

THE MAKING OF A MAN #24 Daniel

A man was driving home from work when he decided to stop and watch a Little League baseball game. He sat down behind the bench on the first-base line, and asked one of the boys for the score. "We're



behind 21 to zip," he answered with a huge smile. "Really," replied the man, "You sure don't look very discouraged for someone whose team is losing." With a puzzled look on his face the boy cried out over the cheers of yet another grand slam against his team, "Discouraged? Why should we be discouraged? We haven't been up to bat yet. And besides, my dad's the coach!" Similarly, Daniel and his TAG (Take And Give) team of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego seemed like they were always on the losing team until they got up to bat! Their winning attitudes prevailed because they understood that the Father was their Coach and they could not lose. So every time at bat, even against insurmountable odds, they scored big time as they trusted the Father! How did you do at your last 'at bat'? **Describe your attitude lately while living in culture which says you are a 'loser' (Rev 12:10-11).**

TEAM DANIEL: 1ST INNING (Daniel 1) From the cheap seats it seems like Daniel [*Dan* /judge + *El*/God = God is my judge] and his posse were born at the wrong time. They were just getting their driver's licenses and lining up a date to the prom at about 16 when their once great nation of Israel fell to the Babylonians (1-2) who took them into captivity for 70 years 900 miles east in modern day Iraq (605 BC). As a result of centuries of unfaithfulness and rejection of God, He allowed His people to be routed by this enemy. King Nebuchadnezzar was smart and commanded the best/brightest youth to serve in his government (4). They were forced to learn to read/write/speak a new language (4), adopt a foreign culture (4), eat different food (5), given pagan names (6-7) and castrated under the chief eunuch (3). But from God's point of view, Daniel and his friends were born at just the right time to not just survive but thrive and change the course of history when they faithfully stood strong instead of caving to culture. They understood that if you don't stand with the Lord in _____ you will fall for _____! This 'loser' team ended up sharing the grace of God with and witnessing to 4 Babylon kings (Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Darius, Cyrus) each of whom ended up declaring our Creator God as the One and only true God! **In what way(s) do you sometimes feel you're on the losing team with God? How do you act?**

(1:8-16) What curve ball was Daniel thrown for his first time at bat? Why was eating meat sacrificed to pagan gods against his convictions? What would be a modern day equivalent to Daniel's situation? Why do curve balls make great chisels? Where is God **testing** your convictions? How are you **trusting** His faithfulness?

(1:8; Romans 12:1-2; Col 2:8, 3:1-4; 2 Cor 10:4-6; Ps 119:9-11) In order to honor the Lord rather than cave to the culture what did Daniel decide to do? Why is it vital that God's men set their minds _____ they are up to bat and strike out? Over what issues is God calling you to "make up your mind" now before you are up to bat? Where are you being tempted to cave? Fathers/granddads, how can you specifically help your family stand strong when so many are caving? How can you teach them that in Christ they are on the winning team? How does God use abusive, abrasive, adversarial cultures to make us more like Jesus?



(1:17) List the 2-3 men who are on your team. Call them and share honestly your latest at bat, strike out or home run.

(1:9, 17, 20) How did God honor Team Daniel during their 1st 'at bat'? How has God given you favor when standing strong for Him? Taking a bold stand for God always _____ but pays big _____! One person's stand has the power to inspire others and change a nation. We are not suggesting that a miraculous outcome awaits everyone who stands with the Lord as a million martyrs each year can testify. But God will get the **glory**, you will **grow** and others will see/hear the **gospel**! Describe a time God honored you for taking a bold stand.

ASSIGNMENT: Please watch/discuss this 7 minute video from the Bible Project <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9cSC9uobtPM>

2nd INNING (Daniel 2) God puts Team Daniel (17-18) in yet another situation in which he needed to take a bold stand (5-6). What knuckle ball did the opposing team throw this time (1-12)?

(2:13-18) What was Daniel's countenance? To Whom did he turn?

(2:20-23, 37) To Whom did Daniel give all the credit? To whom do you give credit for your success, health, breath, pay check, family, friends, reputation, etc? How serious is God about this (4:24-37)?

(2:47) To Whom did Nebuchadnezzar finally give glory? Why?

3rd INNING (Daniel 3) Nefarious Babylonian leaders threw Team Daniel a changeup slider demanding that they change their convictions to worship what culture deems as important rather than God **(1-12)**. What are some ideas or practices which our culture demands that God's men worship? How does God use persecution as a great chisel to make us like Jesus? Where is God asking you to take a stand?

(3:16-18) How did Team Daniel stand with conviction [*con/with + vincer/conquer/courage*]? What was their thinking? On what aspects of God's character did they focus? How does a focus on God grow courage? Where do you need need courage in your life situation?

(3:19-23) What is the most difficult or dangerous situation you have faced as a Christ follower? How did you respond? What did you learn about God? Yourself? What steps will you take to prepare for the next time you need to take a stand? Did you confide in your team?

(3:24-27; John 8:35) When God turns up the heat in your life, what is the _____ thing which is burned up (25)? What effect did the fire have on Team Daniel? Why? Where does God promise to be when the cultural fires rage? Is He the key player on your team? Describe a time you realized that God was with you in the fire.

(3:28-30) How did Coach Nezzar of the opposing team respond to Team Daniel's steadfast conviction? How will our culture treat you?

4th INNING (Daniel 6) Daniel is now 80 and nominated for the Hall of Fame (3) when Team Darius throws a fast ball hoping to strike him out where it counts the most...his heart for the Lord. For Daniel some things in life are _____. List several for which you might pay dearly if you stay the course. What godly character traits did they use against Daniel (4-9)? How can/will your integrity and convictions be used against you? [**"Integrity"** (integer): Whole number; undivided/ indivisible.] Are you the same in public as in private?

(6:10-13; Ex 1:15-20; Acts 5:27-33; Rom 13) Is there a place in our lives for civil disobedience when our culture demands that we cave on our convictions before the Lord? Give an example for which you are prepared to pay a price! How did Daniel respond?

(6:14-20; 23-28) What impact did Daniel's integrity and civil disobedience have on king Darius?

(6:22, 26-27) Every time we stand for Christ in our culture no matter the price, who gets the **glory**? The **growth**? The **Gospel**? Give an example from your life.

(Jeremiah 33:16-19; Matt 28:16-20; Heb 13:5) No matter the adversity, God will be with us in the fire and the lion's den! But even with this truth, God often sends us encouraging messages. Jeremiah was written just prior to Israel's captivity explaining why the Lord is allowing this horrific event to take place but also giving hope and encouragement to sustain them. What encouragement did Team Daniel receive from Jeremiah 33:16-19 as they read and heard what circulated through the people of Israel during captivity?

TAG TEAM DISCUSSION: YOUR TURN AT BAT List 3 life principles from Team Daniel that you want in your life.

- 1
- 2
- 3

ASSIGNMENT: Please watch/discuss this 5 minute video from **'God's Not Dead'** with your wife and children 14 and above that they will most likely face in this world especially if they attend college.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hImNXvL7QV8>

NOTES

TEAM DANIEL: 1ST INNING (Daniel 1)

They understood that if you don't stand with the Lord in **EVERYTHING** you will fall for **ANYTHING!**

(1:8; Romans 12:1-2; Col 2:8, 3:1-4; 2 Cor 10:4-6; Ps 119:9-11)

Why is it vital that God's men set their minds **BEFORE** they are up to bat and strike out?

(1:9, 17, 20) How did God honor Team Daniel during their 1st 'at bat'? How has God given you favor when standing strong for Him? Taking a bold stand for God always **COSTS** but pays big **DIVIDENDS**.

3rd INNING (Daniel 3)

(3:24-27; John 8:35) When God turns up the heat in your life, what is the **ONLY** thing which is burned up (25)?

4th INNING (Daniel 6) Daniel is now 80 and nominated for the Hall of Fame (3) when Team Darius throws a fast ball hoping to strike him out where it counts the most...his heart for the Lord. For Daniel some things in life are **NONNEGOTIABLE**.