

## Daniel Chapter 3:1-30 – “Principle vs Pressure”

Sunday, November 11, 2018

- ❖ How important are the decisions we make every day?...Our lives are **SHAPED**...by those decisions...*Psychology Today* **CALCULATES** that...we make up to 35,000 decisions each day...that would be over 2,000 decisions an hour assuming you sleep for 8 hours...or about 36 decisions per minute.
  - There are many things that influence our decisions...**ENVY**...**JEALOUSY**...**FEAR**...**JOY**...**CIRCUMSTANCES**...**LOVE**...**HATE**...**GREED**...**AMBITION**...**POWER**.
  - We have all been thrown into situations...where we have had to either choose to **COMPROMISE** our principles...due to external **PRESSURE**...or **CONFRONT** our circumstances...by exercising our **CONVICTION** to stand firm...based on our internal...**MORAL PRINCIPLES**!
  - **Daniel Chapter 3** provides us with a **DOCTORIAL** thesis...on making **DECISIONS** based on...**EITHER**...external **PRESSURE** or by internal **PRINCIPLE**!
    - So...with that in mind...I want you to **SEE** yourself in this chapter...I am not concerned if you see Shadrach, Meshach, or Abed-Nego...but I want you to consider how...you would respond in a **SIMILAR** situation.
    - I want you to put yourself in the sermon...because that is the only thing that’s ...going to make it **MEANINGFUL** for you.
      - **SLIDE** - How do you **CONFRONT** and **RESPOND**...to the world you live in?
        - ◆ Do you put God first?...Do you put His Word first?...Do you do what you do...based entirely upon internal **PRINCIPLE**?...Or do you vacillate...and compromise...and respond to...external **PRESSURE**? Daniel 3...gives us **EXAMPLES** of **BOTH**.
- ❖ **Dan. 3:1-30** – Principle vs. Pressure
  - **SLIDE** - **Ver. 1** – “**image of gold**” – Nebuchadnezzar...in his pride...constructed an image **ENTIRELY** of gold...in **OPPOSITION** to the dream’s interpretation.
    - “**sixty cubits**” – height = 90 ft...“**six cubits**” – width = 9 ft.
  - **Ver. 2** – Nebuchadnezzar called for 8 different **CLASSES** of officials:
    - **SLIDE** – **Walvoord**: “The satraps were chief representatives of the king, the administrators (prefects) were military commanders, and the governors were civil administrators. The counselors were advisers to those in governmental authority. The treasurers administered the funds of the kingdom, the judges were administrators of the law, and the magistrates passed judgment in keeping with the law. The other provincial officials were probably subordinates of the satraps. This list of officers probably included all who served in any official capacity under Nebuchadnezzar.”
  - **Ver. 4** – “**commanded**” – ordered – to be given orders
  - **Ver. 5** – “**fall down and worship**” – **FORCED** worship is not true **WORSHIP**...it is **SUBMISSION**...true worship is **SPONTEANEOUS**...and comes from the **HEART**.
  - **Ver. 7** – **SILENCE** is **ACCEPTANCE**!
    - All of these people...became **CONFORMERS**...they compromised any internal **PRINCIPLES** they may have had...and fell victim to external **PRESSURE**...in order to save their lives...or careers.
    - **SLIDE** – **MacArthur**: “In other words, typically, all of these leading politicians, and all of the hierarchy of Babylon were willing to do whatever it took to get the approval of Nebuchadnezzar. They would compromise all of their

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- convictions, whatever other deities they may or may not have worshiped, they would set all of that aside to do what was ever necessary for them to gain favor with this man, and to take themselves out of a position of being punished or even being killed because they failed to do it.”
- **SLIDE** – The 3 friends and the image
  - **Ver. 8** – “**Chaldeans**” - likely priests of Bel-Merodach who...were envious of the gifts and positions enjoyed...by these young Jewish men.
  - **Ver. 12** – **JEALOUSY** made these Chaldeans...become **INFORMERS!**
    - “**have not paid due regard to you**” – disregard your commands and do not respect you – not true or they would not have been promoted...“**they do not serve your gods**” – true...“**worship the gold image**” – also true... their **ALLEGIANCE** to **YAHWEH** is unmistakable!
  - **Ver. 14** – Nebuchadnezzar **OMITS** the **ACCUSATION**...about them not paying him any regard...he knew that was false.
  - **Ver. 15** – The king must have had a modicum of respect...for Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego...because he gave them a **SECOND** chance to **CONFORM** and **SUBMIT**.
    - “**who is the god who will deliver you from my hands?**” – What **PRIDE** and **ARROGANCE**...What about **Dan. 2:47**?
  - **Ver. 16** – Now put yourself in their shoes...imagine the **PRESSURE** to submit and conform...Nebuchadnezzar had stated “**if you are ready**”...they were **READY**... they basically respond to a king...who is in full “**rage and fury**.”...and say, “we don’t need time to think about our response...we will not bow!...that is **CHARACTER**...that is functioning of internal **PRINCIPLE**...not external **PRESSURE**.
    - **SLIDE** - Stephen Girard Story
  - **Ver. 17-18** – **SLIDE** – **MacArthur**: “In fact, maybe the most sublime statement any mortal ever makes in the whole of the Bible, maybe the greatest affirmation of true faith anywhere in holy Scripture. Verses 17 and 18. “If it be so, our God whom we serve” and that’s pretty direct “is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king”...one way or another. “But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.” End of speech, period, paragraph.”
    - **APPLICATION:** God is **ABLE** to deliver us “**from the burning fiery furnace**”... but “**He will deliver us.**”
      - “**But if not**” – **READ** **Hab. 3:17-19** → **Job 13:15** → **James 1:2-4**
  - **Ver. 24-25** – “**four men, loose walking in the midst of the fire**” – Sometimes being in the **MIDST** of the fire...is the only way to be let “**loose**”...to be set free...to experience **LIBERTY** in Christ.
  - **APPLICATION:** God is **ABLE** to deliver **FROM** the fire...God is **ABLE** to deliver us **THROUGH** the fire...but one thing is **CERTAIN**...God will be **WITH** us...**IN** the **MIDST** of the **FIRE!**...He **WILL** deliver us!...God is **ALWAYS** at **WORK** on your behalf!...even if you **CANNOT** see it!
  - **Ver. 28** – “**who trusted in Him**” → **Ver. 17-18.**

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- “**yielded their bodies**” – a perfect illustration of **Romans 12:1-2**...these men became **TRANSFORMERS!**

### ❖ **SLIDE - SUMMARY:**

- When you compromise your internal principles by allowing external pressure to impact your decisions...you become a **CONFORMER**.
- When you take a stand and act upon your internal principles...regardless of any consequences...you become a **TRANSFORMER**.
- God will deliver you **FROM** the fire, or **THROUGH** the fire and He will be with you **IN** the fire.

**SLIDE** - “When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,

My grace all sufficient shall be thy supply;

The flame shall not hurt thee; I only design

Thy dross to consume and thy gold to refine.”

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Stephen Girard, the unbelieving millionaire of Philadelphia, years past, told his clerks one Saturday that they had to come the next day and unload a shipment which had just arrived. Well, the next day was Sunday. One young man stepped up to the desk and said nervously, “Mr. Girard, I can’t work on Sunday.” “Well, sir,” replied the employer, “if you can’t do as I wish, we can separate.”

“I know that, sir,” said the young man. “And I know, too, that I have a widowed mother to care for, but I cannot work on Sunday.”

“Very well,” said Mr. Girard, “go to the cashier’s desk and he’ll settle with you.” For three long weeks the biographer says the young man tramped the streets looking for work, and one day a bank president asked Girard to name a suitable person for cashier of a new bank about to be started. After reflecting a moment, Girard named the young man he had just fired.

“But I thought you said you fired him,” said the bank president. “I did,” retorted Gerard, “because he wouldn’t work on Sunday. And I tell you, the man that will lose his job on account of principle is the man with whom you can trust your money.”