



Life Principles Notes™

The Convictions We Live By

Summary:

Your convictions define who you are.

They guide your decisions and determine your character. Those who live by their convictions are not swayed by their personal preferences or popular opinions. They live by scriptural principles. Strong, biblically-based values are essential for everyone who wants to lead a godly life.

But what is a conviction? It's a belief we hold to be true, no matter what. In today's culture, you and I need to base our standards on biblical truth.

Then we will be firmly anchored in God's Word, ready to face whatever challenges come our way. Only by acknowledging our dependence on the Lord for His guidance and protection can we survive in a culture that is increasingly hostile to Christianity.

Key Passage: Daniel 1:1-8

Supporting Scripture: Exodus 34:12-16; Jeremiah 25:9-12; Daniel 3:8-30; 4:19-27; 5:1-31; 6:1-28; Acts 4:19-20

Scriptural Principles:

1 The Bible is full of stories of believers who had uncompromising convictions.

Noah needed strong faith to build an ark, despite the ridicule of his neighbors. But he trusted God when He said there would be a flood. Although Paul was persecuted, stoned, imprisoned, beaten, and eventually martyred, he didn't compromise his convictions. When the authorities told Peter and John to stop preaching about Jesus, they replied, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge; for we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:19-20).

The Lord wants us to live by conviction. Unfortunately, most people live by preference. They ask themselves, *What do I desire? What is the easiest or best for my life? What will bring the most satisfaction or acceptance?* For a believer, our decisions should be based on personal convictions—strong beliefs we hold based on the truth of God's Word—rather than our preferences.

2 Daniel faced unusually challenging circumstances in a foreign land.

He was probably only a teenager when Jerusalem, the capital of Judah, fell to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon (Jer. 25:9-12). Daniel, along with other young, male, attractive, intelligent Hebrew captives, was selected to train for serving the king. As part of the process to assimilate them into Babylonian culture, the men were given new names that referred to the pagan god of the king. They were also told to eat the rich food of the king's table. Far away from their homeland, families, and priests, little or nothing would reinforce their identity as Jews.

But Daniel and his friends felt strongly that they were not to eat the king's food. It had not been prepared according to Jewish dietary laws and may have been offered to idols (Ex. 34:12-16). So they asked their leader for permission to eat only vegetables for 10 days. At the end of that time, they looked better than the men who were eating from the king's table and were granted permission to continue eating only vegetables.

3 What was Daniel like? He was a man of:

Principle. “Daniel made up his mind that he would not defile himself with the king's choice food” (Dan. 1:8). His homeland was far away, and his parents were probably dead. Yet he determined to obey the Lord and leave all the consequences to Him.

Courage. For refusing to eat the king's food, Daniel and his friends could have lost their lives. But they knew that one compromise could lead to another, and they chose to honor God's laws instead.

Faith. When Daniel asked for the 10-day trial, he told a supervisor that this diet would cause them to look better than their peers.

Humility. Notice that the young man respectfully asked his leader for permission to try eating only vegetables. His modest attitude won the favor of the supervisor.

4 Daniel and his friends faced consequences because of their determination to live by godly convictions.

Promotion: When Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah entered the king's service, Nebuchadnezzar found them ten times better than his other men. Later in Daniel, the prophet distinguished himself from the other 120 administrators with his excellent service. God gave him a long life because he was a man of solid convictions. Daniel worked and ministered for 70 years, through the reigns of four kings: Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar of Babylon, Darius king of the Chaldeans, and Cyrus king of Persia.

Testing: Daniel courageously told Nebuchadnezzar that the king would become insane if he didn't change his ways (Dan. 4:19-27). The prophet fearlessly declared to Belshazzar that his kingdom would come to an immediate end (Dan. 5:1-31). Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego boldly refused to bow down to the golden image of Nebuchadnezzar, despite the threat of being thrown into a blazing furnace (Dan. 3:16-18). Daniel continued to pray to the Lord when it was outlawed and spent one night in the lion's den as a consequence (Dan. 6:1-20).

5 What can believers expect when we live by our convictions?

God's protection: The Lord covered these godly young men in each situation they faced.

Pain and testing: Those who want to live according to their convictions will be tested. When you are falsely accused and mistreated, stick to your moral standards. The history of our faith is filled with men and women who refused to deny their convictions, even to the point of death.

Promotion: As we saw in the lives of Daniel and his three friends, God will honor and promote those who hold firmly to godly beliefs.

The Lord's work in the lives of others: Over and over, the kings whom Daniel served under all acknowledged the one true God. People today want to know if your life is consistent with biblical values because they've seen other Christians say one thing and do another. Be a believer who lives according to godly standards wherever you are—at home, work, play, and in the community.

Conclusion:

The story of Daniel provides us with a powerful example of how to stand up for our convictions. He was a long way from his home and family in the midst of a pagan culture that wanted to strip him of the values he held as a Jew. The Babylonians planned to mold him, along with the other young men, into thinking and acting just like them. As believers in an increasingly secular culture, we need to learn from Daniel's determination.

Instead of allowing society to set our values and priorities, you and I should base our convictions on the Bible. Like Daniel, we need to purpose not to defile ourselves with ungodly choices and behavior. Ask God to grant you the desire and the courage to be a man or woman who lives by your convictions, no matter what. 🙏

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