

LESSON PLAN

DANIEL IN THE KING'S COURT

Daniel 1

Lesson Memory Verse: Daniel 1:8 - **“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.”** (Grades 1 & 2 memorize the portion in **bold**.)

Lesson Aim: We must stay away from sin and be clean in God’s eyes so He can use us.

Lesson Plan: Use the KEY – HE – SEE – WE – BE plan (explained in the Introductory Notes).

KEY (for Attention): Bring a bottle of water and a dirty drinking glass to class and ask the children if they would like to take a drink of water from such a glass. We do not like to drink or eat from things that are dirty or unclean. This object lesson will help them to understand better how God feels about us when we are unclean. God does not want to use our hands, feet or lips, if our hearts are filthy with sin. So we must do our best to keep them pure by turning away from sin. This is what our memory verse tells us about Daniel.

HE (for Authority): Daniel kept his body pure by making a rule for himself that he would not willfully sin, even in what he ate at King Nebuchadnezzar’s table. His food and drink, no doubt, had been offered to Nebuchadnezzar’s gods before it was placed on the table for his wise men to eat. To eat this food would show that they needed the food of this false god to give them strength and wisdom. Daniel did not want to give the false god any credit for giving him strength or wisdom. That would be sin. He wanted his life to bring praise to his God, the true God. So Daniel found a way not to eat the food which the king provided for all of his wise men.

Difficult words and phrases explained:

“Daniel purposed in his heart” – He determined in his heart; he made a rule for himself

“Defile himself” – make himself unclean

“Portion of the king’s meat” – the food that that king provided for all his wise men.

SEE (for Apperception and WE (for Application): PLEASE do not read these comments until you have read the Scriptures for this lesson. First let the Holy Spirit teach you directly from His Word.

This part of Daniel’s story gives us some of the reasons why he was such a powerful witness for God, even when he was quite young--about fifteen or sixteen years old.

I. The Plan of Nebuchadnezzar – Daniel 1:1-7

Nebuchadnezzar took Daniel and many other young men from Judah in 605 B.C. to Babylon to train them in his school for three years. He wanted the very best young men to be trained to be his counselors. He wanted to make them wise so they could help him govern his great empire. They would be taught by the king’s teachers and they would eat the king’s food. Now the king’s food was the very best, but it would be offered to idols first and then it was served to the wise men to eat. The idol was supposed to give the food special power to make the students healthy and wise. The king demanded that all of his special students eat his food, but Daniel and his friends knew that God would not be pleased if they ate it. He wanted them to depend on Him to be healthy and wise, not to depend on a false god. This was a very serious problem for Daniel and his three friends, because the eating of this food would make them unclean.

WE: Sometimes we will be invited to eat a meal with unsaved people that have some food and drinks on the table that do not please God. They expect us to eat and drink the things that they have planned and prepared for the meal. They do not realize and sometimes do not even care that their meal does not please God. They do not know God, nor do they fear Him, so they expect us to cooperate and make no fuss about the meal. This may become a very serious problem for us. What we do will either make us a pure and powerful witness for God or it will make us an unclean and weak witness for God.

II. The Purpose of Daniel – Daniel 1:8-13

Daniel purposed in his heart (made a rule for his life) that he would not make himself unclean with the king’s food. So what did he do? He asked the prince of the eunuchs for permission not to eat the king’s special food. Now God had caused this prince to love Daniel, but the prince also feared Nebuchadnezzar

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and he did not want to lose his head for disobeying his king's command. Daniel did not give up, but had a special test that he and his three friends might be given. Do you know what the test was? It was very simple. Instead of eating the rich food of the king that had been offered to idols, they asked that they might be given ordinary food for just ten days: vegetables (pulse) to eat and water to drink. Then at the end of the ten days they could be checked to see if they looked better or worse than those who ate the king's food. Daniel believed that God would honor this plan and make him and his friends look healthier than the others that ate the king's food.

WE: Do we give up when we try to do the right thing and we are told it cannot be done? Or, do we try again, because we really want to please God, and offer a better plan for them to consider? It is not easy to obey God, but this is what we must do if we are going to be a pure, powerful witness for God like Daniel was.

III. The Proving of Daniel – Daniel 1:14-16

Daniel's suggestion of a test for ten days was accepted by his overseer, so Daniel and his three friends were given vegetables and water to eat. The vegetables and water may not have tasted as good as the food that the other young men ate, but it was worth it to have a clean heart before God. At the end of ten days Daniel and his friends were examined and they looked so much better than the others that they were not forced to eat the king's food that had been offered to idols. God had blessed their vegetables and water to help them pass their test.

WE: We can expect God to bless the plans that we make when we try to obey Him. He will cause them to be successful as He did for Daniel and his three friends.

IV. The Provisions of God – Daniel 1:17-21

Since Daniel and his three friends kept themselves pure, God provided them many blessings. He gave them knowledge and skill in learning their lessons. He gave Daniel understanding of dreams and visions. And when these young men stood before King Nebuchadnezzar at the end of the three-year training period, they were the wisest of all the men that were trained in his school. In fact, they were ten times better than all of the other wise men in his country. As a result, all four of them were given important positions in Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom.

WE: We will find that it pleases God to give us many blessings when we keep ourselves pure in the eyes of God. God loves to use pure people.

BE (for Action): Briefly review the story of Daniel by asking questions of the class. Ask questions that focus on Daniel's desire to be pure. Then check their lives by asking question based on the Ten Commandments. (Suggestions: Do you love anyone or anything more than God? If so, you are an idolater. Do you ever use God's name in cursing someone or use it as an expression of surprise? If so, you are a blasphemer. Do you hate someone? If so, you are a murderer – 1 Jn 3:15. Do you take anything that does not belong to you and keep it for yourself? If so, you are a thief.) Do not think that God wants to bless you like He blessed Daniel, if you live an unclean life. If you love your sins, you probably are not saved. If you are ashamed of your sins and want to be clean, confess your sins (name them) and ask God to forgive you of these sins. Also ask Him to help you to not go back to those sins. If you are sincere with God, He will help you stop doing those sins. Offer to talk and pray with any of them after class, if they want help.