



Stay Alert to Self-Diminishing Compromises - Daniel

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Introduction:

Over the past several weeks we have been learning from men and women in the Bible how to do more than survive spiritually, but how to thrive. We looked at Moses, Esther, Nehemiah, Joseph, and today we are going to look at Daniel.

The book that bears his name is filled with examples of thriving. There is the opportunity to compromise when it came to worship, opportunity to compromise when it came to prayer. The lesson we want to learn this morning is that refusing to compromise can help us to thrive spiritually.

The background to Daniel's story is that King Nebuchadnezzar had gone into Jerusalem and captured the city. In doing that, he took some of the young Hebrew men to be trained and educated and then after 3 years to serve him in his administration.

In the book of Daniel, we read of at least two times when Daniel refused to compromise his convictions, and refused to take the easy, safe and comfortable road.

Merriam Webster gives us this definition of compromise. **“a concession to something derogatory or prejudicial”**

“Compromise is simply changing the question to fit the answer.”
Merrit Malloy, *Things I Meant to Say to You When We Were Old*.

Compromise will bring you down, and giving into it will weaken you spiritually.

I. If we are going to thrive it means we cannot compromise when it comes to issues of faith

Daniel and three other Hebrew men were to have a portion of food and wine from the king's table every day. Daniel had a standard, there was a principle here that he was willing to live and die for. We read these words in Daniel 1: 8 – **Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself in this way.**

Was the food bad? No. Would God have understood the position he and his friends were in if he ate the

food and drank the wine. I think so. Remember these men were prisoners, aliens in a foreign place. They were given the things to eat and drink of that culture. **BUT DANIEL WOULD NOT COMPROMISE.** He had determined ahead of time what he would do if the situation ever came his way, and he stood on his determination not to defile himself.

I think there are times we would be stronger and thrive more in our walk with God, if we would resolve and settle issues about things that are questionable coming into our lives, before they come.

The point was not really an issue of eating meat and drinking wine, it was an issue of faith. Daniel could have had that food, but he would have been compromising what he had held to and eating food that had been offered to idols. God was the one who had made the food in the first place. This food was prepared, then offered to idols and then served to Daniel and his friends. Daniel was not about to partake in anything that remotely looked like he was involved in worshipping or giving thanks to false gods.

There are standards in God's word. We need to remind ourselves to not compromise. Remember we are aliens here and we are also God's holy people. Just because everyone else is doing something doesn't mean it's right. What does God's word have to say about it, and what have I resolved to do about living my life in submission to God's word? That should be our standard. That was exactly where Daniel was in making his choices and living his life.

Daniel asked to be put on a diet of vegetables and see if after 10 days he and his other 3 Hebrew friends were not healthier than those who had eaten the meat and drunk the wine offered to idols.

So it was agreed that this would happen, and after 10 days, Daniel and these other three Hebrew men, were healthier and stronger looking than those who had eaten the food and drunk the wine offered to idols.

There was blessing that God poured out on these men as well and they thrived even though they were aliens in a foreign culture. At the end of chapter 1 we see that there was none equal to these four Hebrew men. They were 10 times better than the magicians, and enchanters in the whole kingdom.

Our willingness to not compromise will give opportunity for God to validate the stand we take to those around us who have no belief or no convictions. People notice when we are different and as Christians, there should be some things that set us apart from those who do not claim to follow Christ. Our testimony will help us to thrive in the places where we live, work and learn. Often the temptation to compromise comes in subtle ways that seem insignificant or small at the time. They would seem to be things that wouldn't really matter. They may not be big huge things at all.

Daniel faced another challenge and an opportunity to compromise when it came to prayer.

Several years after their capture, Daniel was in a position of authority in the kingdom. He had already been faithful and unwilling to compromise when it came to eating meat and drinking wine offered to idols.

This time there had been a change in leadership in the kingdom. King Belshazzar had been killed and Darius took over the kingdom. He was going to appoint three men, one of them Daniel, to be a part of the leadership team to rule with him. Daniel had so distinguished himself as someone who was above all the other leaders in the kingdom that King Darius was going to put him over the entire kingdom.

The other leaders in the kingdom worked hard trying to find something out of order in Daniel's life. Let me tell you friends, that not giving in to compromise will strengthen you in many areas of your life.

Daniel was a man of integrity. These leaders were looking to find some dirt, some way to smear Daniel's reputation. They wanted to catch Daniel in some wrong doing so he would not get the job. God's word indicates they could find nothing to accuse him of. He was trustworthy, not corrupt nor negligent.

These men determined that they would never find anything to base any charges against Daniel, unless it had something to do with the law of his God.

So they devised a plan to use his convictions to trap him. If he gave into the law that was written, he compromised his convictions and would jeopardize his relationship with the God he loved and who had blessed him with wisdom and looked after him. If he held to his convictions and maintained his relationship with God, he went against the law the king had signed and thereby he would face certain death. It appeared to be a no-win situation.

Ever face a no-win situation? That is where no matter what you do or anybody else does, no one wins. It is a dreadful place to be.

So the scriptures tell us that when Daniel learned about this decree, he did not change anything about prayer. He did not waver, He did not close his windows, and he did not falter. He went three times a day and continued to pray with his windows open. These men were out to get Daniel. They knew his pattern, they knew his devotion, they knew where he

lived. They went spying on him and found out that Daniel was not about to compromise, law or not. Off to the king they went. Oh king – remember the law you signed? Well guess what? Daniel is breaking the law. He ignores what you have put into an edict, and he is praying 3 times a day to his god. We just wanted to help you out oh king, and remind you that you signed a law. Are you going to let him get away with breaking the law? You can't change the law. Daniel has to be fed to the lions.

The king was distraught. He pondered to see if there wasn't some way he could get past this and save Daniel's hide. Finally the group came back to the king and pressured him to do the inevitable, and throw Daniel into the lion's den.

The words of the king to Daniel as he is thrown into the lion's den are very enlightening. **“May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you.”** It is obvious from this statement people could see Daniel's unwillingness to compromise, and his relationship with God was more important than compromise. It's obvious that there was a consistency that could be seen daily in that relationship.

II. If we are going to thrive, it takes a consistency in our relationship with God

Daniel's relationship with God was continual. It's also obvious from this statement that there was some expectation that God would possibly spare Daniel. The king and others had seen his uncompromising stand.

It was obvious by the power of the Holy Spirit; God had given Daniel wisdom and the ability to interpret dreams. Remember that back in the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit had not yet been given because Jesus hadn't come nor had He been glorified.

Conclusion:

Just like Daniel we have opportunities as we travel in an alien place, to let the things we believe, and the relationship we enjoy with Almighty God, be a shining example to those around us. In this regard, we can thrive and not just survive.

As we conclude today, we have opportunity to let those around us know of God's love. In your bulletin today, you should find an invitation for people to come see and hear our musical “THE CROSS”. Please take that and give it or send it to someone that God puts in your heart who could use the message of the cross.

We have a responsive reading that I invite you to join me in this morning as we conclude.

If Daniel could resist compromising his faith that impacted his relationship with God without the fullness of the Holy Spirit, we certainly should be able to resist compromising and thrive in our walk with God now that the Holy Spirit has been poured out on all who will ask and seek for His power. We need His help because we live in an alien world.

God was more powerful than the situation. God turned this no-win situation in to a win-win situation. Daniel's life was saved. The king acknowledged the Almighty, and the people were told that Daniel's God was the true God.

God came through. He did the impossible. Daniel did his part of not compromising when it came to his faith, relationship and prayer. And God did His part. Daniel thrived and did more than survive.

The king issued a decree to the whole nation that Daniel's God was to be honored and feared and revered. Here are his words from Daniel 6:26-27.

“For He is the living God and he endures forever; His kingdom will not be destroyed, his dominion will never end. He rescues and he saves, he performs signs and wonders in the heavens and on the earth.”

Because of one man being unwilling to compromise, the whole nation saw God's power at work, and had opportunity to compare the false idols they worshipped with the true and living God.

Isn't that part of what it means to thrive spiritually? For others around us to see that the God we serve and love, is a God of power and might, and is alive and reigns supreme?

LEADER: As we conclude our worship this morning, realize that outside these doors are people our Lord loves, and desires to become part of this wonderful family.

PEOPLE: Lord, help us realize these people matter to you!

LEADER: Though we are free, we make ourselves slaves to those whom you love.

PEOPLE: Lord, help us to become all things to all people so that by all possible means others will come to know you as we do.

LEADER: On the day of Pentecost, people from all over the world heard God's good news of salvation in their own language.

PEOPLE: Lord, help us learn the language the people you love are speaking today, so they might hear your message with understanding.

LEADER: May God teach us that the real ministry of our church takes place outside these walls.

PEOPLE: Lord, may we be equipped today to serve you and the people you love in the harvest fields you have given us.