

# Living in a Pagan World Part 5 "Finish Strong"

## Series Review:

### This is a pagan culture therefore:

1. We need conviction to stand against the tide.
2. We need to learn to fight the right fights in the right way...using truth and wisdom.
3. We must get rid of the natural born killer...pride.

## The Story:

Daniel 6: 1-28

- The Kingdom has switched over to a new ruler.
- Daniel is an overseer of the Satraps.
- Darius is set to put Daniel in rule over the whole kingdom.
- The other administrators (peers) get jealous and want to bring Daniel down, but they can't find any grounds to have him removed.
- The other administrators trick the king into putting a law into place that will trap Daniel in his worship of God.
- The king makes the law.
- Daniel is arrested.
- He gets thrown in the lion's den.
- God protects him.
- The king kills the men who trick him.
- Darius rules that everyone will worship Daniel's God.
- Daniel continues to have favor through the rule of Darius and the next king.

## Daniel is still glorifying God after all this time in the pagan culture. How and Why?

### 1. He has conviction still...after all this time.

#### Daniel 6:4 (NLT)

Then the other administrators and high officers began searching for some fault in the way Daniel was handling government affairs, but they couldn't find anything to criticize or condemn. He was faithful, always responsible, and completely trustworthy.

#### Daniel 6:10 (NLT)

But when Daniel learned that the law had been signed, he went home and knelt down as usual in his upstairs room, with its windows open toward Jerusalem. He prayed three times a day, just as he had always done, giving thanks to his God.

#### Daniel 6:21-23 (NLT)

Daniel answered, "Long live the king! My God sent his angel to shut the lions' mouths so that they would not hurt me, for I have been found innocent in his sight. And I have not wronged you, Your Majesty." The king was overjoyed and ordered that Daniel be lifted from the den. Not a scratch was found on him, for he had trusted in his God.

### 2. His conviction led to action - standards.

#### What do standards look like?

#### Daniel 6:10-11 (NLT)

But when Daniel learned that the law had been signed, he went home and knelt down as usual in his upstairs room, with its windows open toward Jerusalem. He prayed three times a day, just as he had always done, giving thanks to his God. Then the officials went together to Daniel's house and found him praying and asking for God's help.

#### Daniel 6:16 & 20 (NLT)

So at last the king gave orders for Daniel to be arrested and thrown into the den of lions. The king said to him, "May your God, whom you serve so faithfully, rescue you." When he got there, he called out in anguish, "Daniel, servant of the living God! Was your God, whom you serve so faithfully, able to rescue you from the lions?"

### **1 Corinthians 10:23 (NLT)**

You say, "I am allowed to do anything"—but not everything is good for you. You say, "I am allowed to do anything"—but not everything is beneficial.

- Our question should not be, "How much can I get away with?" rather, "How much can I honor God with my life?"
- Too many of us are more passionate about our hobbies than our relationship with God.
- No mystery...the wapati...there is an amazing amount of mystery and wonder in discovering who God is.
- Perfection is our goal, not God's. God is honored while we try. Effort is what Daniel models for us.
- God's Word is a guide for our convictions and our lifestyle, not our cultures'.

### **3. He still cared about what God cared about. (Soft-Hearted)**

#### **Daniel 6:3 (NLT)**

Daniel soon proved himself more capable than all the other administrators and high officers. Because of Daniel's great ability, the king made plans to place him over the entire empire.

#### **Daniel 6:18-20 (NLT)**

Then the king returned to his palace and spent the night fasting. He refused his usual entertainment and couldn't sleep at all that night. Very early the next morning, the king got up and hurried out to the lions' den. When he got there, he called out in anguish, "Daniel, servant of the living God! Was your God, whom you serve so faithfully, able to rescue you from the lions?"

- Conviction while being crusty vs. conviction with a soft heart.

#### **Daniel 6:21-22 (NLT)**

Daniel answered, "Long live the king! My God sent his angel to shut the lions' mouths so that they would not hurt me, for I have been found innocent in his sight. And I have not wronged you, Your Majesty."

- The enemy hates these people.

### **How has Daniel maintained his consistency through all this time?**

- Maintained a state of desperation in this pagan culture.
- Desperation pushed him into the arms of God.
- He was passionate for...
  - i. His God
  - ii. His standards

### **What could our response be to this story?**

- New Testament example: Paul

#### **2 Timothy 4:6-8 (NLT)**

As for me, my life has already been poured out as an offering to God. The time of my death is near. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, and I have remained faithful. And now the prize awaits me—the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on the day of his return. And the prize is not just for me but for all who eagerly look forward to his appearing.

- Today:
  1. *We go after the people that have fallen away.*
  2. *We don't become one who has fallen away.*

- 3 *We re-evaluate our convictions and make adjustments.*
4. *We become consistent in our time with God.*

Scripture quotations marked NLT are taken from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright 1996, 2004. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, IL 60189. All rights reserved.