

RESPONDING

Navigating Cultural Currents

April 9, 2017

Introduction: Much like Daniel, we must respond to a culture that is extreme and often hostile toward those of faith. A recent study by ComRes Faith Research Centre found that up to a million workers may have faced harassment, discrimination or bullying because of their religion or belief. One survey respondent said: "In our office, everyone is very respectful of minorities and would never be disparaging about women or people with disabilities, but when it comes to religion, it's fair game." Today we discuss our response.

Scripture Reading: Daniel 2:25-28b

I. Living in Today's Culture

³ *Then the king commanded Ashpenaz, his chief eunuch, to bring some of the people of Israel, both of the royal family and of the nobility, ⁴ youths without blemish, of good appearance and skillful in all wisdom, endowed with knowledge, understanding learning, and **competent to stand in the king's palace, and to teach them the literature and language of the Chaldeans...** ⁵ ...**They were to be educated for three years...***
(Daniel 1:3–4, 5).

II. Responding

A. Whom do I hold dear?

⁸ **But Daniel resolved** that he would not defile himself with the king's food, or with the wine that he drank. Therefore he asked the chief of the eunuchs to allow him not to defile himself. ⁹ **And God gave Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the chief of the eunuchs** (Daniel 1:8–9).

B. How does this affect my values?

¹⁷ *Then Daniel went to his house and made the matter known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, ¹⁸ and told them to seek mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, **so that Daniel and his companions might not be destroyed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon*** (Daniel 2:17–18).

Say to them, As I live, declares the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel? (Ezekiel 33:11).

C. What would be the loving thing to do?

*Daniel answered the king and said, **"No wise men, enchanters, magicians, or astrologers can show to the king the mystery that the king has asked*** (Daniel 2:27).

²² Claiming to be wise, they became fools, ²³ and **exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images** resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. ²⁴ Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, ²⁵ because **they exchanged the truth about God for a lie** and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen. (Romans 1:22–25).

D. What would be the right and wise thing to do?

but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and he has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days. Your dream and the visions of your head as you lay in bed are these (Daniel 2:28).

⁴⁸ Then the king gave Daniel high honors and many great gifts, and **made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon and chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon.** ⁴⁹ **Daniel made a request of the king**, and he appointed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego over the affairs of the province of Babylon. But Daniel remained at the king's court (Daniel 2:48–49).

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- I. Living in Today's Culture (*Daniel 1:3–4, 5*)
- II. Responding

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B. How does this affect my _____?

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C. What would be the _____ thing to do?

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D. What would be the _____ and _____ thing to do?

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