



## WEEK ONE: RESOLVED

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Daniel and his friends are heroes of the faith. Their resolve and steadfast courage made them men that all generations can look up to as role models. Children love the story of the lions' den and the fiery furnace. Mature believers marvel at their faith and conviction in the face of death. Was Daniel a rebel? Or, were he and his friends radically obedient? How can we follow closely after God, no matter the cost?

### Where Am I Today?

- 1) Take yourself *way back* to middle school. Make a list of a few of the things you thought you "must have" to be cool and liked by the other students. This can be anything from a certain type of shoe or a physical feature (like facial hair!). Enjoy sharing with each other your teenage angst!

Now also consider what it is *today* that you are expecting to satisfy your feelings of insecurity or your need to fit in and be liked. How is the world's value system affecting your desires and expectations?

### Into the Bible

- 2) **Read Daniel 1:1-16.** List all the obstacles and hardships Daniel and his friends experienced in this situation. What were they up against as God-followers, and as captive young men? If any of these are similar to things you are going through, circle them and jot your circumstances beside Daniel's predicament. For example: *He was*



*raised as royalty and now is a slave: "This is no longer the lifestyle I am accustomed to living."*

- 3) Daniel resolved not to defile himself. He chose to "draw the line" based on God's Word and as God prompted him. He then confidently and respectfully approached the chief official and enlisted his help. He and his friends agreed to a test period, in order to protect the official from repercussions. Take a look at the following passages and see if they suggest ways that God would bless your efforts as you follow him.
  - a. Matthew 18:19-20
  - b. Luke 10:1-9, 17-20
  - c. Acts 2:46-47
  
- 4) **Read** the rest of the chapter, Daniel 1:17-21. What specific attributes did these men have? Was this the result of the diet? Why do you think God blessed them in this way?

### **How Does This Apply?**

- 5) What does "rebel" mean to you? It has negative connotations to adults, but is an attractive word to teens. How does God expect us to be rebels and radically different? Be specific.



- 6) Last month we spent a lot of time talking about honoring and respecting the authorities above us. Yet now we are talking about rebelling against the world's way. It's all about actively, intentionally listening to and following God's direction. Have you ever had "the right" to take a stand, but God stopped you? Or, have you ever felt God ask you to be different—to resolve to obey Him instead of men—but you didn't follow-through?
- 7) Daniel and his friends were tested for ten days. They no longer were "under the radar" in their group. It was a huge lifestyle and faith test for them. At the end of that time, they were found to be in better shape than the other group of men. Christians should be like these committed men: ten times happier, effective, and hardworking. There should be ten times more peace and joy in their lives. Not always trouble-free lives, but ten times more comfort and wisdom. Are you an example, living a life that shows people the difference in a knowing Jesus? Where are you settling for mediocrity?
- 8) Where in your life is God saying: "I want you to radically follow me. You need to start doing this—or stop doing that—or think the way I think about this issue, or these people." What is He asking of you personally?

Here are the steps we were challenged to take, with God's help:

- Come up with a God-given plan.
- Talk it out with your family, friends, Life Group—and get their input and buy-in.



- Make some verbal commitments to take the four week challenge.
- Stick with it throughout this series and stay focused.

If you know what God is asking of you before your Life Group meets, you might want to share. If you haven't figured it out, ask for prayer, or other input from your group. Then agree to a ten-day or two-week "checkup" from your group. Give them permission to comment on your progress!

### **Digging Deeper: Going Further on Your Own**

- 9) A great example of beginning to sense a God-sized challenge and how to carry it through, from first thought to completion, is found in the Bible book of Nehemiah. It is Nehemiah's own journey of realizing the call and purpose that God had for his life...and the steps he takes to get there. Check out the following passages. Or if you dare, read the whole book! Make notes of actions or principles that will help you in your search for God's will and also direction for implementing the dream that God gives you.
  - a) Nehemiah 1:1-4
  - b) Nehemiah 1:11
  - c) Nehemiah 2:1-6
  - d) Nehemiah 2:11-18

There are many more leadership principles in the book of Nehemiah. Feel free to continue adding to this list as you continue reading his story!