

Establishing Boundaries

Establishing boundaries in our life, will keep us safe from potential danger and shame.

Establishing boundaries help us control our hungry fleshly appetite.

Consider the consequences of living life with no limits?

In 605 B.C. the Babylonian army under the reign of King Nebuchadnezzar besiege the city of Jerusalem.

The Babylonians set out to destroy the Israelites identity and culture in becoming a slave state.

Daniel 1:3-4 Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, chief of his court officials, to bring into the king's service some of the Israelites from the royal family and the nobility - young men without any physical defect, handsome, showing aptitude for every kind of learning, well informed, quick to understand, and qualified to serve in the king's palace. He was to teach them the language and literature of the Babylonians.

Nebuchadnezzar enriches himself with Israel's treasure, and the best and the brightest young men.

1:5-7 The king assigned them a daily amount of food and wine from the king's table. They were to be trained for three years, and after that they were to enter the king's service. Among those who were chosen were some from Judah: Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. The chief official gave them new names: to Daniel, the name Belteshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abednego.

They gave Daniel a new name - Belteshazzar. Meaning: "Bel will take care of you and watch over you" or "Bel is your defender."

Daniel realized they were stripping away his identity and everything he believed in.

Daniel decided to do something.

*1:8 But Daniel resolved **not to defile himself** with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission **not to defile himself** in this way.*

This was a major insult to Nebuchadnezzar.

Daniel understood that to compromise his convictions would weaken his resolve.

The tension within us to go beyond the limits weakens our resolve and our determination to resist.

Daniel decided enough was enough and by saying no, he could potentially lose his life.

1:9 NOW GOD had caused the official to show favor and compassion to Daniel.

The “*Now God*” part is where God uses the boundaries we set to protect us and to redirect us.

1:10-16 but the official told Daniel, “I am afraid of my lord the king, who has assigned your food and drink. Why should he see you looking worse than the other young men your age? The king would then have my head because of you.” ¹¹ Daniel then said to the guard whom the chief official had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, ¹² “Please test your servants for ten days: Give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink. ¹³ Then compare our appearance with that of the young men who eat the royal food, and treat your servants in accordance with what you see.” ¹⁴ So he agreed to this and tested them for ten days. ¹⁵ At the end of the ten days they looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who ate the royal food. ¹⁶ So the guard took away their choice food and the wine they were to drink and gave them vegetables instead.

Because of Daniel’s stance, God used Daniel’s decision to direct his life from then on.

Daniel had no idea what hung in the balance of his decision and we have no idea what hangs in the balance of our decision to adhere to the boundaries we set in our life.

BIG IDEA: Character is doing what is right, as defined by God, regardless of the personal cost.

God honoured Daniel's decision to stand by his convictions.

1:17-21 To these four young men God gave knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning. And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds. ¹⁸ At the end of the time set by the king to bring them into his service, the chief official presented them to Nebuchadnezzar. ¹⁹ The king talked with them, and he found none equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; so they entered the king's service. ²⁰ In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanterers in his whole kingdom. ²¹ And Daniel remained there until the first year of King Cyrus.

Refusing to establish personal boundaries, will erode our ability to say no!

Our greatest regrets could have been avoided if we had established boundaries.

Like Daniel, we need to make the right decisions to keep on track because we **know** how our story will end if we don't - join the dots!

God will use our right decisions to help **direct** our life for good.

Our greatest regrets could have been avoided if we had established boundaries. **Future regrets** can be avoided.

What is **THAT** decision you need to make today?