

20250525 An Excellent Spirit: Lessons from Daniel's Life – Duane

Someone once said, "God is more concerned with our character than our comfort."

Today, we'll see this truth in the life of Daniel, a man who faced great trials yet became the most outstanding figure of his generation. How did a foreign captive gain such favour and influence? Daniel 6:3 gives the answer: **"An excellent spirit was in him."** This excellent spirit—marked by integrity, obedience, and courage—set Daniel apart.

1. Integrity: Living Blamelessly in a Corrupt World

Firstly, Daniel was a man of integrity. Daniel 6:4-5 says, *"The governors and satraps [regional leaders] sought to find some charge against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find no charge or fault, because he was faithful and of excellent spirit. These men said, 'We shall not find any charge against this Daniel unless we find it against him concerning the law of his God.'"* In a corrupt government, jealous officials tried to undermine Daniel when they heard that King Darius was about to put him in charge, but his honesty and sincerity made him blameless. Even the testimony of Daniel's enemies reinforces his integrity, *"They could find no fault against him."*

The Hebrew word for integrity means honesty, sincerity, and single-minded devotion to God.

- Noah, is described as a man who was *"blameless among his people"* (Genesis 6:9).

In 1 Kings 9:4 God speaks to Solomon, King David's son, and says, *"As for you, if you walk before me in integrity of heart and uprightness, as David your father did..."* God uses David as an example for his son Solomon and tells him to walk in the same way. However, King Solomon, despite his wisdom, failed to walk in integrity and his divided loyalty led to spiritual compromise, causing God to judge his kingdom by tearing it apart after his reign (1 Kings 11:9-11).

Though Jesus does not use the word integrity He still encourages us to embrace its qualities in our lives. For example, sincerity and motive, Matthew 5:8, *"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."* *"Be careful not to do your 'acts of righteousness' before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven* (Matthew 6:1). Singleness of purpose, *"Love the Lord our God with all our heart"* (Matt 22:37) and to, *"Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness"* (Matt 6:33).

Integrity matters because, as Dr. Alexander Maclaren said, *"The world may not judge my faith, but it sees my conduct."* Paul says it this way in 2 Corinthians 3:2, *"...we are letters known and read by all men."*

Where is God calling you to align your actions with your beliefs? Maybe it's being honest in a tough situation or keeping your word when it's inconvenient, getting your assignments in on time, not showing up to work late or even speaking positively about people. Integrity reflects God's glory and builds an excellent spirit.

2. Obedience: Choosing God's Way Wholeheartedly

Daniel's integrity made him trustworthy, but his obedience to God set him apart further. In Daniel 1:8-9 we read, *"Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's delicacies... Now God had brought Daniel into the favour and goodwill of the chief of the eunuchs."* As a teenage captive, Daniel faced pressure to eat food that violated God's law. Despite his youth, he chose to obey God, and God granted him favour.

God asks Noah to build a boat; He gave him very specific instructions as to the size, shape, and materials to use. Genesis 6:22 says, *"So Noah did everything exactly as God had commanded him."* Notice that Noah obeyed completely and he obeyed exactly; this is obedience. Noah didn't ask why and furthermore, Noah didn't ignore any instructions.

For some, obedience might mean prioritising prayer despite a busy schedule. Others, it might be reading the Bible. What's one area where you can obey God more fully? Maybe it's forgiving someone who hurt you or just becoming a better husband or wife, a better father or mother.

The Psalmist in Psalm 100:2 describes how we should obey Him, *"Obey Him gladly."* Whole hearted obedience is done joyfully and with enthusiasm. In Psalm 119:33 we see David's attitude towards obedience, *"Just tell me what to do and I will do it, Lord. As long as I live I'll wholeheartedly obey."*

In 1 Sam 15:22 Samuel the great prophet says to Saul, the king of Israel at the time, *"Does the Lord take greater delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed or give attention to than the fat of rams."* Obedience is better than any other sacrifice we can offer God. When we obey God it proves that we love Him. Jesus said, *"If you love me, you will obey my commandments"* (John 14:15).

3. Courage: Standing Boldly for Faith

Daniel's excellent spirit shone brightest in his courage. In Daniel 6:9-10, when a decree banned prayer look what Daniel did, *"Therefore King Darius signed the written decree. Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days."*

In Daniel 5:17 we read about Daniel showing great courage when speaking to the ruler Belshazzar, *"Then Daniel answered, and said before the king, 'Let your gifts be for yourself, and give your rewards to another; yet I will read the writing to the king, and make known to him the interpretation.'" Daniel fearlessly interpreted a divine warning to King Belshazzar, declaring his kingdom's fall.*

Today, we need courage to live out our faith. This might mean sharing the gospel with a coworker, standing against secular pressures, or offering to pray for someone in need. Courage can also look like choosing not to join in gossip, showing love instead of judgment. Who can you pray for or share your faith with this week? Maybe a classmate, a relative, or someone you meet.

We each have the chance to stand out or shine in our workplaces and beyond because of by our integrity and the wisdom that comes from God.

Conclusion

Moving forward, what type of people should we be? Let's choose to be people of an excellent spirit—radiating integrity, embracing obedience, and walking boldly in courage. These qualities not only draw the favour of God but also earn the respect and trust of those around us. Choose excellence, and let it define who we are.