

UPRIGHTNESS

PROVERBS 28:6 & DANIEL 1:1-9

Text: Proverbs 28:6

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⁶ Better *is* the poor that walketh in his uprightness, than *he that is* perverse *in his* ways, though he *be* rich.

Introduction:

This word uprightness mean: integrity, complete, mature.

I would like for us to look at an example of one who exemplified this in his life.

Turn to Daniel 1

Read Daniel 1:1-9

When we open our Bibles to the book of Daniel, immediately our thoughts turn to great prophetic truths. Yes, the book of Daniel in the Old Testament is equivalent to the book of Revelation in the New Testament, full of prophetic truths. But there is also some practical truth in the book of Daniel that teaches us some valuable lessons for the hour in which we live.

Daniel was a young man that grew up in a Judeo culture of traditional family values. Then he unexpectedly found himself in a culture that did not share his religious convictions and moral values, a culture that was foreign to everything he had known.

The reason for this was the Babylonian captivity. The nation of Judah was given into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian army, because of their disobedience to God. Two sins caused Judah to be carried away into captivity...

- Disobedience to the Word of God

God told the people to give the land a Sabbath rest every 70 years. In that year they were not to cultivate the land. But they disregarded God's word and for 490 years the land had no Sabbath rest.

- Departure from the Worship of God

The Jews found a strong fascination with the idols of the pagan nations around them. They begin to worship strange gods and idols.

For Daniel his value system, his moral compass, his uprightness was challenged at every turn.

Like Daniel we too find ourselves in a world that is rebelling against the Christians culture that this country was founded as.

What can we learn from this example, how can we remain upright?

Notice:

1. THE CRISIS HE FACED (VS. 4-7)

Daniel 1:3-7

³ And the king spake unto Ashpenaz the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring *certain* of the children of Israel, and of the king's seed, and of the princes; ⁴ Children in whom *was* no blemish, but well favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as *had* ability in them to stand in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans. ⁵ And the king appointed them a daily provision of the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank: so nourishing them three years, that at the end thereof they might stand before the king. ⁶ Now among these were of the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: ⁷ Unto whom the prince of the eunuchs gave names: for he gave unto Daniel *the name* of Belteshazzar; and to Hananiah, of Shadrach; and to Mishael, of Meshach; and to Azariah, of Abednego.

A. A Challenge to Change

- Change their learning (vs. 4)
- Change their language (vs. 4)

- Change their lifestyle (vs. 5)
- Change their loyalty (vs. 7)

Note the change of their names:

Daniel = God is my judge – Belteshazzer = Favored by or Protected by Bel

Hannaniah = Gift of God – Shadrach = Under the Command of Aku, the Babylonian Moon god

Mishael = Who is God – Meshach = Who is like Aku, the Babylonian god

Azariah = One the Lord helps – Abednego = servant of Nebo the son of Baal

The truth is we too face the same challenges today.

- There is an asserted effort to change our learning.

Illustration:

Teaching history, teaching science, lack of teaching morals and manners

- There is an asserted effort to change our language.

Illustration:

We have ceased from using the words of the Bible to soften the impact of words.

Drunkard to Alcoholic

Sodomite to Gay

Adultery to an Affair

- There is an asserted effort to change our lifestyle.
- There is an asserted effort to change our loyalty.

2. THE COMMITMENT HE MADE (VS. 8)

Daniel 1:8

⁸ But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.

Life is a series of decisions. What we are today is the result of decisions we made in the past. What we will be tomorrow depends upon the decisions we make today. Many of our major decisions are made while we are young.

A. Making a Commitment Involves a Decision

“Daniel purposed”

All real decisions are heart decisions.

Proverbs 4:23

²³ Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it *are* the issues of life.

The Babylonians could change a lot of things about Daniels life. They could change his homeland, and even his name, but they could not change his heart.

We need to resolve to live by God’s Principles

We need to be committed to God’s Plan

B. Making a Commitment Involves Drawing a Line

The boundaries of this line, where this line should be drawn should be before temptation to compromise comes. It is easier to resist temptation, if you have thought through your convictions before temptation arrives.

- Daniel had already settled in his heart to be faithful to the laws of God before he was faced with the Kings meat and the Kings wine

- We will find ourselves compromising if we have not already decided to draw the line.
- Before such temptations to compromise comes, decide on your convictions...based upon the Word of God...set your boundaries, draw your lines...then you are ready to say no!

We need a “Heart the is Purposed”

3. THE COMPANION HE FOUND (vs. 9)

Daniel 1:9

⁹ Now God had brought Daniel into favour and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs.

“Now God...”

God had moved with an unseen hand to change the heart of the Babylonian official.

Remember:

“When we stand for God ... God stands with and for us.”

When we take a stand for God, we can trust Him to protect us in the ways we may not be able to see!

Close:

Proverbs 28:6

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Daniel 1:8

⁸ But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.

Walking upright is purposed in our hearts.

Have we purposed in our hearts?

Are we walking upright?