect of their lives. They have little means to resist the forces of assimilation that are controlling them. They seize on one of the few areas where they can still exercise choice as an opportunity to preserve their distinct identity." Daniel demonstrated the courage of his convictions.

1:12 "Daniel used good judgment by offering an alternative instead of rebelling."

1:17 Dreams were believed to be important for revealing the work of the gods or communications from the gods. Sometimes information was sought through dreams. Dream interpreters were included among their court advisors. Daniel and his friends mastered the Babylonian literature on astrology and divination by dreams, although this pagan literature would prove worthless. Only by God's special revelation would Daniel interpret correctly. (Daniel 2:17-28)

*Sources: The IVP Bible Background Commentary OT; NIV Study Bible*