

True North – The Inner Life of a Leader 6-19-11

As we continue this look at leadership, specifically through some of the more well known biblical characters, this morning we are going to take a look at Daniel. Daniel in the Old Testament is known by us as a one of the major prophets. There is a book in the OT. Named after him, and it describes a portion of his life. Here is how we get to Daniel in the chronological time line that we introduced last week.

- King Saul - 1040 – 1000
- King David – 1000 – 960
- King Solomon – 960 – 920
- Kingdom Split - Kingdom of Israel & The Kingdom of Judah - 920
- King of Israel - Kings & Prophets - 722 Destroyed
- King of Judah – Kings & Prophets - 586 Exiled to Babylon
- Persia overthrows Babylon - 545
- Daniel – 605 – 530

So here we see Daniel. He was a prophet during the time of the Babylonian Captivity. Babylon came into the Kingdom of Judah to take over. Here is how it reads in Daniel 1:1.

“In the 3rd year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it.. The Lord delivered Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand.”

So this is how the book of Daniel starts. So they carry off all the people to Babylon, and within the 1st chapter of Daniel we see Nebuchadnezzar, selecting young Israelites out of all the exiled people in order to retrain them. The training was basically to cause them to forget their homeland and their God and after 3 years to be placed into the King’s service. This was the plan. If the calculations are approximately correct Daniel was about 19.

Here we have an approx. 19 year man. What might we learn from him on this Father’s Day? Let’s look at just three aspects of the inner life of this young man and draw out what they might mean for us.

Ladies, may I speak specifically to the men today? These thoughts work for all of us, but I thought you wouldn’t mind me directing them toward the men.

So here we have a 19 year old. In a foreign land, we do not hear of any physical evidence of his parents. He is on his own and he is being offered, virtually everything that life in that time would have been considered luxuries, ‘the good life’ was his.

And out of his life came these things...

1st he...

Establishing Principles & Boundaries

Daniel's life first show's us that out of the inner life of a leader who is going to have impact in the world comes decisions based on living by certain principle's and not violating certain boundaries. The principle's he lived by we will see more clearly in the 3rd point. But here in verse 8 we see his unwillingness to violate his first boundary.

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 this way.

For Daniel the first test came, right away, while the other recruits most likely could not believe what they were hearing and they were chowing down and drinking up. Daniel, asked politely, but as you see when you read the whole book. He most likely had already decided, that if he was forced to take the food and drink, he would have refused to his death.

I wonder where a young man gets that kind of inner resolve? I wonder where a young man misses getting that kind of inner resolve? When is it taught?

Story: Greenville H.S. parties "Well they are going to drink anyway, they might as well do it within my watch?"

When we choose as Father's to live that way toward our children, I believe we are missing something very critical in life. Our children are waiting for us to hold up a standard. As men, we have been given a sacred trust, we have the key to our children's hearts. They listen to us, they watch us like hawk's. They look to see where we stand.

Movie Trailer – 'Courageous' coming September 30th

Statistics tell us that:

1. If a child in the family comes to Christ – 12% of the time the family will come to Christ
2. If the woman in the family comes to Christ – 29% of the time the family comes to Christ.
3. If the man in the family comes to Christ – 94% of the time the family comes to Christ.

So as we look at Daniel, we very likely are seeing the influence of a family that is not mentioned. When a man at any age, says, "This, I will not do!" and I will not do it because of my relationship with God and the principles I live by. They become a success in the making at whatever they do and they also become a target for those who want to see them fall.

The second piece of this as we view the inner life of a leader through the life of this young man named Daniel is what I called:

The Discipline of Success

This book is a fascinating read, but I am jumping ahead to chapter 6, verse 3.

³ Now Daniel so distinguished himself among the administrators and the satraps by his exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom.

Look at that verse, Daniel did not strive for success, it was others who wanted to place him into a very influential position. Those that lead successfully, whether at home, in business, school or community, do not strive for those places, they are driven by something else. Something far greater.

Their joy comes from something far deeper than material success and positional leadership. Their joy comes from a place no one can really ever touch because they have helped create that divine place where they are available to God for God's purposes.

T.J. Dermot Dunphy was the CEO of Sealed Air Corp that makes protective packaging and supplies North America, Europe, Middle East and Africa. A millionaire many times over, when asked how he defined success, he said this:

“The most important is to love and be loved, the second is to be respected, the third is to possess a sense of honor. It's how you feel about yourself early in the morning when you get up and look at yourself in the mirror.”

So what is being said here? Am I not supposed to strive toward my dream. Are you telling me Dan that I just need to be a really nice guy?

Not at all, what we see in Daniel is a life that was practicing disciplines that allowed him to understand the temporary nature of positional success and material gain.

It was one of the greatest gifts my Father gave to me. Let me speak to the Father's a moment. All those hours and days and months you are spending taking your children to soccer games and volleyball and cheerleading practice, and swimming lessons, and... Here is what it produces. The chances of one of your children making to a professional level at any one of those games or activities is approx. .00005, or 1 child a whole heck of a lot. So what is it producing. I will tell you what it really is producing. My Dad came to every game he possibly could. I played virtually everyday of my childhood. But there came a time when I no longer wanted to play the game, but what had been produced in me was an understanding of success. I was able to see it for what it was because my Father was the same toward me whether I won or lost. He really didn't care. His focus was on my development as a person. He never said it, but his lack of high emotional responses when I would have a bad game, allowed me to come to him when I was ready to talk about my performance and not have to be dragged down some God-aweful verbal thrashing for making a mental error.

Children learn the discipline of success and failure under the watchful eye of a loving parent, who simply loves them, and is able to wait for and seize those opportunities when the son or daughter is ready to speak.

Daniel, had a discipline toward success that allowed him to focus on his internal growth as the day when his strengths would be recognized and rewarded.

These principles that he lived by also made him ready when opposition came. This 3rd aspect of the inner life of a leader is

Being Prepared for Opposition

Listen to verses 4 & 5

*⁴ At this, the administrators and the satraps tried to find grounds for charges against Daniel in his conduct of government affairs, but they were unable to do so. They could find **no corruption** in him, because **he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent**. ⁵ Finally these men said, “We will never find any basis for charges against this man Daniel unless it has something to do with the law of his God.”*

They tried to find charges to bring against him in how he handled affairs of the state, it went on to say, *They could find **no corruption** in him, because **he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent**.*

A person who decides that they will be available to God has an unwritten rule to follow, they will have to decide whether they are going to be principle driven, or emotion driven. A emotion driven person, is easy to spot. When all is well, they are at the top of their game. Things could not be better, but when things make a turn for the worse, they are very unpredictable, often they are not a very pleasant person to be around. They are driven by emotion and opposition to their point of view is viewed as a threat. As I observe Daniel and I observe other principle driven leaders, I see that they live at a standard that causes them to not waiver, when the going gets tough. Daniel was 19, he learned it young, Father's they learn it early.

So men, the inner life of the leaders all around us are being shaped by you and me. Whether you are a Father, Uncle, Cousin, Grandfather. Our job is critical.

As I close this morning some of you are sitting here, men and women, and you are saying to yourself, as far as that crafting of the inner life in me and my Father, I got none of that. I want to close with a paragraph from a devotion that was brought to our staff meeting this week. It goes like this:

As human beings, all fathers fall short of the original design for fathers. Some fall far short. Absent fathers, abusive fathers, critical fathers- they all fall short. We have no control over that. We can, however, control our response to our fathers. We can choose to forgive.

Today, you may be looking at your start whether with your own Father, or yourself as a father and you are saying “It has been a rough start, but it is time to change that. The inner life of someone is waiting to be crafted into the leader they are meant to be. Maybe it is you, maybe its someone you touch. Today is the best day to begin. Let's pray.

