

LESSON 7 Devotional

Personal Integrity

As a young man, Daniel and his friends were dragged from their home, the palace of Jerusalem, and taken 1,600 miles away to Babylon. They were forced to join a management training program, of sorts, for the most wicked king in the world, Nebuchadnezzar.

Daniel was a well-trained Jewish boy who feared God. Throughout the years and in the most challenging of circumstances, Daniel continually proved that he was a man with personal integrity and one that was above reproach.

We realize the depth of Daniel's wisdom and integrity almost immediately in Daniel 1:8 where we read, *"But Daniel made up his mind that he would not defile himself with the king's choice food or with the wine which he drank; so he sought permission from the commander of the officials that he might not defile himself."*

Consuming food sacrificed to idols was not something Daniel was willing to do, so he took a stand to maintain his personal integrity. In doing so, he needed to devise a creative solution that both maintained his values *and* acknowledged his superior's authority.

Ultimately, Daniel convinced his boss to allow him and his friends to take a test. They were to be given permission to eat nothing but vegetables and drink only water. If they remained physically fit, then they would be allowed to maintain their special diet.

When the test worked, Daniel effectively averted his personal crisis while building respect with his superiors. Sometimes maintaining our integrity takes resolve and clear boundaries around our values.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What do you admire most about the life of Daniel? Why?

2. Read Psalm 15:1 below:

1“O Lord, who may abide in Your tent? Who may dwell on Your holy hill? 2He who walks with integrity, and works righteousness, and speaks truth in his heart. 3He does not slander with his tongue, nor does evil to his neighbor, nor takes up a reproach against his friend; 4In whose eyes a reprobate is despised, but who honors those who fear the Lord; He swears to his own hurt and does not change; 5He does not put out his money at interest, nor does he take a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things will never be shaken.” (NASB)

Verses 3 through 5 help define the life of integrity previously referenced in verse 2. Discuss which of these attributes you find hardest to maintain in your own life.

3. Discuss what fruit might come from your life if you modeled each of these characteristics discussed in Psalm 15.

- a. How would you feel about a friend's life if these words were spoken about them at their funeral?

- b. How would you feel if these words were spoken about you at your funeral?

4. What steps would help you become more like the person the psalmist describes in this passage?
