

## **Thoughts on the Sunday School Lesson**

*by Pastor Artee Williams*

Sunday, January 7, 2017

Subject: Sincere Faith/ Living Your Convictions

Daniel 1: 8-21

### **I. Key scriptures**

Psalm 33: 1-22 Psalm 121: 1-8 John 17: 20-23

Romans 12: 1-2 I Peter 5:8-9

### **II. Introduction**

This lesson provides an example of what it means for believers to live in faith, to live consistent with their convictions and to maintain their character in the face of worldly pressures.

It is amazing that these 4 young persons who were at the least teenagers when they were led captive to Babylon and after three years of training under Babylonian teachers were either older teens or very young men, however, even when their names were changed, and they were indoctrinated into Babylonian culture and custom, yet their character remained unchanged, they remained faithful to God.

What a lesson for all believers regarding the blessings of God that are available to those who live in faith, rely on their convictions and refuse to compromise their character.

Daniel and his companions refused to corrupt themselves with the things of the world.

Paul the Apostle reminds us that evil communications corrupt good manners- I Corinthians 15:33. The NIV version of this verse states: "Do not be misled: Bad company corrupts good character."

Daniel and his companions did not allow the worldly company they were in to corrupt their character.

### **III. Points to ponder**

1. Three years of training in the Babylonian culture, customs and language did not change the character of these young Hebrew men.
2. The Babylonians changed their Hebrew names to Babylonian names that represented their idol gods in order to influence these young men. Some of these names included the god of Lucifer, the sun god, the god of sin and the goddess of wine.
3. Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself.
4. Defile means to spoil, to impair, to degrade, to contaminate, to pollute, to make impure or unclean.
5. God is at work in this account of the young Hebrews. God brought Daniel into favor with the prince of the Eunuch's who had responsibility for the 4 young men.
6. Daniel and his companions were allowed to eat a vegan diet instead of the King's food, however, the success of their diet had more to do with the sovereignty of God in blessing

Daniel's spiritual commitment than it was the diet.

7. God gave Daniel and his companions knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom. God also gave Daniel understanding in visions and dreams. In fact Daniel and his companions were 10 times better than all the Babylonian magicians and astrologers, so much so that they were appointed to stand before the king.

8. Daniel and his companions did not seek promotion but were promoted because of God's blessings upon their lives. God prepared Daniel and his companions for promotion.

9. This lesson teaches that God bestows blessings upon those who like Daniel are courageous, humble and obedient.

10. Daniel did not see access to the King's table as a privilege, but as an opportunity for defilement. When faced with this choice, Daniel chose to do what was right in the sight of God.

11. Daniel purposed or resolved not to eat the King's food. There is a deeper meaning here regarding purpose, it means that Daniel had already made up his mind before being deported from Jerusalem to Babylon that he would remain faithful to God. Daniel made a pre-decision before he had to make a present-decision.

12. Daniel is also an example of faith. Daniel believed that God would cause he and his companions to look healthier than those who ate the King's food.

13. Daniel was so confident that he requested a 10 day test. Daniel was not testing God but was believing God.

14. Daniel teaches us that faith is believing that the power of God is greater than the power of men.

15. Daniel teaches us that God is faithful to those who have sincere faith and refuse to compromise their character.

16. Daniel and his companions were blessed with physical benefits, spiritual benefits and career benefits.

17. God is ready to bless those who live in faith, rely on their convictions and refuse to compromise their character.

#### **IV. Compelling challenge**

Are you willing to live in faith, rely on your convictions and refuse to compromise your character?

Your decision can make a difference in your life.

Are you willing to be the difference that makes a difference?