

Steward of two Economies - T3

Christians must live consciously aware of two realities:

- (1) the tangible world where they live and work, created by God; and,
- (2) the spiritual world with its eternal perspective, also created by God.

Jesus gave us a sneak preview of how this works; He was literally standing and speaking in Jerusalem; yet rightfully claimed to be in heaven)

Jn.3:13 NKJV:

"No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven."

Jn.3:13 AMPC:

"And yet no one has ever gone up to heaven, but there is One Who has come down from heaven—the Son of Man [Himself], Who is (dwells, has His home) in heaven."

Jn.3:13 JUB:

"And no one has ascended up to the heaven but he that came down from the heaven, even the Son of man, who is in the heaven."

We are not allowed to permanently withdraw from one to meditate on the other; nor are we allowed to compromise the principles of the eternal in order to thrive in the tangible.

In the face of cultural norms that challenge our spiritual principles, we must find ways to adhere to them.

And, in doing so, we must also serve with diligence, competence, and admiration in the workplace and in society at large.

Christians often feel trapped, thinking they have few options when facing these conflicts.

BABYLON HAD A PLAN FOR DANIEL: Da. 1:3-21 NIV

3 Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, the chief of his eunuchs, to bring some of the sons of Israel, some of the king's descendants, and some of the nobles—4 young men without blemish, good-looking, endowed with all wisdom, knowledge, and quick understanding, capable of serving in the king's palace and who could teach them the language and literature of the Chaldeans. 5 The king assigned them a daily provision of the king's food and the wine he drank, and three years of training for them, so that at the end of that time they would serve before the king. 6 Among the sons of Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. 7 The chief of the eunuchs gave these names: to Daniel, Belteshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abednego. 8 But Daniel set his heart on not defiling

himself with the king's portion of food or with the wine which he drank; therefore he desired of the chief of the eunuchs that he might not be allowed to defile himself. 9 Now God had placed Daniel in the favor and goodwill of the chief of the eunuchs. 10 And the chief of the eunuchs said to Daniel, "I fear my lord the king, who has appointed your food and your drink. Why should he see your faces worse than those of young men your age? Then you would put my head in danger before the king." 11 Then Daniel said to the steward whom the chief of the eunuchs had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, 12 "Please test your servants for ten days, and let them give us vegetables to eat and water to drink. 13 Then let our appearance be examined before you, and the appearance of the young men who eat the king's portion of food; and do whatever you think is right, so you will do to your servants." 14 So he agreed with them in this matter and tested them for ten days. 15 And at the end of ten days, their features appeared better and fatter than all the young men who ate the king's portion of food. 16 So the steward took their portion of food and the wine they were to drink, and gave them vegetables. 17 As for these four young men, God gave them knowledge and understanding in all kinds of literature and wisdom; and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams. 18 At the end of the days, when the king commanded them to be brought, the chief of the eunuchs brought them before Nebuchadnezzar. 19 Then the king examined them, and among them all there was not found anyone like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. Therefore they served before the king. 20 And in every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers who were in all his kingdom. 21 Thus Daniel continued until the first year of King Cyrus.

Babylon's plan for Daniel & co.

1. Name change - change of identity.
2. Indoctrination through language and literature (when you embrace the language and culture of the world, you'd produce worldly results)
3. Food - change of appetite.

The episode where the Babylonian King (Nebuchadnezzar) teaches Daniel and his friends the language and literature of the Babylonians and offers them food from his table (Daniel 1) holds a deep spiritual significance.

Here's a breakdown of the key spiritual themes:

1. Cultural Assimilation vs. Spiritual Identity

Spiritual significance:

This moment illustrates a test of faith and identity. The Babylonian king's intent was not just educational—it was part of a broader strategy to assimilate the best of the conquered people into Babylonian culture. By teaching them the language and literature and giving them food from his table, the goal was to reshape their minds, loyalties, and even faith.

Daniel and his friends resist complete assimilation. While they learn the language and literature (which they could not avoid), they draw the line at eating food that may be ritually unclean or dedicated to idols—maintaining their spiritual integrity (Daniel 1:8).

2. God's Sovereignty in Exile

Spiritual significance:

Despite being in exile, God is in control. The fact that Daniel and his friends are placed in the Babylonian court, educated, and eventually promoted shows that God can use foreign systems and pagan rulers to accomplish His purposes.

Their wisdom and favor with the king (Daniel 1:17–20) show that God empowers His people, even in hostile environments.

3. Divine Wisdom vs. Worldly Knowledge

Spiritual significance:

The contrast between the world's knowledge (Babylonian literature) and God's wisdom is central.

While Daniel and his friends gain mastery in the Babylonian system, their true power comes from divine revelation.

Daniel's ability to interpret dreams (Daniel 2) surpasses all the Chaldean "experts."

This reinforces the biblical idea that God's wisdom is superior to human systems.

4. Purity and Holiness in a Foreign Land

Spiritual significance:

The refusal to eat the king's food (Daniel 1:8–16) reflects the importance of remaining pure and holy, even in exile. The food likely violated Jewish dietary laws or was offered to idols—either way, it would represent spiritual compromise.

Their choice to eat only vegetables and water becomes a symbol of faithful resistance.

God honors their commitment by making them healthier and wiser.

5. Faithfulness Leads to Elevation

Spiritual significance:

Daniel and his friends are eventually elevated in status (Daniel 1:19–20), demonstrating the principle that faithfulness to God brings favor, even in secular or oppressive systems.

SUMMARY TABLE:

Element	Spiritual Significance
Learning Babylonian literature	Exposure to pagan culture; test of discernment and identity
King's food	Temptation to compromise holiness; test of faithfulness
Daniel's refusal	Loyalty to God above earthly kings
Divine favor and wisdom	God's power exceeds worldly knowledge
Rise in Babylonian court	God honors faithfulness, even in exile

This story is not just about Daniel's diet or education—it's a rich spiritual narrative about how believers can remain faithful in a foreign land, maintain their identity in God, and trust that God's sovereignty transcends nations, cultures, and kings. It's a timeless model of faithful presence in exile, relevant for any believer navigating a world that often conflicts with spiritual convictions

Daniel's Response:

1. Daniel was well grounded and prioritized his relationship with God (Mark 3:13-14; John 17:3; Da.6:10;1 The.5:17-18).
2. He was determined to seek first God's kingdom and His righteousness; he did what he could and trusted God to do what only He could do (Matthew 6:33).
3. He remained faithful in the face of trials; he understood that God expects faithfulness even in the face of trials; he will not eat at the king's table (1 Corinthians 10:21).
4. He used his gifts to honor God (well favored, skilled in all wisdom, discernment, understanding, apt for learning)—we are also gifted—(see 2 Peter 2:3-8 TPT):

"Everything we could possibly need for life and godliness has already been deposited within us by his divine power. For all this was lavished on us through the rich experience of knowing him who called us by name and invited us to him through a glorious display of his kindness. As a result, he has given you magnificent, priceless promises, so that through the power of these tremendous promises we may experience fellowship with the divine nature, through which you have escaped the corrupt desires of the world. Therefore, devote yourselves to generously supplementing your faith with kindness; and to kindness add understanding; and to understanding, the strength of self-control; and to self-control, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, mercy toward the brothers and sisters; and to mercy, mercy toward the brothers and sisters. To others, add unfailing love. Since these virtues are already rooted within you and you possess

them in abundance, they will keep you from being inactive or fruitless in your quest to know Jesus Christ more intimately.

5. Daniel was creative: he offered an idea; he employed God's creative genius (since he was created in the image of the Creator of the Universe).

CONCLUSIONS:

- God expects faithfulness even in the face of trials.
- God also expects us to give our best, even when the authority over us is not someone we would choose if we had the freedom to do so.
- We are to serve our employers with the same integrity and competence with which we serve God.
- Christians are not promised that their jobs will be easy, but they are promised that God will always be with them in those jobs.
- Trials never give us permission to do less than our best to be faithful to the standards God has set.
- God often uses difficult circumstances to move us to where He intends to use us more effectively, that is, Joseph

T -3 Walking with God: Biblical Examples of Deep Relationship with Him”

Key Scripture: James 4:8 – “Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you.”

Introduction: The Invitation to Relationship

- God does not call us to religion alone, but to relationship.
- From Genesis to Revelation, the Bible is the story of a God who pursues intimacy with His people.
- We'll be looking at 7 biblical figures whose lives model what it means to walk closely with God—lessons that still speak powerfully to us today.

1. Enoch – The Quiet Walk (Genesis 5:24)

"Enoch walked faithfully with God; then he was no more, because God took him away."

Point: Enoch's life was marked not by achievement, but by daily, faithful communion with God.

Application: In a noisy world, sometimes the most powerful testimony is quiet, consistent closeness to God.

Exhortation: Make space daily to walk with God—not just to do things for Him, but to be with Him (we take on his aroma when we've been with him- 2 Co.2:15-16; Acts 4:13 NKJV)

2. Abraham – Trust that Builds Friendship (James 2:23)

"He was called God's friend."

Point: Abraham's journey shows that deep relationship grows through trust and obedience, even when God's commands are hard to understand.

Application: Faith is the foundation of friendship with God.

Exhortation: Don't wait to understand everything—walk in faith, and relationship will deepen along the way (Ge.12:1,4; he trusted God's word, like children trust us when we promise to take them on a trip ie Disney World)

3. Moses – Face-to-Face Fellowship (Exodus 33:11,15)

"The Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend."

Point: Moses didn't want to go anywhere unless God went with him. He knew that God's presence was more important than any blessing.

Application: Prioritize God's presence over performance. Make time in His presence non-negotiable.

Exhortation: If your life is too busy for prayer and stillness, it's too busy for power (Ex.33:13; Ps.103:7)

4. David – A Heart that Pursues (Acts 13:22, Psalms)

"A man after My own heart."

Point: David's intimacy with God wasn't because he was perfect, but because he was passionately in pursuit—through praise, repentance, and honest relationship.

Application: God isn't looking for perfection, but authenticity.

Exhortation: Come to Him just as you are.

Pour out your heart—He can handle it (Ps.27:4; 84:10; 132:1-5)

5. Daniel – Devotion in a Hostile World (Daniel 6:10)

"He prayed three times a day, just as he had done before."

Point: Daniel maintained his relationship with God regardless of pressure or persecution.

Application: Relationship with God must be cultivated with discipline and consistency, even when culture pushes back.

Exhortation: In a world that wants you to compromise, hold on to God in prayer (Da.2:16-18; Amos 3:7; Ps.25:14; 1Co.2:9-10 - can God trust you with His secrets?)

6. Mary of Bethany – Choosing What's Better

"Mary has chosen what is better..."

Point: Mary chose to sit at Jesus' feet rather than be distracted by religious or cultural expectations.

Application: Our relationship with God thrives when we prioritize being with Him over doing for Him.

Exhortation: Slow down. Don't let busyness rob you of intimacy (Lk.7:37-47; 10:38-42; Jo.11:1-2; 12:1-3)

7. Jesus – The Model of Intimacy (Mark 1:35, John 17)

"Very early in the morning... Jesus went to a solitary place to pray."

Point: If Jesus, the Son of God, needed regular communion with the Father, how much more do we?

Application: Our strength comes from secret place moments.

Exhortation: Seek solitude. Meet God before you meet the world
(Jn.5:19,30;15:5; 10:27)

Closing Challenge:

- God desires relationship, not just results.
- Draw near to Him—not just on Sundays, but every day.
- Like Enoch, Abraham, Moses, David, Daniel, Mary, and Jesus... your relationship with God can become the defining reality of your life.

Final Scripture:

Jeremiah 29:13 – "You will seek Me and find Me when you seek Me with all your heart."