

## Daniel Discussion Questions 2.12.17

### Leader Prep Section

Take time before your small group meeting to prepare by reading through the questions and scripture passage so that you can select 4-5 questions that are best suited to your group.

Try to work through at least one question from each of the sections - Hook, Book, Look, Took in order to move from observation to application.

When possible spend time in prayer for each member of your group.

### Questions

#### **Hook - Ice breaker type questions to help make the transition into the study time.**

1. What have you done when you found yourself surrounded by people who did not have the same moral compass that you have?
2. Share a story of a time you found yourself in a culture very different than your own.

### Background

The book of Daniel picks up the story of Israel after the close of the books of 2 Chronicles and 2 Kings. By this time the Northern Kingdom of Israel has already been defeated and the people are in exile and you never hear of them again. Now the Southern Kingdom (Judah) is in big trouble. The book opens by introducing us to a central character, Daniel and we are told he has been taken into exile to Babylon. Babylon has become the new world power by defeating Assyria and Egypt in battles near Judah. Fresh off a victory over Egypt Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, comes and attacks Jerusalem and takes the people away into Exile. As the story begins Daniel and several friends have been selected to be trained to serve in the court of King Nebuchadnezzar. This would have been seen by most as the best possible scenario for a captive who has been brought to Babylon who is forced to live in Exile. Daniel, however has a different view and how he responds to the situation becomes a model for how Judah is to behave while they are in Exile.

To be in Exile was to be completely cut off from your land, the place that was more than just home. For the Southern Kingdom their land was holy and the good gift from their God. It was the Promised Land. To be cut off from that was to be removed from all they knew and from their God. Exile was a lonely and god-forsaken place. Exile was the thing that the prophets had been warning about for generations.

Read Daniel 1:1-21

#### **Book - These questions are designed to get you into the text itself.**

1. Who was selected to be trained to serve in King Nebuchadnezzar's court?
2. What compromise did Daniel make with the guard who was responsible for his food?
3. At the end of the training to serve the King, who were the most talented?

#### **Look - These questions will take you on a deeper look at what the passage means for us today.**

1. Training people to serve King Nebuchadnezzar who were part of the elite in Jerusalem before the exile was strategic. This would give the people of Judah a role model to follow. Daniel did not play his role, for he found a way to be faithful to God and to serve. What stand did he take right away? What would that look like today?

2. In the ancient world the food you ate was a clear way to determine which god you served. What are those differentiators today?
3. What skills do you have that might get you noticed as Daniel and his friends were noticed by the King?

**Took - These questions are focused on applying the big idea from the text to our lives.**

1. Daniel modeled one way to balance the tension between serving the king and serving God. How can you follow his example in your life this week?
2. What areas of your life could you challenge the ways of the world without creating trouble for those around you?
3. Talent is undeniable. Daniel and his friends were the best and brightest of the new servants and that won them favor with the King. How can we help the world so that we God can use us to his glory?

**Closing**

Take some time to pray together as you finish your night. Pray that you would find opportunities to practice being in the world but not of the world. That you would find that balance point of loving the people in this world, but not let it pull you away from the God who has saved you.

Reminder: Our allegiance is first to the Kingdom of Heaven, but held in tension with the fact that we are called to love this world and those who live in it. Total disconnection is not the answer, we must find a way to be in the world, not of the world.