

June 28th, 2020

Finding Courage to Not Compromise!

Sermon Summary

This message looks at Daniel and three of his close friends and their experiences for finding courage to not compromise! From their stories we discover 10 very important components for finding courage to not compromise our God-given convictions! Here are the ten components and the main verse or two for each one:

1. Finding Courage to Not Compromise Starts With the Little Things (Dan 1:8)
2. Finding Courage to Not Compromise Trusts God With Outcomes (Dan 1:12-13)
3. Finding Courage to Not Compromise Comes From Godly Wisdom (Dan 1:17)
4. Finding Courage to Not Compromise is Powered by Prayer (Dan 2:18)
5. Finding Courage to Not Compromise is Strengthened by Praise (Dan 2:19-20)
6. Finding Courage to Not Compromise Is Found in Humility (Dan 2:27-28)
7. Finding Courage to Not Compromise is Undergirded by Truth (Dan 2:45)
8. Finding Courage to Not Compromise is the Result of Unwavering Commitment (Dan 3:16-18)
9. Finding Courage to Not Compromise is Found in Knowing God's Faithfulness (Dan 3:24-25)
10. Finding Courage to Not Compromise Grows When You Recognize Satan's Tactics (Dan 6:4-7)

Full Sermon Notes

"Who is the great King of glory seated on high in the heavens?" We're going to find out today, that it was certainly not King Nebuchadnezzar! At one time he was the king of kings as far as earthly kings were concerned, but never the King of glory seated on high in the heavens! But as the song we just sang says, "Jesus, You alone You are the Lord God Almighty Strong in compassion and mercy, Jesus, You alone!" The book of Daniel is yet another book of prophecy that points to Jesus as the Messiah and the ultimate King of Kings and Lord of Lords! And if He is Lord of your life, then you can find the courage to not compromise when the world tries to tear down your faith and get you to give up on God! Let's pray and ask God to help us see why it is so vitally important we find the courage to not compromise our faith! Pray!

Today's message contains some of the most fascinating stories in the Old Testament! True stories of people who found the courage to not compromise their faith or their God-given convictions! You see, compromise may be a great thing when you are trying to find common ground with family, friends, a neighbor or a co-worker! However, compromise is a terrible thing when it comes to the moral and ethical truths God has given us to live by. Compromise is a terrible thing when it comes to watering down the truth of God's Word to try and make it convenient for the world. Last week we talked about finding courage to hope and the individuals we will study today show us how our hope in God fuels our courage to not compromise. As we've seen in our studies, the Northern Kingdom of Israel had been destroyed and the people sent into captivity by the Assyrians. The Southern Kingdom of Judah had followed suit because of their evil behaviors and were taken into captivity by the Babylonians. Now remember I told

you last week there was a remnant of faithful people who had remained true to God, although they suffered captivity as well because of the sin of the nation. However, God protected them and used them in powerful ways even in captivity because they continued to stay true to God no matter the circumstances! We see this in what happened at the very beginning of the captivity and we discover the first of ten components that help us find the courage to not compromise.

1. Finding Courage to Not Compromise Starts With the Little Things

Dan 1:3 Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, chief of his court officials, to bring in some of the Israelites from the royal family and the nobility--

Dan 1:4 young men without any physical defect, handsome, showing aptitude for every kind of learning, well informed, quick to understand, and qualified to serve in the king's palace. He was to teach them the language and literature of the Babylonians.

Dan 1:5 The king assigned them a daily amount of food and wine from the king's table. They were to be trained for three years, and after that they were to enter the king's service.

Dan 1:6 Among these were some from Judah: Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah.

Dan 1:7 The chief official gave them new names: to Daniel, the name Belteshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abednego.

Dan 1:8 But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way.

So glad you kids could be with us again today! You may have to put up with me a few more weeks with this pandemic! Daniel and his friends had a chance to eat like kings, and live it up with wine from the king's table. But they chose to honor God and not compromise their faith or their health! A lot of folks would have said, "Awe, come on, this is not a big deal! It's just royal food, and a little wine, besides, you're a captive, so just go with the flow!" But many times, it's the little compromises that lead to bigger ones! Anybody in this room who could be a witness to that fact? You started out with just a little compromise and before you knew it, you had a monster on your hands! Kids, if your friends try to get you to do something wrong and tell you it's just a little wrong, a little lie, and it won't hurt, just remember, a little lie is still a lie and doing little things wrong can lead to doing big things that are wrong. That's what the wrong kind of compromise is. Daniel and his friends had beliefs and convictions they were not willing to set aside just to fit in! They were faithful in the little things. Jesus taught on this principle as well. He said...

Luke 16:10 "Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much..."

Daniel, and his three buddies knew the importance of taking care of the physical bodies they had been given so they could bring glory to God! There's a New Testament passage which gives good reason to not compromise with the seemingly small thing of taking care of ourselves physically...

1 Cor 6:19 Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own;

1 Cor 6:20 you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

Okay, the second component...

2. Finding Courage to Not Compromise Trusts God With Outcomes

Dan 1:9 Now God had caused the official to show favor and sympathy to Daniel,

Dan 1:10 but the official told Daniel, "I am afraid of my lord the king, who has assigned your food and drink. Why should he see you looking worse than the other young men your age? The king would then have my head because of you."

Dan 1:11 Daniel then said to the guard whom the chief official had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah,

Dan 1:12 "Please test your servants for ten days: Give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink.

Dan 1:13 Then compare our appearance with that of the young men who eat the royal food, and treat your servants in accordance with what you see."

Dan 1:14 So he agreed to this and tested them for ten days.

Dan 1:15 At the end of the ten days they looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who ate the royal food.

Dan 1:16 So the guard took away their choice food and the wine they were to drink and gave them vegetables instead.

Daniel had the courage to trust God with the outcome. He knew his trust was not misplaced! He knew his God, not King Nebuchadnezzar was the God of Glory! Sometimes we compromise with the world because we don't really trust God's plan, God's way, God's Word, and we're not willing to trust Him with the outcome of certain things. Sometimes we get impatient and take matters into our own hands! Folks I'm not saying we are to just sit in our easy chairs and do nothing and expect God to do everything for us. What I am saying is that we are to do the best we know to do, and have been called to do, and trust God with the outcome! The Psalmist put it this way...

Psa 4:5 Offer right sacrifices and trust in the LORD.

Psa 37:3 Trust in the LORD and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture.

Psa 37:4 Delight yourself in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart.

Psa 37:5 Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him and he will do this:

Psa 37:6 He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun.

Psa 37:7 Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him; do not fret when men succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes.

Psa 37:8 Refrain from anger and turn from wrath; do not fret--it leads only to evil.

I love the old song by Keith Green...

"Just keep doing your best and pray that it's blessed and He'll take care of the rest!" Keith Green

Component three...

3. Finding Courage to Not Compromise Comes From Godly Wisdom

Dan 1:17 To these four young men God gave knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning. And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds.

Dan 1:18 At the end of the time set by the king to bring them in, the chief official presented them to Nebuchadnezzar.

Dan 1:19 The king talked with them, and he found none equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; so they entered the king's service.

Dan 1:20 In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters in his whole kingdom.

Ten times better! God's wisdom is at least ten times better than the world's wisdom! Letting God help you have understanding based on Godly discernment is infinitely better than the world's wisdom. I love what Paul wrote to the Corinthians in his second letter to them concerning God's wisdom...

2 Cor 1:12 Now this is our boast: Our conscience testifies that we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially in our relations with you, in the holiness and sincerity that are from God. We have done so not according to worldly wisdom but according to God's grace. Paul goes on to say...

2 Cor 1:19 For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by me and Silas and Timothy, was not "Yes" and "No," but in him it has always been "Yes."

2 Cor 1:20 For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God.

2 Cor 1:21 Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us,

2 Cor 1:22 set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

We stand firm in Christ! God's wisdom helps us understand why it is foolish to compromise our God-given convictions! And notice, I said God-given convictions! Sometimes we get our opinions mixed up with God's wisdom. We should never compromise on our God-given convictions, but there are times when we should set our own personal opinions aside for the greater good! There's a difference! Husbands, I hope you're listening! Wives too! Paul told Timothy this...

2 Tim 2:23 Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels.

2 Tim 2:24 And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful.

Component 4...

4. Finding Courage to Not Compromise is Powered by Prayer

Dan 2:14 When Arioch, the commander of the king's guard, had gone out to put to death the wise men of Babylon, Daniel spoke to him with wisdom and tact.

Dan 2:15 He asked the king's officer, "Why did the king issue such a harsh decree?" Arioch then explained the matter to Daniel.

Dan 2:16 At this, Daniel went in to the king and asked for time, so that he might interpret the dream for him.

Dan 2:17 Then Daniel returned to his house and explained the matter to his friends Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah.

Dan 2:18 He urged them to plead for mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that he and his friends might not be executed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

What do you do when you are in trouble, in a tight spot, when you are tempted to give up on your God-given convictions? Daniel knew what to do and he encouraged his friends to join with him in crying out to God in prayer! I think he had read these verses in Psalm 86:6-7 & 11...

Psa 86:6 Hear my prayer, O LORD; listen to my cry for mercy.

Psa 86:7 In the day of my trouble I will call to you, for you will answer me.

Psa 86:11 Teach me your way, O LORD, and I will walk in your truth; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name.

Component five...

5. Finding Courage to Not Compromise is Strengthened by Praise

Dan 2:19 During the night the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision. Then Daniel praised the God of heaven

Dan 2:20 and said: "Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever; wisdom and power are his.

Dan 2:21 He changes times and seasons; he sets up kings and deposes them. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning.

Dan 2:22 He reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what lies in darkness, and light dwells with him.

Dan 2:23 I thank and praise you, O God of my fathers: You have given me wisdom and power, you have made known to me what we asked of you, you have made known to us the dream of the king."

Daniel had probably grown up singing the Psalms, songs with great teaching. Like these verses found in Psalm 17:7-8...

Psa 16:7 I will praise the LORD, who counsels me; even at night my heart instructs me.

Psa 16:8 I have set the LORD always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.

Component 6...

6. Finding Courage to Not Compromise Is Found in Humility

Dan 2:26 The king asked Daniel (also called Belteshazzar), "Are you able to tell me what I saw in my dream and interpret it?"

Dan 2:27 Daniel replied, "No wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about,

Dan 2:28 but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come. Your dream and the visions that passed through your mind as you lay on your bed are these:

Daniel could have tried to take all the credit and exalted himself, but he didn't! He gave God all the credit and glory! Now I'm going to give you fair warning, I'm about to step on some toes! Some people use "not compromising" as a prideful way to not even have a discussion, and can be mean spirited about their opinions on everything. That's not Christ-like or Biblical. A person can be completely committed to their convictions and yet humble and kind at the same time. That humility can only come when our convictions are rooted in Christ and His wisdom and understanding! We must recognize that neither our righteousness nor our wisdom is found in ourselves, but is an undeserved gift of grace from God to us through the sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross. Paul reminds of this in Galatians...

Gal 5:26 Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

Gal 6:1 Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted.

Gal 6:2 Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

Gal 6:3 If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself.

In Daniel's interpretation of the dream we discover Component 7...

7. Finding Courage to Not Compromise is Undergirded by Truth

Dan 2:44 "In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever.

Dan 2:45 This is the meaning of the vision of the rock cut out of a mountain, but not by human hands--a rock that broke the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold to pieces. "The great God has shown the king what will take place in the future. The dream is true and the interpretation is trustworthy."

Daniel had great courage because he was speaking the truth. When we know we are standing on truth we have a foundation which supports our commitment to God and gives us the strength and tenacity to not compromise! And for a moment, at least, the King actually believed Daniel and this took place...

Dan 2:46 Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell prostrate before Daniel and paid him honor and ordered that an offering and incense be presented to him.

Dan 2:47 The king said to Daniel, "Surely your God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, for you were able to reveal this mystery."

By the way, Daniel's interpretation of the dream was yet another prophecy about Jesus, the rock, whose Kingdom will endure forever! Jesus was once debating with the religious leaders about His authority to teach the things He was teaching. I love the question Jesus asked the people who were supposed to be the teachers of God's law!

Mat 21:42 Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: "'The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone ; the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes'?"

Mat 21:43 "Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit.

Mat 21:44 He who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces, but he on whom it falls will be crushed."

Mat 21:45 When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard Jesus' parables, they knew he was talking about them.

Mat 21:46 They looked for a way to arrest him, but they were afraid of the crowd because the people held that he was a prophet.

The chief priests and Pharisees had long ago compromised their commitment to God's Word and had become blinded to it's truth. In our world today we will be constantly confronted with things that challenge the truths of Scripture. We must hold to the truth of Scripture. In doing so it is critical that we know Scripture and that we do not twist or manipulate Scripture to support opinions which do not conform to the intent or original meaning of Scripture. Paul gave some great wisdom to young Timothy...

2 Tim 2:15 Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.

2 Tim 2:16 Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly.

2 Tim 2:17 Their teaching will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus,

2 Tim 2:18 who have wandered away from the truth.

Component 8...

8. Finding Courage to Not Compromise is the Result of Unwavering Commitment

King Nebuchadnezzar had recognized the truth of Daniel's interpretation and was so impressed with Daniel that this happened...

Dan 2:48 Then the king placed Daniel in a high position and lavished many gifts on him. He made him ruler over the entire province of Babylon and placed him in charge of all its wise men.

Dan 2:49 Moreover, at Daniel's request the king appointed Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego administrators over the province of Babylon, while Daniel himself remained at the royal court.

But King Nebuchadnezzar got prideful and decided he wanted to be the greatest King of all time and he did something crazy! Kids, do you know what he did? Listen to this...

Dan 3:1 King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, ninety feet high and nine feet wide, and set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon.

And you won't believe what happened next...

Dan 3:4 Then the herald loudly proclaimed, "This is what you are commanded to do, O peoples, nations and men of every language:

Dan 3:5 As soon as you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes and all kinds of music, you must fall down and worship the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up.

Dan 3:6 Whoever does not fall down and worship will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace."

Do you think Daniel's friends Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego fell down and worshiped the gold statue? No they didn't!!!

Dan 3:13 Furious with rage, Nebuchadnezzar summoned Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. So these men were brought before the king,

Dan 3:14 and Nebuchadnezzar said to them, "Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the image of gold I have set up?

Dan 3:15 Now when you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes and all kinds of music, if you are ready to fall down and worship the image I made, very good. But if you do

not worship it, you will be thrown immediately into a blazing furnace. Then what god will be able to rescue you from my hand?"

Check out their unwavering commitment...

Dan 3:16 Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter.

Dan 3:17 If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king.

Dan 3:18 But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up."

Are you willing to say "But even if"? In other words, regardless of the cost are you willing to stay true to your commitment to God? Is your commitment to God unwavering? I love what Peter and John told the religious leaders after they were warned not speak of Jesus anymore...

Acts 4:18 Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.

Acts 4:19 But Peter and John replied, "Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God.

Acts 4:20 For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard."

Component nine...

9. Finding Courage to Not Compromise is Found in Knowing God's Faithfulness!

God will be with you in the fire!

Dan 3:23 and these three men, firmly tied, fell into the blazing furnace.

Dan 3:24 Then King Nebuchadnezzar leaped to his feet in amazement and asked his advisers, "Weren't there three men that we tied up and threw into the fire?" They replied, "Certainly, O king."

Dan 3:25 He said, "Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods."

Dan 3:26 Nebuchadnezzar then approached the opening of the blazing furnace and shouted, "Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!" So Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego came out of the fire,

Dan 3:27 and the satraps, prefects, governors and royal advisers crowded around them. They saw that the fire had not harmed their bodies, nor was a hair of their heads singed; their robes were not scorched, and there was no smell of fire on them.

Dan 3:28 Then Nebuchadnezzar said, "Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants! They trusted in him and defied the

king's command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God.

When you trust God's faithfulness no matter what the circumstances look like, God will honor that by giving you amazing courage to not compromise! Way back in Deuteronomy we find this promise from God...

Deu 7:9 Know therefore that the LORD your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commands.

Component ten...

10. Finding Courage to Not Compromise Grows When You Recognize Satan's Tactics

Satan is smart, but not as smart as you might think. The problem is that he's sometimes smarter than us! But when we get our smarts, our wisdom, our understanding from God above then we can out smart Satan. If you'll allow God to show you the truth, you'll see that Satan has been using the same tactics for ever. The same old tricks, the same old lies! Babylon fell to Persia and another King, named Darius was now over the people. He appointed some administrators to run things for him. Listen to this...

Dan 6:3 Now Daniel so distinguished himself among the administrators and the satraps by his exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom.

Dan 6:4 At this, the administrators and the satraps tried to find grounds for charges against Daniel in his conduct of government affairs, but they were unable to do so. They could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent.

Dan 6:5 Finally these men said, "We will never find any basis for charges against this man Daniel unless it has something to do with the law of his God."

Dan 6:6 So the administrators and the satraps went as a group to the king and said: "O King Darius, live forever!

Dan 6:7 The royal administrators, prefects, satraps, advisers and governors have all agreed that the king should issue an edict and enforce the decree that anyone who prays to any god or man during the next thirty days, except to you, O king, shall be thrown into the lions' den.

Dan 6:8 Now, O king, issue the decree and put it in writing so that it cannot be altered--in accordance with the laws of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed."

Dan 6:9 So King Darius put the decree in writing.

Satan never gives up, but he uses the same old tactics! Don't let Satan lie to you and deceive you! Don't think things will be different for you because you're smarter than everyone else who's gone before you! Realize and recognize Satan's lies and you will find courage to not compromise! Daniel had seen this kind of thing before. He remembered what had happened to his three friends who refused to bow down and worship an earthly king. He remembered the

fiery furnace situation, so he knew God was very capable of saving His prophet so this is what he did...

Dan 6:10 Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before.

Dan 6:11 Then these men went as a group and found Daniel praying and asking God for help.

Dan 6:12 So they went to the king and spoke to him about his royal decree:

The King really liked Daniel, but he had made a decree and didn't feel like he could change his mind, so Daniel was cast into the lion's den! Then this happened...

Dan 6:19 At the first light of dawn, the king got up and hurried to the lions' den.

Dan 6:20 When he came near the den, he called to Daniel in an anguished voice, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to rescue you from the lions?"

Dan 6:21 Daniel answered, "O king, live forever!

Dan 6:22 My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his sight. Nor have I ever done any wrong before you, O king."

Dan 6:23 The king was overjoyed and gave orders to lift Daniel out of the den. And when Daniel was lifted from the den, no wound was found on him, because he had trusted in his God.

Daniel found courage to not compromise because he followed all of the principles we just talked about!

He trusted God with the small things

He trusted God with outcomes

He trusted God's wisdom

He trusted God in prayer

He trusted God with praise

He trusted God with humility

He trusted God's Truth

He trusted God with unwavering commitment

He trusted God's Faithfulness

He trusted God to reveal Satan's tactics

Everyone in this room and those joining us on the broadcast will at some point be tempted to compromise, to give in to the pressure, to give up your convictions, to abandon your commitment to our Lord. I pray you will find the courage to never ever compromise your God given principles or waiver in your commitment to live for the One who lived and died for you! Let's pray!