

Bible Character Study

Daniel | Daniel 1 & 6

Trials Show our True Character

Have you ever watched someone walk through a difficult situation and wondered how they could remain so at peace, so joyful, and so faithful? It's a pretty powerful testimony, isn't it? When we walk through difficulties and continue to allow God to shine through, we demonstrate the depth of our character. The opposite is also true. Have you ever watched someone face a trial and respond with anger, doubt, and complaining? This response is understandable, but it also fails to point people to Jesus. Trials test our faith and prove our character—just like they did for Daniel.

1 Timothy 1:5 (NLT) *"The purpose of my instruction is that all believers would be filled with love that comes from a pure heart, a clear conscience, and genuine faith."*

Proverbs 10:9 (NLT) *"People with integrity walk safely, but those who follow crooked paths will be exposed."*

Titus 2:7-8 (NLT) *"And you yourself must be an example to them by doing good works of every kind. Let everything you do reflect the integrity and seriousness of your teaching. ⁸ Teach the truth so that your teaching can't be criticized. Then those who oppose us will be ashamed and have nothing bad to say about us."*

Psalms 25:21 (NLT) *"May integrity and honesty protect me, for I put my hope in you."*

2 Corinthians 8:21 (NLT) *"We are careful to be honorable before the Lord, but we also want everyone else to see that we are honorable."*

2 Timothy 4:7 (NLT) *"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, and I have remained faithful."*

2 Timothy 2:15 (NLT) *"Work hard so you can present yourself to God and receive his approval. Be a good worker, one who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly explains the word of truth."*

Trials Give Us Opportunities to Pray for Our Authorities

When trials come for a country, leaders are required to make a lot of difficult decisions—which suddenly puts them in the spotlight. Have you ever felt nervous about the choices an authority may make? Perhaps concerned about an election or how your boss may choose to respond? Instead of causing chaos and fear, those difficult circumstances should bring us to our knees. Daniel served under multiple kings and every one of them elevated him to a position of authority. Why? What was so unique about Daniel? He was known for being a man of prayer. He did not speak out against the king's decisions and complain about policies he didn't agree with—instead, he was faithful to pray. And as the trials increased, so did the opportunities for fervent prayer.

1 Timothy 2:1-2 (NLT) *“I urge you, first of all, to pray for all people. Ask God to help them; intercede on their behalf, and give thanks for them. ² Pray this way for kings and all who are in authority so that we can live peaceful and quiet lives marked by godliness and dignity.”*

Romans 13:1-7 (NLT) *“Everyone must submit to governing authorities. For all authority comes from God, and those in positions of authority have been placed there by God. ² So anyone who rebels against authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and they will be punished. ³ For the authorities do not strike fear in people who are doing right, but in those who are doing wrong. Would you like to live without fear of the authorities? Do what is right, and they will honor you. ⁴ The authorities are God's servants, sent for your good. But if you are doing wrong, of course you should be afraid, for they have the power to punish you. They are God's servants, sent for the very purpose of punishing those who do what is wrong. ⁵ So you must submit to them, not only to avoid punishment, but also to keep a clear conscience. ⁶ Pay your taxes, too, for these same reasons. For government workers need to be paid. They are serving God in what they do. ⁷ Give to everyone what you owe them: Pay your taxes and government fees to those who collect them, and give respect and honor to those who are in authority.”*

1 Peter 2:13-17 (NLT) *“For the Lord's sake, submit to all human authority—whether the king as head of state, ¹⁴ or the officials he has appointed. For the king has sent them to punish those who do wrong and to honor those who do right. ¹⁵ It is God's will that your honorable lives should silence those ignorant people who make foolish accusations against you. ¹⁶ For you are free, yet you are God's slaves, so don't use your freedom as an excuse to do evil. ¹⁷ Respect everyone, and love the family of believers.^[1] Fear God, and respect the king.”*

Acts 5:29 (NLT) *“But Peter and the apostles replied, “We must obey God rather than any human authority.”*

Trials Prove the Sincerity of Our Convictions

We told our kids as they were growing up how important it was for them to establish their own convictions. What are convictions? And why are they so important? Convictions are deep-rooted, solid beliefs in what is right or wrong in a given situation, and they are vital because they determine how you will respond to difficult decisions that come your way. For example, if someone has a conviction to not watch movies with language or immorality, they will actively evaluate each movie before they begin watching. This conviction shapes their actions and behaviors. After your convictions are established, there will come plenty of difficult circumstances that will test your sincerity. When Daniel was a young man, not more than a teenager, he was kidnapped from his home and brought to Babylon. It would have been easy for him to throw aside his religious convictions in order to simply go through the motions of survival in this new world and situation. But he didn't. Instead, he actively sought out ways to live in light of his convictions and God's laws—even when it was extremely difficult.

Romans 12:2(NLT) *“Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.”*

John 3:20-21 (NLT) *“All who do evil hate the light and refuse to go near it for fear their sins will be exposed. ²¹ But those who do what is right come to the light so others can see that they are doing what God wants.”*

1 Peter 2:12 (NLT) *“Be careful to live properly among your unbelieving neighbors. Then even if they accuse you of doing wrong, they will see your honorable behavior, and they will give honor to God when he judges the world.”*

1 Thessalonians 2:4 (NLT) *“For we speak as messengers approved by God to be entrusted with the Good News. Our purpose is to please God, not people. He alone examines the motives of our hearts.”*

Ephesians 5:11 (NLT) *“Take no part in the worthless deeds of evil and darkness; instead, expose them.”*

Notes:

Reflection and Response from This Week's Lesson:

What's my take-away and how will I practice trusting God more through my custom-designed trials?

