



## Culture Shift Week 1

### Announcements

**301 Biblical Foundations** – This class begins **Monday, September 7th** at 7:00 pm at all campuses. Don't miss the opportunity to grow in your understanding of the Bible and in your relationship with God. If you missed week 1, you can still participate by beginning with week 2 on September 15<sup>th</sup>.

**201 Dream Team Orientation** – **Sunday, September 14th** at 5:00 pm at all campuses. 201 Dream Team Orientation is the second step in Pathway and your place to find a great place to serve at Church of the King.

### Warm-up

How do you tend to respond to change? Are you resistant or do you embrace it?

In this 6-part series we are going to discuss how Christ-followers should respond as our culture shifts away from being Christ-focused.

### Word and Application

To begin this study we are going to define culture as *the beliefs and customs of a particular society, group, place, or time. It's a way of thinking, living and behaving that exists in a certain place.*

We also want to have a basic historical background of the book of Daniel as we use it for our guide to help us understand how to respond to cultural changes. Daniel lived around 600 years before Jesus. The book covers the period 605 BC to about 530 BC. In the beginning, Daniel is a teenager, approximately 15 years old. When the book closes, he is about 90. During his long life, God allowed him to serve under a succession of Babylonian and Persian rulers. From being an imported hostage, he becomes a trusted prime minister and counselor to some of the mightiest rulers in world history.

**Read Daniel 1:3-5.** These verses show how King Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, begin the process of trying to assimilate Daniel, and other young Jewish men into the Babylonian culture.

How does the attempted integration of Daniel and his peers into Babylonian culture parallel what is occurring in our rapidly shifting culture?

Cultural leaders will often attempt to shift the language, learning and laws in order to bring a change in the minds and hearts of people. Daniel had to learn how to stand strong in the face of a radically new culture in which he was living.

**Read Daniel 1:7.** This verse explains how the Babylonian rulers were changing the names of Daniel and his peers as a way to recreate their identity. The Jewish young men had names that honored God and the Babylonians were changing their names to reflect a glorification of pagan gods.

Do you know the meaning of your name? Was your name given to you because of the meaning?

In Biblical times, names were given to people as a way to define who they were, not just as a means to identify them. This attempted “identity theft” by the Babylonians was a way to change who Daniel was. However, Daniel was aware of his enemy’s schemes and knew how to secure his God-given identity. He held close to the Word of God and was wise in how he related to others.

What are ways you have seen people’s identities stolen by our shifting culture?

**Read Daniel 1:8** to see how we are to respond in the face of a shifting culture.

What part of this scripture verse speaks to you? Why?

The phrase in Daniel 1:8, “*purposed in his heart*”, helps us understand how to respond in the face of our shifting culture. Daniel knew God and knew the truth of God’s Word. He knew who God had called him to be and what God called him to do and as a result was able to stand firm in the face of a major cultural shift.

We must be committed to stand firm in our *commitment to God*, we must be resolute in our *convictions* and we must stand with *courage*.

What has God spoken to you during our discussion today? How will this impact you this week?

## Prayer

Pray for everyone in your small group to learn to trust God to help them stand strong in the midst of a cultural shift. Also, take time to ask for specific prayer requests from those in your small group.