

Daniel's Integrity and Excellence
(Daniel 1:1-21)

I. Introduction:

- A. The **degeneration** of our culture
- B. The **defection** of our youth
- C. The **declaration** of our God – I Peter 1:14-16

II. Exposition: Daniel's Integrity and Excellence (1:1-21)

- A. Daniel's **Captivity** (1:1-7)
 - 1. Nebuchadnezzar's **campaign** (v. 1)
 - 2. Nebuchadnezzar's **conquest** (v. 2)
 - The Lord's will
 - The Lord's vessels
 - "God would rather have his people living in shameful captivity in a **pagan** land than living like pagans in the **Holy** Land and **disgracing** His name." **Warren Wiersbe**
 - 3. Nebuchadnezzar's **captives** (vv. 3-7)
 - The youths' **inclination** (vv. 3-4)
 - The youths' **indoctrination** (vv. 5, 7)
 - The youth's **identification** (v. 6)
 - Daniel – Belteshazzar
 - Hananiah – Shadrach
 - Mishael – Meshach
 - Azariah – Abed-nego
- B. Daniel's **Convictions** (1:8-13)
 - 1. Daniel's **resolve** (v. 8a)
 - 2. Daniel's **request** (v. 8b)
 - 3. Daniel's **regard** (vv. 9-10)

- 4. Daniel's **response** (vv. 11-13)
 - Test (vv. 11-12)
 - Compare (v. 13a)
 - Observe "what you see" (v. 13b)

C. Daniel's **Excellence** (1:14-16)

- 1. Daniel and friends **examined** (v. 14)
- 2. Daniel and friends **excelled** (v. 15)
- 3. Daniel and friends **exonerated** (v. 16)

D. Daniel's **Exaltation** (1:17-21)

- 1. God-given **knowledge** and intelligence (v. 17)
- 2. God-given **wisdom** in service (vv. 18-20)
- 3. God-given **longevity** in life (v. 21)

III. Conclusion: Charles R. Swindoll

- Inner **conviction** can overcome any outer **coercion**!
- God honoring **convictions** yield God-given **commendations**!

Questions to reflect on individually and discuss in Small Groups:

- 1. What stuck out to you from the message? (What's your keeper?)
- 2. In what ways does our world try to make "pagans" out of us?
- 3. Why is it so important to develop convictions based on the Word of God? What Scriptures most help you in developing convictions?
- 4. Why is excellence so important for us as believers? What happens to our testimony when we lack excellence? Explain your answers.
- 5. Why do Christians often lack the courage to live lives of convictions and excellence? What helps or can help you to live this type of life?
- 6. What stuck out to you from the conclusion?
- 7. Finish this sentence with the primary thing that God is leading you to do: "In light of these passages and this discussion, I will ..." (What is your action point?)