



When Culture Shifts – Week One

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Overview

Welcome to the first message of our new series entitled, **Brave**. Over the next six weeks, we will dive into the Book of Daniel, found in the Old Testament. Week One emphasizes the importance of studying Daniel, what happens when culture shifts, and how to respond.

Discussion Questions

Culture is defined as the beliefs and customs of a particular society, group, place, or time. It is a way of thinking, living, and behaving that exists in a certain place. A **culture shift** occurs when it seems like everything is rapidly changing before our eyes. During a time of unprecedented change, we will discover in Scripture how this godly Daniel handled a **culture shift**.

Three Reasons to Study the Book of Daniel

- 1. Daniel's situation is becoming increasingly similar to our own.**
He lived, as a believer, in a culture that did not reflect his values. We will learn many useful principles as we seek to live for Christ in a world at odds with our faith. What concerns you most about living in a culture that is moving farther away from God?
- 2. Daniel's prophecies may all soon be fulfilled.**
The Book of Daniel reveals dreams, visions, and prophecies about the End Times. We will discover an amazing connection between the words of Daniel and our life in the 21st century. How knowledgeable are you about what the Bible says about the End Times? What is one thing you would like to know about the End Times?
- 3. Daniel's God is also our God--who is still on the throne.**
God is in charge of nations, families, and individuals. He is in charge of the past, the present, and the future. Studying this book will increase our confidence in the sovereignty of God. What key things do you already know about Daniel?

What Happens When Culture Shifts?

1. Culture attempts to give us new language, learning, and laws.

Captured as teenagers, Daniel and his friends were immersed in Babylonian culture, history, language, and religion. Daniel's education was not focused on "how" to think but on "what" to think.

A culture that doesn't honor God attempts to prescribe you with new language, new learning, and new laws. Give an example of current society prescribing these things above the ways of God. As believers, what must our thinking always line up with?

2. Culture attempts to give us new labels.

A culture that doesn't honor God will always try to rename you. **Daniel 1:7 says**, "To them the chief of the eunuchs gave names: he gave Daniel the name Belteshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abed-Nego."

Daniel and his friends were given new names; however, they stayed faithful to their true names and kept their identity secure in God. Share any Bible verses you know that declare who you are in Christ Jesus.

How Do We Respond When Culture Shifts?

Daniel 1:8 says, "But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself." Daniel settled the issue in his heart to live as a follower of God. He knew God. He knew the truth. Daniel was a man of commitment, conviction and courage--and he knew who God had called him to be and what God called him to do. Describe what it looks like to purpose something in your heart.

We stand firm in our commitment to God.

We stand on our convictions.

We stand up and live brave.

Life Challenge

Like Daniel, we need to purpose in our heart to stay committed to God, stand on our faith-based convictions, and live brave. This week, identify and ask the Holy Spirit's help about a specific situation for which you need to stand firm and stand up so that you can live brave in God.

Prayer

Father, we thank You that Daniel is a model of someone who experienced a culture shift but stayed true to You. We ask that as we see all the changes that attempt to make us question our identity in Christ and abandon Your Word, that You would help us, by the power of Your Holy Spirit, to stand firm, stand on, and stand up to live brave for Your honor and glory. Amen. Pray for the specific needs of the group.