



Week 1 **LEADER** Discussion Questions

Week of 4/16/23

Text: Daniel 1

Icebreaker: What do you think it means to be “winsome” as a Christian?

This is the series theme, so it might be helpful to kick things off with a discussion about what it means.

1. Read verses 1-7. What kind of emotions would you expect these “youths without blemish” (v. 4) to be experiencing as they’ve been taken from Jerusalem to Babylon, given new names, and selected to eventually “stand before the king” (v. 5)?

They might have been fearful, angry, sorrowful, anxious, heartbroken, etc. Suffice it to say that it must have been a very disorienting experience.

Application: Has there been a time in your life when you felt similar emotions to those you could imagine these young men experienced? What was your situation?

2. Verse 2 begins, “And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand...” Why should it matter that this outcome was the Lord’s doing?

This must have seemed like rock bottom for God’s people! Even so, God’s hand was in it all. This could be both reassuring and sobering. It’s reassuring because it reveals that God is just as in control in hard times as in good. Even this disaster is in his control. It’s sobering, though, because God had warned his people over and over through the prophets that this day would come if they did not return to him. This turn of events was a result of the unfaithfulness of God’s people.

Application: When you’re going through something difficult, do you find it hard to believe God is in control? Why?

(...with that in mind, we’re not suggesting that difficult times in our own lives are always the result of some unfaithfulness on our part!)

3. Read verses 8-16. What do Daniel’s actions demonstrate?

They demonstrate faith in God as he is determined not to defile himself with the food he was being asked to eat. Even though Daniel and many others have been removed from the land God gave them, Daniel is confident that God’s commands still apply. (This naturally raises questions about what exactly Daniel was being asked to consume and in what way he would become defiled. Those details, though, are not what the text is emphasizing.) We also see Daniel’s courage to go against what the king’s officials instructed. Daniel’s wisdom is also on display as he proposes a solution that would likely only pose a minimal risk to the Babylonian officials...just a 10-day trial.

Application: Describe a situation in your life where you could be (or have been) asked to compromise from what you know is pleasing to God.

4. Even in Babylon, “God gave” Daniel and his companions great abilities that made them stand out. What does this say about God’s sovereignty and purposes in a less-than-ideal situation?

Earlier, God “gave” the king of Judah over to the Babylonians. Here, God is giving great abilities to Daniel and his companions. God is apparently able to work just as effectively outside of Israel’s land as he is in it. He is also able to operate just as well in a land where his name is not honored or even acknowledged. He works according to his purposes, which will be revealed in greater detail in the following chapters.

Application: How has God equipped you for situations that are less than ideal?

5. God’s people are in this predicament because of their unfaithfulness to Him. Where do you see displays of God’s faithfulness, though, in this first chapter?

God is actively involved in the situation his people are in, even as they are experiencing the consequences of his judgment. God is faithfully providing the gifts his people need to accomplish his purposes, even when they are not yet aware of his purposes. God is faithful even when his people are not.

Application: How has God been faithful in your own life? Take time to celebrate these examples with your group.

In what current situation do you need to be reminded of God’s faithfulness? Take time to share this with your group and pray for each other.