

## Living for God in the Midst of Difficult Times    The Book of Daniel

**Proverbs 22:1 – “A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, and favor is better than silver or gold.”**

Most people today are searching for riches, fame, glory, comfort, luxury, etc.

What about us? **How many of us would be content if all we had was the legacy of a good name,** and the experience of God’s favor in our lives?

**“Daniel” is a good name!** Daniel left behind a great legacy of faith! & He lived with God’s favor on his life, despite living through very difficult times!

What’s in a name? Daniel had 2 names, both revealing different extremes: “Daniel” – His Hebrew birth name meant **“God is my judge!”** “Belteshazzar” – His given Babylonian name meant “the favored of Ba’al!”

One name speaks of trusting in Yahweh alone, submitting oneself under His rule & reign, obeying His commands, and living for His glory!

The other name speaks of forsaking Yahweh, conforming to the ways of the culture, embracing another god as sovereign, and living for another’s glory!

**Daniel had the choice to be a “Daniel” or a “Belteshazzar”!** So do we!

**Some examples in Daniel of living within the tension of these two names:**

- **If God commanded us to eat vegetables & drink water, while living in a meat-eating and wine drinking world, would we do it? Daniel 1:8-9**

God gave Daniel & his friends a specific diet to follow, but the king of Babylon offered them a whole different menu! What would we do?

- **If God put us in a position that we didn’t want to be in, would we serve well & give it our best, or would we try to force change? Daniel 2:17-19**

God put Daniel in the service of the pagan king who brought destruction upon God’s people, yet Daniel served him well! Would we do the same?

- **If living God’s way brought with it harsh consequences, would we still be willing to put God first? Daniel 3:4-6**

Shadrach, Meshach, & Abednego refused to bow before the statue of

Nebuchadnezzar, and Daniel refused to stop praying to his God – both actions brought about a death sentence! Would we risk as much?

- **If our enemy suffered humiliation, how would we respond? Daniel 4:28-33**

Daniel witnessed this in Nebuchadnezzar, yet he continued to serve him

- **If that same enemy became a friend of God, would we celebrate? 4:34-37**

Nebuchadnezzar’s health gets restored & he turns to the God of Daniel.

- **Living rightly will at times lead to false accusations, or intentional opposition. Is it worth it when a target gets placed upon our backs?**

Daniel was placed in a leadership role & those under him set out to destroy him. **Daniel’s faith provided the ammunition! Daniel 6:1-16**

Living God’s way may not be “living the dream”, unless the dream is to have a good name, & to live with favor in the sight of God! What’s your dream?

Daniel’s choice to be a “Daniel” resulted in experiencing miraculous displays of God’s goodness, protection, and faithfulness in his life! Let us not rob ourselves from seeing God “show up & show off” in similar ways by the choices we make!

There will be times in the Christian life when we must suffer, wait, trust, obey, seek His Kingdom... But God will be with us just as He was with Daniel!

**“Sometimes the worst turmoil opens the door to the richest gift!”** We see this in this book when the biographical information turns to future prophecy

**God’s favor in Daniel’s life didn’t stop with shutting the mouths of lions, but in pointing him to the future glory of God’s people! Daniel 7:13-14**

-The arrival of the Messiah – Jesus’s first coming to establish a new Kingdom  
-The return of the Messiah at the end of days in glory - To bring it to completion

What can help us live for God, even in the midst of difficult times, until that glorious day of Christ’s return comes? The same things that helped Daniel!

- **Living into our name!** As followers of Jesus, we too have a name!
- **Prayer!** It helps shift our perspective from fear to faith!
- **Good friends** Who is our Shadrach, Meshach, & Abednego?

A good name is better than riches, God’s favor is better than silver & gold!

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