

# Walk it Out

## Daniel 1:8, 17

### Dr. Paul Cannings

#### A. Be Determined (vs. 8-9):

1. Made Up; Put – Daniel, with no plans to ever cease from repeating this action, is determined that his mind would only be committed to do what God instructed him to do.

a) At first glance this request seems simple enough, but a number of factors rendered this a courageous act. (1) To refuse the royal diet could have been taken as an insult to the king and as an act of direct disobedience to Nebuchadnezzar's orders. (2) Pressure from Daniel's peers most certainly made the decision difficult. Everyone else was doing it. By choosing this course of action, Daniel and his friends were setting themselves apart from the others. Now they were different, strange. (3) Such unorthodox behavior could have jeopardized their chances for advancement. (4) The quality of food would have been attractive. It was the best in the land. (5) Their new location may have tempted them to be unfaithful. Judah was nine hundred miles away; parents and friends would never know whether or not they kept God's laws. Yet Daniel and his friends were aware of a very important fact. Other people might not know their actions, but God would know, and someday everyone will give an account of themselves to him. (6) It would have been natural to argue that since God had not protected them from captivity—this horrible situation—they did not have to be careful to obey His commands. They could have become bitter toward God during this time. Sometimes believers fall into this trap. All of these factors could have caused some people to compromise, but Daniel and his friends remained faithful to their God.<sup>[1]</sup>

2. Mind/Heart – Setting his mind to only be committed to God's Word is to passionately seek to understand what needs to be done and then with determination work to allow oneself to see it to completion.

a) How can God's people resist the pressures that can "squeeze" them into conformity with the world? According to Romans 12:1–2, "conformers" are people whose lives are controlled by pressure from without, but "transformers" are people whose lives are controlled by power from within. Daniel and his three friends were transformers: instead of being changed, they did the changing! God used them to transform the minds of powerful rulers and to bring great glory to His name in a pagan land.<sup>[2]</sup>

b) For the Jews, the heart was the seat of the will and intelligence of a person, rather than of the emotions and feelings. One commonly-used English idiom that reflects the meaning of the Hebrew expression is "made up his mind" (tev). Some other verbs that may be used to express the same idea are "intended," "determined," "resolved," or "purposed."<sup>[3]</sup>

3. Defile Himself – Daniel purposed in his heart, based on Levitical law, to not ever make himself ceremonially unclean. Nothing Daniel did during the week would ever conflict with his commitment to live pure before God.

a) They were assigned food from the king's table which means that they received the best from the king (vs. 5). This food however, violated God's law about what the Israelites were to eat (vs.8).

b) *Gā'al* ("defile") occurs eleven times in the Old Testament (e.g., Mal 1:7, 12; Ezra 2:62; Neh 7:64; Isa 59:3) and refers to moral or ceremonial defilement. In this case Daniel would have been defiled on both counts.<sup>[4]</sup>

c) Similar problems would arise in drinking the wine. To abstain from the Old Testament prohibition against "strong drink" (e.g., Prov. 20:1, kjv; Isa. 5:11, "drinks"), Jews customarily diluted wine with water. Some added 3 parts of water to wine, others 6 parts, and some as much as 10 parts of water to 1 part of wine. The Babylonians did not dilute their wine. So both the food and the drink would have defiled these Jewish young men. Daniel knew the requirements of the Law governing what he should and should not eat and drink.<sup>[5]</sup>

d) Actually, all food in Babylon was considered unclean by the Hebrews (cf. Ezek. 4:13; Hos. 9:3–4). But the point is that the men were submissive to their captors in

everything except those things that would lead to disobedience to God. They would not be defiled.<sup>[6]</sup>

4. Sought Permission - Daniel relentlessly did everything he could do to get the attention of those in charge so that they do not ask him to violate the Word of God. Daniel knew that as soon as they got the food before him, it would be he who was refusing to do what the king was saying. Daniel being a Jew that had been captured would probably lose his life.

a) In setting forth his reasons for the request, Daniel would have had an indirect opportunity to share his faith with Ashpenaz. From a study of the book, it may be observed that Daniel was a witness throughout his life and probably had great influence in spreading the knowledge of Yahweh throughout that part of the world.<sup>[7]</sup>

5. Defiled – By persisting in going to those in charge Daniel protected himself and his friends from making himself unclean before God. This is important as well because Daniel relentlessly prayed to God. He wanted to be acceptable before God and did so in a religious environment that was godless.

a) Nebuchadnezzar had made abundant provision for the captives. Theirs was a life of luxury, not deprivation; for they were given a portion of food and wine daily from the king's own table. However, this food did not conform to the requirements of the Mosaic Law.<sup>[8]</sup>

## **B. God Has Your Back (v. 9):**

1. God Granted – The supreme God who rules the universe generously responded to Daniel's faith and trusted in him.

a) Daniel was not afraid of being tested because he was in God's will and was determined to obey God's word (vs.12,14,15).

2. Favor; Lovingkindness – Daniel’s commitment caused God to decide to steadfastly demonstrate His kindness towards him. In other words God obligated Himself to be loyal to Daniel by being benevolent towards him.
  
3. Compassion; Bowels – No matter how powerful the Babylonians were, God who is supreme over all will supersede anything they can do to hurt Daniel by demonstrating His tender mercy towards him. This did not ensure that Daniel would not have troubles. It means that God would keep him in the midst of his troubles and rescue him (Psalm 34:17-19).
  
4. In the Sight of the Commander – God’s kindness and compassion to Daniel was executed by moving the heart of the commander to work with Daniel’s recommendation. The pressure and need to act is still on Daniel. God was ahead of Daniel so that when he approached the commander, the commander would respond appropriately.

## **C. God Makes a Way (vs. 17):**

1. God Gave Knowledge – The supreme God who rules the universe generously put into Daniel and his friends the skill to decipher the most intricate issues with great wisdom and understanding. This caused Daniel to become a great asset in the Babylonian kingdom.
  - a) Key verses: Job 12:13 -- "To God alone belongs wisdom and power; counsel and understanding are His."
  
2. Intelligence/Insight – God also properly prepared them to be prudent with their decisions so that they could provide practical applications to the complex issues they may have experienced.
  
3. Wisdom – God so blessed Daniel and his friends to handle any literature or requirements to judge issues, based on the knowledge He provided them; they brilliantly

demonstrated a clear understanding of everything. Their advice to the king or his officials would be impeccable.

4. Understood; Discerning – Daniel and his friends, with brilliancy, are able to distinguish good and evil. These four young men, because of their undeterred commitment to the Lord, will rise to the top of all those who serve the king. God has now infiltrated the Babylonian kingdom with His righteousness, all because of the commitment of four young boys.

a) Daniel had a special gift not possessed by the others. “And Daniel” might better be translated “but Daniel,” presenting a sharp contrast between Daniel and the other three boys. The young prophet was miraculously endowed with a gift highly prized in that day, especially in Babylon—the ability to “understand” all kinds of “visions and dreams.”<sup>[9]</sup>

5. Understood; Discerning – These young men’s decision to put their lives in God’s hands was all God needed to pour into them the ability and strength to powerfully influence the course of a nation. It did not mean they were not placed into a fire or a den of lions, but what it meant was that their trials when combined with who God designed them to be, became a hallmark for change.

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<sup>[1]</sup> Miller, S. R. (1994). [Daniel](#) (Vol. 18, pp. 67–68). Broadman & Holman Publishers.

<sup>[2]</sup> Wiersbe, W. W. (2000). [Be resolute](#) (pp. 15–16). Victor.

<sup>[3]</sup> Péter-Contesse, R., & Ellington, J. (1994). [A handbook on the Book of Daniel](#) (p. 18). United Bible Societies.

<sup>[4]</sup> Miller, S. R. (1994). [Daniel](#) (Vol. 18, p. 66). Broadman & Holman Publishers.

<sup>[5]</sup> Pentecost, J. D. (1985). [Daniel](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, pp. 1330–1331). Victor Books.

<sup>[6]</sup> Hughes, R. B., & Laney, J. C. (2001). [Tyndale concise Bible commentary](#) (p. 315). Tyndale House Publishers.

<sup>[7]</sup> Miller, S. R. (1994). [Daniel](#) (Vol. 18, p. 68). Broadman & Holman Publishers.

<sup>[8]</sup> Pentecost, J. D. (1985). [Daniel](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, p. 1330). Victor Books.

<sup>[9]</sup> Miller, S. R. (1994). [Daniel](#) (Vol. 18, p. 70). Broadman & Holman Publishers.