**Standing for Your Convictions**

Truth Sowers Life Group

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A couple of weeks ago, we talked about why Christianity is hated more than any other faith in the world. Someone suggested one of the reasons is because Christianity is based on ABSOLUTE MORAL TRUTHS.

Something dangerous is happening in this country in our generation. We have a whole new, young generation being raised who believe there are no ABSOLUTE MORAL TRUTHS. For example: “If I think it’s wrong, it’s wrong.” “If you think it’s right, it’s right.” So therefore, RIGHT AND WRONG depend on a person’s circumstance or what they are looking for in life. And obviously the Bible could have no use in such a culture so it must be thrown out!

Because of this there is no ABSOLUTE MORAL TRUTH, there is no STANDARD, there’s nothing SOLID TO GIVE GUIDANCE AND DIRECTION. As a result our society has become UNSAFE, UNHEALTHY, UNGODLY, IMMORAL, and on and on the characteristics go that INEVITABLY, GOD IS GOING TO HAVE TO JUDGE THIS NATION AND IN FACT, GOD IS ALREADY JUDGING THIS NATION.

With this attitude, before long everyone does what they think is right in their own eyes. This is extremely dangerous for a nation. It is not getting better. It is only getting worse.

God did the same thing to Israel and Judah. There sin continually came before Him and he finally allowed them to be destroyed.

1. During the time of Daniel, Israel had been conquered and Nebuchadnezzar had taken many of the Hebrew people back to Babylon.
	1. Daniel remained faithful to God
	2. Daniel was promoted even among his captors and given great authority.
	3. Daniel had favor **Psalm 5:12**
	4. Daniel’s favor lasted through 4 rulers of Babylon
		1. Nebuchadnezzar
		2. Belteshazzar his son
		3. Darius the Mede
		4. Cyrus the Persian
2. In the Book of Daniel we learn about Daniel and three of his friends, Shadrach, Meschach and Abednego.
3. Daniel and his friends stuck to their CONVICTIONS.

Daniel 6:1-5ESV

It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom 120 satraps **(Provincial rulers)**, to be throughout the whole kingdom; 2and over them three high officials, of whom Daniel was one, to whom these satraps should give account, so that the king might suffer no loss. 3Then this Daniel became distinguished above all the other high officials and satraps, because an excellent spirit was in him. And the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom. 4Then the high officials and the satraps sought to find a ground for complaint against Daniel with regard to the kingdom, but they could find no ground for complaint or any fault, because he was faithful, and no error or fault was found in him. 5Then these men said, “We shall not find any ground for complaint against this Daniel unless we find it in connection with the law of his God.”

**So these guys had Darius sign a decree that if anyone prayed to anyone other than him for 30 days, they would be thrown into the lion’s den.**

10When Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open toward Jerusalem. He got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, **as he had done previously**. 11Then these men came by agreement and found Daniel making petition and plea before his God. 12Then they came near and said before the king, concerning the injunction, **“O king! Did you not sign an injunction, that anyone who makes petition to any god or man within thirty days except to you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions?”** The king answered and said, “The thing stands fast, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be revoked.” 13Then they answered and said before the king, “Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or the injunction you have signed, but makes his petition three times a day.”

14Then the king, when he heard these words, was much distressed and set his mind to deliver Daniel. And he labored till the sun went down to rescue him. 15Then these men came by agreement to the king and said to the king, “Know, O king, that it is a law of the Medes and Persians that no injunction or ordinance that the king establishes can be changed.”

16Then the king commanded, and Daniel was brought and cast into the den of lions. The king declared to Daniel, “May your God, whom you serve continually, deliver you!” 17And a stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet and with the signet of his lords, that nothing might be changed concerning Daniel. 18Then the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; no diversions were brought to him, and sleep fled from him.

19Then, at break of day, the king arose and went in haste to the den of lions. 20As he came near to the den where Daniel was, he cried out in a tone of anguish. The king declared to Daniel, “O Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?” 21Then Daniel said to the king, “O king, live forever! 22My God sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths, and they have not harmed me, because I was found blameless before him; and also before you, O king, I have done no harm.” 23Then the king was exceedingly glad, and commanded that Daniel be taken up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no kind of harm was found on him, because he had trusted in his God. 24And the king commanded, and those men who had maliciously accused Daniel were brought and cast into the den of lions—they, their children, and their wives. And before they reached the bottom of the den, the lions overpowered them and broke all their bones in pieces.

25Then King Darius wrote to all the peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: “Peace be multiplied to you. 26I make a decree, that in all my royal dominion people are to tremble and fear before the God of Daniel,

for he is the living God,
    enduring forever;
his kingdom shall never be destroyed,
    and his dominion shall be to the end.
27He delivers and rescues;
    he works signs and wonders
    in heaven and on earth,
he who has saved Daniel
    from the power of the lions.”

28So this Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

1. Daniel courageously stood by his convictions regardless of the consequences.
	1. Definition of Conviction

Something that we believe to be true and that we will stand by.

* 1. Definition of a Strong Conviction

We are so thoroughly convinced something is true that we are willing to take a stand for it regardless of the consequences!

* 1. **What do you believe in that you stand by so strongly that no matter how you are threatened or if you lost your job or your family or your life?**
1. The Babylonians wanted to:
	1. Change the way the Israelites ATE AND DRANK
	2. Change their LANGUAGE.
	3. Change their ATTITUDES to become BABYLONIANS.
	4. They even changed their NAMES.

Even in the presence of your enemies, God can and will promote you if you remain faithful to Him!

1. One of the first things the Babylonians were going to do was to serve these young Hebrews food that had been served to idols.
	1. Daniel said NO!
	2. He suggested that they be allowed to eat only vegetables and water for ten days and after ten days see if they didn’t look better than the men who ate the meat that was given to idols.
	3. Daniel as a young teenager would not eat meat or drink wine that were offered to idols.
	4. He followed his convictions while he was very young.
	5. Holding to your convictions will either build your character or destroy your character depending on what convictions you are holding onto!
	6. He began his life in Babylon saying “NO” to disobedience and “YES” to Almighty God!
	7. Daniel also decided he would be a Godly example to the others who had been taken captive. To do so, he had to stay with the truth he had been taught.

Eccl 11:3 When a tree falls to the North or to the South, there it lies (the die is cast).

Illustration: When I was 18, I had a tremendous experience with the Lord. I was working for the telephone company and I finally went to work in the Oil Field on the drilling rigs. At that time they had a hard time finding enough people to fill positions. There was a lot of drug abuse and substance abuse among the people that worked on the rigs. God showed me how important my first impression was with people. If I stood up strongly for my Christian values from the very start, it was much better than if I laid back and laughed at their dirty jokes or drank a few beers with them, etc.

* 1. Another conviction Daniel had was that God WOULD ANSWER HIS PRAYERS!
		1. **Do you have a conviction that God will answer your prayers?**
		2. **When Christians TITHE they need to EXPECT God to MEET THEIR NEEDS!**
		3. **When you PRAY, EXPECT God to ANSWER YOUR PRAYERS!**
1. **Nebuchadnezzar had a dream and Daniel was faithful to give the answer**
	1. **Daniel 4:19-33**

*19“Upon hearing this, Daniel (also known as Belteshazzar) was overcome for a time, frightened by the meaning of the dream. Then the king said to him, ‘Belteshazzar, don’t be alarmed by the dream and what it means.’*

*“Belteshazzar replied, ‘I wish the events foreshadowed in this dream would happen to your enemies, my lord, and not to you! 20The tree you saw was growing very tall and strong, reaching high into the heavens for all the world to see. 21It had fresh green leaves and was loaded with fruit for all to eat. Wild animals lived in its shade, and birds nested in its branches. 22That tree, Your Majesty, is you. For you have grown strong and great; your greatness reaches up to heaven, and your rule to the ends of the earth.*

*23“‘Then you saw a messenger, a holy one, coming down from heaven and saying, “Cut down the tree and destroy it. But leave the stump and the roots in the ground, bound with a band of iron and bronze and surrounded by tender grass. Let him be drenched with the dew of heaven. Let him live with the animals of the field for seven periods of time.”*

*24“‘This is what the dream means, Your Majesty, and what the Most High has declared will happen to my lord the king. 25You will be driven from human society, and you will live in the fields with the wild animals. You will eat grass like a cow, and you will be drenched with the dew of heaven. Seven periods of time will pass while you live this way, until you learn that the Most High rules over the kingdoms of the world and gives them to anyone he chooses. 26But the stump and roots of the tree were left in the ground. This means that you will receive your kingdom back again when you have learned that heaven rules.*

*27“‘King Nebuchadnezzar, please accept my advice. Stop sinning and do what is right. Break from your wicked past and be merciful to the poor. Perhaps then you will continue to prosper.’*

*28“But all these things did happen to King Nebuchadnezzar. 29Twelve months later he was taking a walk on the flat roof of the royal palace in Babylon. 30As he looked out across the city, he said, ‘Look at this great city of Babylon! By my own mighty power, I have built this beautiful city as my royal residence to display my majestic splendor.’*

*31“While these words were still in his mouth, a voice called down from heaven, ‘O King Nebuchadnezzar, this message is for you! You are no longer ruler of this kingdom. 32You will be driven from human society. You will live in the fields with the wild animals, and you will eat grass like a cow. Seven periods of time will pass while you live this way, until you learn that the Most High rules over the kingdoms of the world and gives them to anyone he chooses.’*

*33“That same hour the judgment was fulfilled, and Nebuchadnezzar was driven from human society. He ate grass like a cow, and he was drenched with the dew of heaven. He lived this way until his hair was as long as eagles’ feathers and his nails were like birds’ claws.*

1. Nebuchadnezzar set up a large golden image and made it a law that everyone had to worship the image but there were three young men who would NOT WORSHIP THE IMAGE.
	1. They were brought to Nebuchadnezzar.
	2. They still would refused to bow to anyone but God.
	3. **Daniel 3:16-18**

*16Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego replied, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you. 17If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God whom we serve is able to save us. He will rescue us from your power, Your Majesty. 18But even if he doesn’t, we want to make it clear to you, Your Majesty, that we will never serve your gods or worship the gold statue you have set up.”*

1. What were Daniels and the other Men’s motivations? What motivated them?
	1. They were raised on the Word of God
		1. They were taught to Obey the Word of God.
		2. He Studied the Word of God.
		3. His love and devotion to God
		4. His commitment to OBEY GOD
			1. Are you committed to OBEY the Word of God
			2. When you compromise your Biblically based convictions – you give away a part of yourself – The TREE FALLS TO THE NORTH or the SOUTH
2. What were the CONSEQUENCES OF DANIEL’S CONVICTIONS?
	1. He won his first battle of standing for his convictions
		1. He took a stand and said he would not eat food offered to idols
	2. He was a good influence on his companions
	3. It opened doors of opportunity for him to counsel and influence kings.
		1. He could have faded into society and never been anything but he stood up for his beliefs in God!
	4. **WHAT CONVICTIONS DO YOU HOLD THAT GUIDE YOUR CONDUCT?**
	5. **GOD IS LOOKING FOR PEOPLE THAT WILL STAND TRUE TO THE WORD OF GOD REGARDLESS OF THE CONSEQUENCES, GOOD OR BAD!**

**IF WE COMPROMISE OUR CONVICTIONS IT IS DUE TO FEAR OF CRITICISM, REJECTION, FAILUR OR LOSS.**

**YOU NEVER KNOW WHO IS WATCHING YOU WHO IS HOPING AND PRAYING YOU ARE WHO YOU SAY YOU ARE.**

**THEY ARE HOPING YOU ARE A PERSON WHO DOESN’T COMPROMISE YOUR VALUES.**