

WELCOME TO paniel's WORLD

CHILDREN STEWARDSHIP REVIVAL WEEK



GOD FIRST
ADVENTIST STEWARDSHIP MINISTRIES





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CHILDREN STEWARDSHIP REVIVAL WEEK



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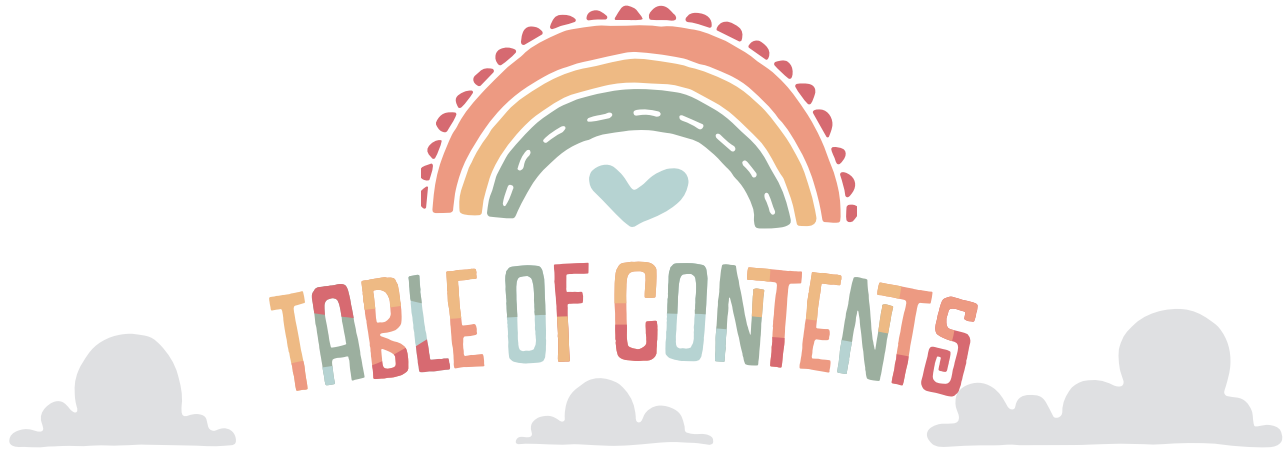
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MEET THE AUTHOR



HELLO, DEAR CHILDREN OF THE WHOLE WORLD!

I am Pastor Teddy Ah Kiune, from Réunion Island, an island located in the Indian Ocean, about 700 kilometers east of Madagascar. Ask your youth leaders to locate it for you on a map of the Indian Ocean. I hope that, despite your daily challenges, you are all okay. You will have a special week in November, 2023. Be ready to participate in it!

During this week, we will explore the book of Daniel. When we mention the book of Daniel, it immediately conjures up in our memory the story of the golden statue or of the den of lions. But during this week, we shall discover Daniel's daily life. We shall also see his struggles and challenges. Life was not always easy for him, even though he was a worker for God.

Throughout his life he applied the following principle: "**God First**" (**GF**). His "**GF**" was at the center of his life. I encourage you to ask your parents to plan your time, so that you may enjoy what God our Father has prepared for each of you. Every day we will examine an aspect of Daniel's life in direct relationship with the **GF** principle. A team and myself will guide you through this adventure during this week, which I have entitled

"Welcome to Daniel's World!" We shall have a learning schedule, with time for prayer, manual activities, practical activities, and meditation. Here is the program for this week:

- i. Daniel's Life as an Immigrant
- ii. Daniel's Daily Habits
- iii. Daniel's Friendly Relationship
- iv. Daniel's Resolution
- v. Daniel's Talents
- vi. Daniel's Life as a Worshiper



vii. Daniel's Faithfulness;
viii. Daniel's Gratitude.








I rejoice in advance to know that, on all continents, in all countries and islands, we will delve together into the book of Daniel. I hope that these moments will influence you to place "God First" in every aspect of your lives.

I wish you a blessed Stewardship Week under the gaze of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit!

With the brotherly greetings of
Pastor Teddy Ah Kiune

GOD FIRST

I PROMISE:

-  **SPEND TIME** talking to Jesus when you first wake up every day.
-  Ask Jesus to help you **FORGIVE** and **LOVE** others because it can be really hard.
-  Choose **HEALTHY HABITS** so you can listen to God's voice.
-  **TELL** all your friends and family about Jesus.
-  Make **SABBATH** extra special by getting ready.
-  Faithfully **RETURN** God's **TITHE** which is 10% of whatever income He **FIRST** gives to you.
-  **PROMISE** a percentage (____ %) of your income as regular offering.

WITH GOD'S HELP: _____ DATE: _____



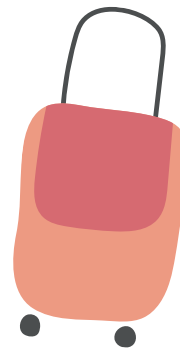
STEWARDSHIP MINISTRIES

Day One

I COMMIT MYSELF

DANIEL'S LIFE AS AN IMMIGRANT

"GOD FIRST" — A CHOICE FOR LIFE



INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS AN IMMIGRANT?

An immigrant is a person who leaves their homeland to live in another country. Why would a person leave their country? Sometimes it is by their own choice, but most often through necessity. Immigrants (both adults and children) are compelled to leave their nation because life has become too difficult and maybe even dangerous for them. Immigrants come from nearly everywhere in the world. Many of them endeavor to escape poverty and famine. Others are fleeing war, like many Ukrainians, Sudanese, Syrians, and Libyans. Some of them also leave their homes and countries because of natural disasters like earthquakes, floods, and cyclones. The character we will study this week was also an immigrant.

LIFE IN A FOREIGN LAND

So far, young Daniel had been enjoying a peaceful life in Palestine. He belonged to the dignitaries of the court of King Jehoiakim. He was probably of royal descent (Daniel 1:3). But his world collapsed when he was taken captive. Let us discover what took place in his life and in the lives of his three friends. They went through a terrible upheaval. It was not easy for them: a new country, a new language, new customs, new surroundings. More importantly, no more access to the temple, which is where they went to worship God.

Daniel was accustomed to seeing the temple in Jerusalem and the worship services being held in it. Now, in Babylon, there was none of this. But this young man, despite his exile and a change in his name, went on worshiping his Creator. Remember when you changed grades or teachers, what were your first impressions?

How did Daniel adapt to these changes in his life? Let us examine these changes:

- ★ A new government different from that of his homeland, Israel;
- ★ A new country, Babylon;
- ★ A new mentality;
- ★ New colleagues;
- ★ A new language;
- ★ And even a new identity.

For you, dear child, it may be:

- ★ Moving to a new place;



- ★ New friends;
- ★ New teachers;
- ★ Living in a new district.

Considering all these new things (country, lodging, culture, etc.), the four young Hebrews might have said: “We are here alone, far from our family and friends, far from the Jerusalem temple. God has forsaken us. He delivered our people into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, an idol-worshiping king. We are poor captives, exiled from our nation. Nobody sees nor will know whether we forsake our beliefs.” Daniel and his friends were living in an environment which was incompatible with their faith. The food given to them was the same as the food prepared by the cooks for the king’s table. It was an offense to refuse the king’s invitation. While facing all kinds of political and spiritual pressures, Daniel and his friends always chose to remain faithful to God and to give Him first place in everything.

What Should We Do When We Are Left to Ourselves? How Shall We Face Sudden Changes

Among the characteristics of these four servants of God, let us highlight that they always prayed regularly. Prayer may be practiced alone, like Daniel after King Darius’ decree was published (Daniel 6:10),

or collectively, as when the four friends had to intercede before God to discover Nebuchadnezzar’s dream and its interpretation (Daniel 2:17, 18).

Their prayers were influenced by reading and studying God’s Word (the “books” mentioned in Daniel 9:2), through Jeremiah’s prophecies, which revealed the duration of the people of Juda’s exile in Babylon and their return to Jerusalem. This is why Daniel was led to confess his people’s sins and to intercede for them.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

How did Daniel succeed in coping with the terrible upheavals in his life? These behaviors, throughout all time, represent the moral qualities of the persons who remain faithful to God:

- 1 Study of and obedience to God’s Word;
- 2 Humility and meekness of mind;
- 3 Faith in God in face of trials;
- 4 A practical separation from the world and the evil reigning in it;
- 5 A spiritual intelligence given by God to those who are in communion with Him;
- 6 Witnessing before the world; and
- 7 Faithfulness amid suffering.

You, dear children, have been called to imitate Daniel and his friends in your prayers, in your study of God’s Word, and in your witnessing. Only then will you become like Daniel wherever God brings you.



WHAT YOU MUST REMEMBER

Although they were in exiles, submitting to an authoritarian power that wanted to deprive them of their right to exist, and facing the instrumentalization of an idolatrous worship, Daniel and his friends were not discouraged. They had taken the staunch decision to place **God First** in their lives. Later, they used every opportunity to glorify God by their faithful service, refusing all kinds of compromise or disobedience to God’s orders, and even risking their lives. Yet they remained submitted to the authorities established by God. Daniel and his friends exemplify the life of any Christian citizen. The testimony of their behavior, as people of influence of ancient times, is still instructive for the leaders who discover the divine truth, as Nebuchadnezzar did. I therefore challenge you to commit yourselves to make **God first (GF)** in everything and in every circumstance!

DAY TWO I CULTIVATE DANIEL'S DAILY HABITS

DANIEL "PRAYED AND GAVE THANKS BEFORE HIS GOD,
AS WAS HIS CUSTOM SINCE EARLY DAYS" (DANIEL 6:10)



INTRODUCTION

What is a Habit? We might define a habit as something we often do; an act which we have acquired to the point when it becomes automatic. We all have habits, good or bad. Even babies are born with the habit of sucking their thumb! To have habits may save your life; for instance, the habit of looking for oncoming traffic before you cross a street, or of buckling your safety belt in a car, or to wash your hands before meals. Maybe in your family, your parents have established habits which are particular to your own culture. Yet wherever we live on this planet, there are habits which are common to all of us. We will examine one of them today.

OUR PERSONAL MOMENTS WITH GOD (PMG)

Think for a moment about the habits you have in your home. This week's character, Daniel, had habits just like you and I. Let us examine one of these habits: "When Daniel knew that

the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, . . . he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days" (Daniel 6:10, NIV). This verse shows that Daniel had his own **PMG—Personal Moments with God**.

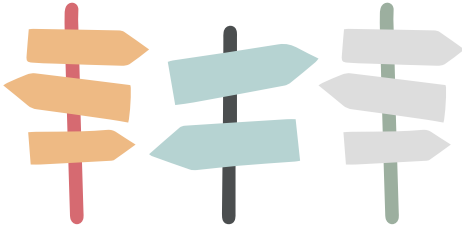
Let us review the facts to better understand what was going on. Daniel's colleagues, high-ranking civil servants at the king's court, had persuaded King Darius to forbid everybody in his kingdom to pray to any other person than the king himself during 30 days. They wanted everybody to worship him as a god (Daniel 6:7, 8). What would you do if you were in Daniel's place? What would be your attitude if you were told to choose between Jesus and your school? If you accept Jesus and keep the Sabbath, you might be dismissed from your school! What would be your reaction?

There is something I want to teach you. When we read different translations of the Bible, we

observe that the word "when" is translated elsewhere by the expressions "even after" or "although." We might read this text as: "Even after or Although Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, . . . he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days" (Daniel 6:10). It is easy to keep a good habit when everything is fine, but it is more difficult to keep this habit when pressures, jeering, or even threats are directed at us. Thanks to his **PMG** relationship with Jesus, Daniel entrusted this situation of crisis to God's Son. Let us examine this

"He Prayed and Gave Thanks before His God, As Was His Custom since Early Days."

He used to pray three times a day. He always did. It means that he had not begun praying only when he discovered that a crisis was threatening him, for he already had this well-established habit of praying three times a day;



just as a child has the habit of eating, going to bed early, brushing their teeth, etc. In the Jewish tradition, the moment of prayer was the third hour (9:00), sixth hour (12:00), and ninth hour (15:00). The third and ninth hours corresponded to the morning and afternoon, respectively. Prayer occupied an important place in Daniel's heart when he became a captive. The city of Babylon, brimming with idols, did not keep him from turning constantly to the Creator.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

Our interest is always to make **God first** in all our activities. Here are a few thoughts:

- ★ Before we take a decision, let us pray to God to guide our lives;
- ★ Let us seek God's counsel even before turning to our friends;
- ★ When a need arises, let us talk it over with God before talking with somebody else;
- ★ Let us think of thanking **God first** when something good happens to us;
- ★ When we receive anything, for instance money or anything else, let us apply the

Bible principle, giving to **God first** what belongs to Him.

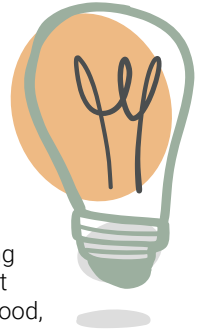
- ★ Let us thank God before meals.
- ★ At home, when we wake up, let us think of speaking with God even before we talk with anybody else. Prayer will start our new day.

Facing these difficulties, Daniel changed nothing in his habits. As he used to do before, he went on praying to God, without considering whether circumstances were favorable or unfavorable. His life of prayer was not molded on his moments of crisis or discouragement; he always prayed. King Darius, who, let me remind you, was very appreciative of Daniel, was manipulated by his counselors. Later, he forbade any prayer addressed to any other god than God Himself. It was therefore an open war, since the decree was published in the whole country. How more cunning are the attacks of the enemy of our souls! His goal is to keep us from praying. With this object in view, he uses various means: our homework, the time we spend on social media, being too tired to pray, our lack of interest for spiritual things, etc. But in a time of great upheaval, Daniel was able to remain faithful to God.



WHAT WE SHOULD REMEMBER

Although Daniel was now living in Babylon, very far from Jerusalem and its temple, he cultivated the good habits acquired during his early years. He kept turning to God. His prayer life was not organized according to his mood, nor was it influenced by his surroundings. Despite the jealousy of his colleagues, who did all they could to keep him from praying, Daniel went on ordering his life to always place God first, even though he was running the risk of losing his own life. This story shows us that God the Father wants us to learn to turn to Him in all circumstances, good or bad. We should daily cultivate **PMG**. These moments will help us experience His peace and love, as Daniel did. I therefore challenge you to **cultivate the good habit** of prayer as soon as you wake up, at any other moment of the day, and also at night.



Day THREE

I BUILD DANIEL'S FRIENDLY RELATIONSHIP



"THE KING, WHEN HE HEARD THESE WORDS, WAS GREATLY DISPLEASED WITH HIMSELF, AND SET HIS HEART ON DANIEL TO DELIVER HIM; AND HE LABORED TILL THE GOING DOWN OF THE SUN TO DELIVER HIM" (DANIEL 6:14, NKJV)

INTRODUCTION

Friendship! Let us define what friendship is:

A feeling of affection or sympathy linking two persons, resting neither upon family bonds nor on sexual attraction. You make friends throughout your life. Friendship may begin already at the kindergarten. Each child has had the privilege of having a friend. Throughout your school life, having friends may be helpful if you need a psychological support, a protection against intimidation or bullying; and to get good grades, too! As an adult, I still remember my childhood friend. It shows that time does not erase friendship between children. Do you think Daniel had a friend in Babylon, apart from his three friends?

A STRONG RELATIONSHIP

Let us now come back to Daniel, who was now in the kingdom of Darius, the king of the Medes and Persians, and who now lived in Susa. Daniel

formed a deep link of friendship with this king, a fact which may seem unlikely or a rarity. True friendship presupposes a deep commitment. In other words, a good friend is aware that he/she has a responsibility toward you, which means that he/she really cares for you. Of course, such a commitment should be both-sided and requires efforts, and sometimes sacrifices, from one or the other of the two friends. But it is worth it! Ask yourself: "Am I ready to give of myself, of my time, and resources, for my friend?" Remember: to have a friend, you must first be one! What took place between Darius and Daniel?

DARIUS' ATTITUDE

It has already been said that Daniel's colleagues, who were jealous of him, had trapped King Darius into publishing a decree forbidding to pray anybody but the king during 30 days. The people had therefore to address

their prayers exclusively to Darius. I know that you remember this story. This incident took place just before Daniel was thrown into the lions' den, thus confirming the depth of his relationship with Darius. The king had been deeply pained to see his friend thrown into the lions' den. Let us read this in the Bible: "The king, when he heard these words, was greatly displeased with himself, and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him; and he labored till the going down of the sun to deliver him" (Dan 6.14). These three attitudes express the depth of the relationship existing between Darius and Daniel:

- ★ "Greatly displeased with himself"
- ★ "Set his heart . . . to deliver him"
- ★ "Labored"

Darius felt deeply concerned by what was happening to his friend Daniel. He did his best to find a solution and come to the rescue of

Daniel. He felt downcast because he now understood the trap set by his high-ranking civil servants, who were jealous of his friend Daniel. The king's attitude reveals that Daniel counted very much for him. What influence do your friends exert upon you?

THE INFLUENCE OF FRIENDS

All friendships are not alike. There are several levels of friendship in the relationships we may form with others:

- i. Acquaintances
- ii. Punctual friends
- iii. Good friends
- iv. Intimate, or best friends

We are not necessarily influenced by our friends whom we call "acquaintances" or "punctual friends," but we may be influenced by those whom we choose as good friends or by those we call "our best friends." There is an important principle concerning friendship: we imitate those whom we choose as friends. However, in Daniel's case, he did not allow himself to be influenced by his friendship with Darius.

WHAT IS THE GOAL OF THIS RELATIONSHIP?

This friendly relationship taught King Darius an important lesson: He discovered who was this great God whom Daniel was serving, a God who deserves that you go the whole way for Him. He also learned that, for Daniel, God occupied first

place (**GF**), despite the friendship Daniel had for him, the king, which occupied only second place. The king understood that the God whom Daniel had been serving was a living God (Daniel 6:26). Darius suffered deeply because of this friendship, but Daniel was an extra help for the king instead of a burden.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

As a child, I suppose that your parents taught you to say "no," "yes," "please," and "thank you" very often. A good lesson to learn is when your parents tell you not to follow an unknown person and to tell him/her "No!" If he/she tries to lure you to follow him/her somewhere else. This is an important lesson, exemplified by Daniel. It is a short word, easy to say, yet very important: "No!" Only two letters from our alphabet! We should learn to say no firmly, but with plenty of love. Here is an example of what we could say if our friend happened to try to lure us to a wicked act:

Friend: "Come on! Let's go and steal fruit from the neighbor's garden!"

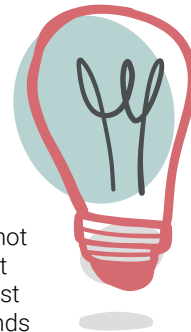
You (with a smile): "No, thank you, I don't want to have any part of this!"

Friend: "Why won't you not come with me?"

You (with a smile): "Because I have dedicated my life to Jesus Christ, and I want to do as He did."

WHAT WE SHOULD REMEMBER

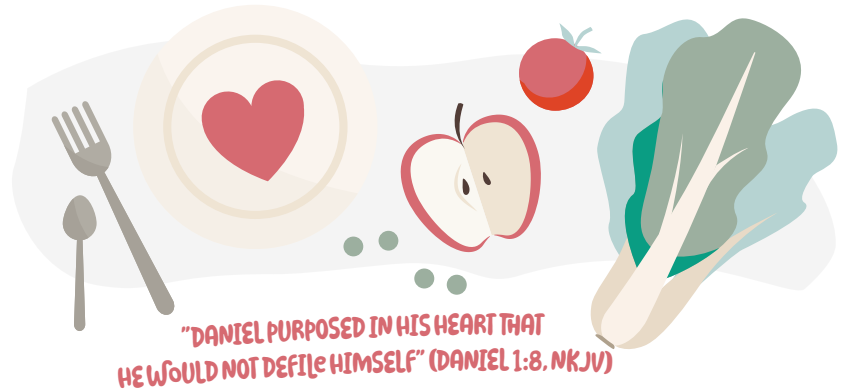
Throughout his life, Daniel had friends, and his intimate friends were very precious to him. Do not forget, dear children, that he lived in a country which was not his, in a culture which was not his, and that he might have lost all his landmarks, but his friends were a great help to him. Yet his friendships were never an obstacle to his faith. He never hesitated when he had to choose between his friends and God. He always made **God first** (the "**GF**" at the beginning of our week), and also the **personal moments with God (PMG)**. You cannot have one without the other. If his friendship with Darius did not affect his relationship with God, Daniel continued to serve his king and friend; but when he had to choose between Darius and God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, Daniel placed **God First** without hesitating. The Bible does not forbid us to have friends; on the contrary, it encourages us to do so. The Bible is full of examples of relationships between friends, of characters who cultivated friendship. The Bible encourages us to **build deep friendships** (Proverbs 17:17). Yet God's Words demands us to make **God first** in our relationships, including our friendships.



DAY FOUR

I KEEP FIT

DANIEL'S RESOLUTION



"DANIEL PURPOSED IN HIS HEART THAT HE WOULD NOT DEFILE HIMSELF" (DANIEL 1:8, NKJV)

INTRODUCTION

What is a resolution! A resolution is a staunch decision. At the beginning of each year, many adults make resolutions such as: to practice a sport, to eat healthily, etc. Have you, dear children, ever made resolutions? (*Leave to the children time to answer*). Allow me to tell you this: Some resolutions have few consequences upon our future life, but some others have serious consequences. This week's character, Daniel, also took a staunch, irrevocable resolution, which was a shock for those around him. Let us discover this and read it in Daniel 1:8.

DANIEL "RESOLVED"

Our text begins with the following sentence: "Daniel purposed in his heart" or "resolved." This verb, "to resolve," means to find a solution or have determination to do something. I

remember that my grandmother ceaselessly repeated this proverb: One place for everything, and everything in its place. Her aim was to make her grandchildren understand that each thing should be in its right place. Daniel, too, had understood this important lesson. During his youth, he had taken the staunch decision to be faithful and to honor **God** first in all circumstances. How did he put into practice this decision in his life?

THE RESOLUTION NOT TO DEFILE HIMSELF

Remember that Daniel had resolved to not defile himself and committed himself to keep his resolution and to put God in the right place. The old Hebrew word for "to defile" implies the idea of "polluting" or "making a stain" (see also Isaiah 59:3; Zephaniah 3:1; Malachi 1:7). Daniel wished to not defile himself, while explaining the spiritual foundation of his request. He did not want people to think that he was avoiding

the king's food for other reasons. Daniel and his friends considered the king's food as defiled for at least three reasons:

- ★ First, this food was probably not "*kosher*" (which in Hebrew means "*fit for human consumption*").
- ★ Second, this same food had very probably been sacrificed to the heathen idols.
- ★ Third, eating the food from the king's table meant sharing in the worship of the Babylonian gods.

Everything had been done to make Daniel a full Babylonian. We can see a boy far from his homeland, from his father's house, uprooted, solitary, and who might have sunk into a heathen culture. He was faced with all kinds of temptations and sins, yet he remained staunch in his behavior. It may be argued that he had been ordered to consume this food, hence, we might wish to know the reason for

his refusal. He did not want to consume this food because “according to Oriental standards, sharing a meal meant committing oneself to a relationship of friendship, and had taken the meaning of making an alliance.”¹ You can see where Daniel was drawing the line by deciding what was right or wrong. He did not rely upon his own opinion, nor on tradition, customs, or culture. Far from it! His opinion rested upon God’s Word. How about you?

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

We believe that God cares about our physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. Here are a few healthy resolutions which you might make:

- ★ I will drink at least one liter of water daily.
- ★ I will walk for 20 to 30 minutes daily.
- ★ I will take meals containing vegetables of various colors.
- ★ Wherever possible, I will go to bed early.
- ★ I will hike in nature to breathe fresh air.

You might also choose to make these spiritual resolutions:

- ★ Read my Bible every morning and evening.
- ★ Pray every morning and evening.

- ★ To be a witness of Jesus wherever I am.
- ★ To be in my neighbor’s service.

WHAT WE SHOULD REMEMBER

All the days of our lives, we are called to make choices in various realms: school, family, and even friendship. Our choices or resolutions should have the following principle as a foundation: I choose to make **God first**, just like Daniel and his friends did when tempted to eat improper food from the king’s table. They made the decision to have a healthy lifestyle. Without any hesitation, they applied what God’s Word teaches about food. It was “**God First**,” even in matters of food. We, too, dear children, should make the resolution to **maintain** good physical, mental, and spiritual health because God cares about our health. So, we should not hesitate for a single second, because these resolutions will further strengthen our faith in God. Let us not allow ourselves to be carried away by those who surround us! On the contrary, let us practice the God First principle in all our choices!




¹ Tremblay, Y., M.Sc (2016, June 22). La reconnaissance, qu'en est-il pour vous ? LinkedIn. Retrieved September 5, 2023, from <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/la-reconnaissance-yanik-tremblay>.

DAY FIVE



I PERFECT MYSELF

DANIEL'S TALENTS



"IT PLEASED DARIUS TO SET OVER THE KINGDOM ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY SATRAPS... THREE GOVERNORS, OF WHOM DANIEL WAS ONE, THAT THE SATRAPS MIGHT GIVE ACCOUNT TO THEM, SO THAT THE KING WOULD SUFFER NO LOSS. THEN THIS DANIEL DISTINGUISHED HIMSELF ABOVE THE GOVERNORS AND SATRAPS, BECAUSE AN EXCELLENT SPIRIT WAS IN HIM; AND THE KING GAVE THOUGHT TO SETTING HIM OVER THE WHOLE REALM" (DANIEL 6:3, 4, NKJV).

INTRODUCTION

Service! What is service? A service is the offer of an intellectual and/or technical skill. Connected to the word "service," you find the verb "to serve." To serve means to help persons who are young, adult, or aged, anyone who may need our help. For Christians, serving proceeds from the sincere love they feel for their Savior and the tender care (love) the Savior gives them for the persons whom He brings them in contact with. We may serve God in a variety of ways, such as our way of speaking, working, or behaving. Yet there exists another way of serving Him, which we will discover today.

DANIEL'S TRAINING

Every young Jewish boy was trained in God's affairs. It was no different for Daniel. His training went on when he was at the court of King Zedekiah. He learned how to know and serve God. Yet just when he was ready to

assume his responsibilities in Jerusalem, he was exiled to Babylon. There he was chosen to be in King Nebuchadnezzar's service and received further training. Whether in Israel or in Babylon, these trainings helped him develop his spiritual gifts and talents. When I speak of "spiritual gifts," I mean the capabilities for the service of God. Jesus exemplified it when He prayed, interceded, preached, and healed. We will come back to this point later. For almost 65 years, Daniel was in the service of the Babylonian kingdom as a wise man. Thus, he was able to use his gifts and was never blamed by his master.

HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT YOU HAVE RECEIVED A GIFT?

Our heavenly Father is a generous God who loves to offer gifts to us. Ephesians 4:7–13 explains how God offers gifts of grace to each of us. Nobody is excluded. God gave Daniel not

only knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and science, but also the capability to understand visions and dreams (Daniel 1:17).

Some Bible readers claim that the activity of the Holy Spirit through spiritual gifts was limited to the New Testament, but the Holy Spirit was just as active in the Old Testament as in the New. Here are some characters who received gifts in the Old Testament: (*give the children time to answer*): Bezaleel (or Bezalel), Samson, David, Samuel, etc. Can you name some more? Daniel 6:3 tells us that "an excellent spirit was in him," and that "Daniel distinguished himself above the governors and satraps," which simply means that the Holy Spirit was in Daniel. The same Holy Spirit equipped him for the task that was before him.

HOW THE SPIRITUAL GIFTS ARE USED?

Daniel did not have the time to exercise his spiritual gifts within his own religious

community in Israel. Yet it did not keep him from exercising these gifts among the Babylonians. If you know Daniel's story, you know that Daniel had dreams. (*Ask a child to tell in their own words Nebuchadnezzar's dream*). You may read this in chapters 2, 4, and 5. In chapter 5, verses 10–12, the queen said some words that show that Daniel frequently used his spiritual gifts, which had given him a strong reputation.

ACTIVITY OF REFLECTION

Dear children, from what you know of Daniel's story, tell me which spiritual gifts he had received. (*Give the children time to answer*). Gifts of intercession, leadership, administration, prophecy, and martyrdom are some examples. If you do not know what intercession, leadership, prophecy, or martyrdom mean, ask one of your leaders. How could we explain why Darius, who was first an enemy of Babylon before he became a king, chose Daniel to work in his own administration, when Daniel was formerly in the service of the Babylonians? The answer is, he trusted him because of his character and competency.

WHAT WE SHOULD REMEMBER

Thank you, Lord, for equipping us when You call us to Your service! This is what He did for Daniel. Besides equipping him, God trained him through knowledge he may have received in the courts of the Israelite and Babylonian kings. The Holy Spirit gave him spiritual gifts, which he used in the service of the ruling governments. Despite an environment hostile to his faith in the true God, Daniel did not hesitate to work for God by using his spiritual gifts. By perfecting his capabilities, he excelled in the service of God. We, too, are called to place our talents and spiritual gifts in God's service. Young age is not an obstacle to be in God's service. Let us learn to **perfect ourselves** in the service we offer, using our spiritual gifts and talents. The Lord also calls us to be a blessing for others. I have received freely, therefore, I place my spiritual gifts and talents in the service of the church. Let us therefore be involved in service for our Creator!



DAY SIX I GET ORGANIZED DANIEL'S LIFE AS A WORSHIPER



INTRODUCTION

What is a Birthday? Birthdays are occasions for celebrating a person's day of birth. It may also be the reminder of an event that took place in a specific place and at a specific time. For instance, the liberation of France during World War II, or the day of independence for a country. For some deceased persons, the date of their decease may also be celebrated. It is called an homage. Whether big or small, a birthday celebration must be carefully prepared if you wish it to be a success, otherwise, it might be a big flop! Now, God has established a celebration in which He wishes everybody to share. Daniel, his friends, and his people knew this celebration perfectly. Let us see what it is.

A PECULIARITY OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE

So far, we have seen that Daniel manifested

his affection for God and the divine principles. Remember that he refused to eat impure food, and that he went on praying as usual, despite the trap set by his colleagues. Where did his habits come from? Where did he learn them? Have you got an answer, dear children? (*Give them time to answer*). Yes, he learned them from his parents. Today, we shall deepen this topic. In Daniel's times, the Jewish nation was differentiated from all other surrounding peoples by some peculiarities:

- ★ The sanctuary services
- ★ The ark of the covenant
- ★ The priests
- ★ The prophets
- ★ The consumption of healthy (*kosher*) food

Yet, one thing marked the most clearly this difference: what do you think it was? We shall have the answer in a moment. First, let me introduce this unique feature of God's people through a series of questions (*Remark: the answers must not be given immediately*):

- ★ How do you determine a year?
By the revolution of the Earth around the sun.
- ★ How do you determine a month?
By the revolution of the moon around the Earth.
- ★ How do you determine a 24-hour day?
By the revolution of the Earth on itself.
- ★ How do you determine a week? *Is there any astronomical movement/revolution that corresponds to a week?*

The first three periods of time may be explained by a revolution of the Earth or of the moon. Yet the explanation of the fourth period of time may be found exclusively in the Bible. It concerns the seven-day week (see Genesis 1 and 2). Even if science offers us logical answers, let us not forget that there is a Creator behind the creation. This week, which we have all spent studying Daniel's life and the **GF** principle, is going to end on a day which God Himself has set apart. God rested on this day and blessed it. It is the seventh day. Can one of you tell which other name the Bible gives the seventh day? Sabbath! Who can tell me what the Sabbath is? (Genesis 2:1–3). It is the seventh day of the week, which found its origin in a sinless world. Of course, the Bible does not state

expressly that Daniel and his companions kept the Sabbath, but when we consider their commitment to God before the golden statue built by Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 3), we may deduce that they kept the Sabbath and did everything to place **God first**. The Sabbath was therefore at the heart of their spiritual experience with God. How is the Sabbath different from the other days of the week?

A BLESSED GIFT

The Sabbath is a gift that God offered to mankind from the origin of this world. We should know how to take care of this kind of gift. I invite you to reflect upon how long it took God to prepare this gift. The Bible states that He took six days to make (create) this gift, to make it perfect. So, these six days are useful to really appreciate this gift. This is what you have just lived, these six days, which will allow you to appreciate the gift God is going to offer you. God could have made it in one day, by snapping His fingers. Yet He wants us to consider the importance of this gift, which comes at the end of the six days of the week. The Bible describes three actions of God concerning this day: God blessed it, sanctified it (that is to say, set it apart from the others), and rested. Well, man must really be precious in God's eyes, since God did His best to offer him this gift! The celebration must therefore prove equal to the gift. To keep it carefully, we must get organized on the other six days. How should we do it? Can you tell me?

ACTIVITY OF REFLECTION

And now, dear children, imagine that your parents decide to celebrate your birthday by inviting all your friends. This would be a magnificent celebration! Yet your parents have decided that they would not clean the house nor tidy it. Would you like to clean it and tidy it? When your friends arrive, will they find a dirty and untidy house, or a clean and orderly one?

- ★ What would be your reaction when learning what your parents will do at this celebration?
- ★ Why is it impolite to invite your friends to a dirty and untidy house?

THE ORGANIZATION NECESSARY FOR A BEAUTIFUL CELEBRATION

I organize my week one day at a time, so that the Sabbath celebration may be kept smoothly. The preparation should begin one week in advance. A clean and orderly house helps to ensure us a more rested Sabbath. Well-ordered spaces promote a more concentrated, peaceful, and pleasant frame of mind. This is why it is an excellent idea to plan the time necessary to clean and tidy before the Sabbath begins. These tasks may include:

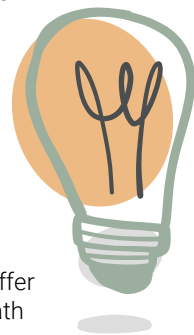
- ★ Helping Father or Mother as much as possible to prepare meals.
- ★ Tidying the kitchen after preparing meals.
- ★ Cleaning the bathroom.

- ★ Sweeping and washing the floors.
- ★ Putting away all unnecessary objects.
- ★ Dusting the shelves and tables.
- ★ Changing the bedsheets.

In other words, do whatever you can to help your parents, with the aim of having a clean house for this celebration. Do your best to enter the Sabbath day without pressure, stress, tension, or excessive weariness.

WHAT SHOULD BE REMEMBERED

We serve a God who loves to offer gifts to His children. The Sabbath is one of the most beautiful gifts God has offered to mankind. The world was still sinless when the Sabbath was given to Adam and Eve. God Himself gave us an example by resting on the seventh day, showing that this day is very important to Him. Every time we live and appreciate the Sabbath as it deserves, we acknowledge that God is the one and only Creator of the universe. We should therefore **get organized** during the first six days of the week to fully enjoy communion with Him on the seventh day. Just as Daniel applied the **GF** principle in his life, we should also apply this principle when we prepare our week to welcome the Sabbath properly.



Day Seven I Manage DANIEL'S FAITHFULNESS



INTRODUCTION

What is Culture! The word culture, early spelling of the word culture, appeared in the 12th century. It then referred to a “cultivated land,” according to the *Dictionary of the French Academy*.¹ With the passing of time, this definition changed. We might say today that it is a social behavior which determines the practices, and even identity, of a society. This concept includes the following elements: rites, habits, customs, etc. Well, dear children, which customs give a good definition of your culture? (*Give the children time to answer*). Daniel grew up in a Jewish family. Therefore, he also had his own culture. Let us see where it started, and what influence it had on his life.

THE CUSTOMS OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE

From the very beginning of our week, we have noticed that Daniel had certain practices: He ate

only food that was fit for human consumption (pure), and avoided food that was not (impure); he celebrated the Sabbath; he had an active life of prayer in all situations. All this was linked with the worship of the true God. Since he was a child in Israel, Daniel had been instructed about Yahweh through the sanctuary services. Yet if we want to know when it all began, we must go back to Creation. What did God want to establish so specially for man in Genesis 2? May there exist a culture willed by God?

THE CULTURE OF FAITHFULNESS

In the beautiful Garden of Eden, God established a **culture of faithfulness**. Yes, dear children, even in the Garden of Eden, there was a culture. Its aim was to have Adam and Eve always be dependent upon God, whatever the situation. How did God establish this culture? Let us discover it through a game.



ACTIVITY OF REFLECTION

Dear children, I need you to take seven boxes or seven bottles, on which you will write the numbers 1 through 7. Then also take 10 cardboard boxes or 10 bottles of the same size, upon which you will write the numbers 10, 20, 30, etc., till 100. Then take several sheets of paper, upon which you will draw fruit trees with the word “Eat.” Then, on another sheet of paper, draw just one tree with the words “Do not eat.” When everything is ready, the game may start. This is God’s “sharing game.”

¹ Louis-Philippe Gratton (2002, April), “What is Culture?” *Exculture*. Retrieved from <http://www.excultureae.com/definition-culture-francais/>.

God says to man:

- ★ Out of the seven days of the week, I give you six days, and the seventh is Mine (Exodus 20:8–11).

Place the objects in a row and apply God's sharing rule: six for the human beings, one for God.

- ★ Out of all the trees in the Garden, all of them belong to man except one: the tree of knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:16, 17)..

Place all the drawings of a tree in a row, then apply God's sharing rule. To sum up, all the produce of the earth belongs to man except one tree, which belongs to God.

Then place in a row the objects bearing the figures 10 to 100. Again, apply God's rule of sharing, and set apart the object bearing the figure 10. The remaining 90% are for man, God keeps the 10%.

- ★ Out of all income, you keep 90% for yourselves, the remaining 10% belongs to God.

Did you not notice something a little bit strange in this sharing game? (*Give the children time to answer*). God leaves us the larger share. Our God is very generous, even though everything belongs to Him! God has never ceased testifying of who He is: a God of love who provides and multiplies. If He acts like this, it is for several reasons:

- ★ He wants us to learn to place Him first in everything (Matthew 6:33, 34).
- ★ He wants to teach us to count on Him alone (Psalm 37:5).
- ★ He wants to test our faith in difficult times (Psalm 23:4).

Just like the Sabbath, tithing is holy. It should therefore be set apart (Leviticus 27:30).

LET US DEVELOP OUR REFLEXES OR HABITS

When I was a child, I grew up on an island where people drive on the left side of the road. This sentence was repeated to me again and again for my safety: "When you cross the street, look right, then left, then again right, so you are not run over by a car!" Today, years later, I have kept these same reflexes. It is the same for tithing: you must acquire the habit of tithing. To acquire a habit, a minimum of 21 days is necessary. How do you put that into practice? When I receive a sum of money from whatever origin:

- ★ I think of giving to God before spending for myself.
- ★ I set apart the part that belongs to Him.
- ★ I return joyfully the Lord's share when the collection basket passes by.
- ★ I commit myself not to use what does not belong to me.

Life's difficulties may urge me to use what I have set aside for God, yet I must not use it

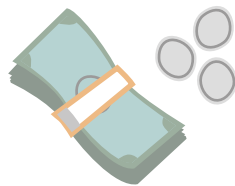
on myself because I have committed myself to give to **God** first, despite the problems I may face. The trials of my life should not decrease my faith in God. I should renew my commitment to the Lord if I am not faithful.

WHAT SHOULD BE REMEMBERED

We all have habits, good or bad, that cling to us. Whether our name is Daniel or Nebuchadnezzar does not protect us from these habits. In the long run, acquiring or practicing routines become a part of our culture. Even when the circumstances were extremely difficult in his life, Daniel remained faithful to God in everything. It is what we call the "culture of faithfulness." It is also what God is expecting from each of us. By giving Him first place in our lives, we learn how to trust Him fully. We realize that He supplies all our needs. This is why we joyfully return our tithes (one-tenth of all our income) to Him. Through the tithe and our **personal moments with God (PMG)**, we affirm to the world that God is the One who supplies all our needs. He is trustworthy, and we may count on Him in all circumstances, whether easy or difficult. I therefore learn how to **manage well** my resources, to honor Him.



Day Eight I BRING OFFERINGS DANIEL'S GRATITUDE



INTRODUCTION

What is Gratitude! Gratitude is an act by which we express to a person that we are grateful to him/her. To be grateful is similar to acknowledge or recognize. Boris Cyrulnik, a famous neuropsychiatrist,¹ describes recognition as: “a set of signs by which the singularity and identity of the other is fully taken into account.”² Recognition always involves a movement to emphasize the importance of what has been received. It is an experience that generates generosity.³ It follows that we may understand gratitude as an attitude or way of being before the other person.” Were Daniel and his friends in exile grateful to God, even though they had been uprooted from their country? You may ask yourself: In what way is our gratitude important to God?

THE CONTEXT OF CONFLICT IN THE BOOK OF DANIEL

Dear children, I would like to teach you an important word: **“context.”** This word gives us information about, for instance, the time when a verse or chapter was written. When you are reading a Bible text, you should keep in mind the word context. It will give you crucial information to understand that text. Let us see what Daniel 1:1, 2 teaches us, and let us define its context:

- ★ Two kings: Jehoiakim vs Nebuchadnezzar;
- ★ Two gods: Yahweh (the true God) vs Marduk (the false god)
- ★ Two cities: Jerusalem vs Babylon;
- ★ Two peoples: the Hebrews vs the Babylonians
- ★ Two temples: God’s temple vs Marduk’s temple

Remember that we said that there were two temples and two types of divinities. There were necessarily two types of offerings: the offerings for the Creator God, and those for Marduk. An offering is a voluntary gift brought to God. An offering is sweet-smelling to God and is given with all our hearts, therefore without any hesitation. God wants us to be generous and to give with all our hearts (Romans 12:8). He even says that everyone should give “as he purposed in his heart” because “God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Corinthians 9:7, NKJV). What about Belshazzar, the king of Babylon? What did he do?

BELSHAZZAR'S ATTITUDE

Belshazzar profaned the sacred utensils dedicated to the service of the true God, which had been brought from the temple of Jerusalem (Daniel 1:2) to honor the divinities worshiped by the king (Daniel 5:23). Having this mentality, Belshazzar diverted the honor and offerings due to the Creator God alone. Daniel’s role was to call King Belshazzar to order.

THE OFFERINGS IN ISRAEL

During this week, we spoke about culture. I hope that you still remember. Here is an example that took place in Israel: Three times a year, the men (and families) of Israel all had to appear before the Lord in Jerusalem. Deuteronomy 16:16 tells us: “They shall not appear before the LORD empty-handed” (NKJV).

¹ A physician who treats the brain of his/her patients and their behavior.

² Tremblay, Y., M.Sc (2016, June 22). La reconnaissance, qu'en est-il pour vous ? LinkedIn. Retrieved September 5, 2023, from <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/la-reconnaissance-yanik-tremblay>

³ Larivey, M. (2002). Puissance des Emotions : Comment Distinguer les Vraies des Fausses. Editions de l'Homme.

Returning one's tithe and bringing offerings was a part of the worship service. It was at the festivals of Easter, Pentecost, and at the Feast

of Tabernacles that the children of God used to bring their tithes and offerings. You do not come empty-handed to the festivals of the Lord! This was part of the culture of the children of Israel.

WHAT WAS THE AIM OF THESE OFFERINGS?

We find here an important, even crucial, lesson to remember: Bringing offerings to God is a gesture of gratitude for what God has done for us in Jesus Christ. The best way to express our love and gratitude is not only through words, but also through acts. Giving thanks is also done through acts. On the other hand, ingratitude and selfishness produce idolatry (Romans 1:21). We should be grateful for God's abundant grace. This abundant grace proceeds from Jesus Christ, who, "though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich" (2 Corinthians 8:9, NKJV). Gratitude and our love for God take a concrete form as offerings.

ACTIVITY OF REFLECTION

Do you know why you should say "thank you"? Dear children, do you often feel that you are compelled to say "thank you," just to annoy you? How do you react when your parents try desperately to teach you to say "thank you"?

Using the words "thank you" means expressing your gratitude toward the generosity of life and is one of the best approaches in our first steps in prayer. Let us be grateful to God because He loved us first. Our gift is only the response to His wonderful gift to us. "The Lord does not need our offerings. We cannot enrich Him by our gifts. Says the psalmist, 'All things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee.' Yet God permits us to show our appreciation of His mercies by self-sacrificing efforts to extend the same to others. This is the only way in which it is possible for us to manifest our gratitude and love to God. He has provided no other" (Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 18).

WHAT SHOULD BE REMEMBERED

Do you remember that Daniel worked for wicked King Belshazzar? This king despised the Creator God. But Daniel, who loved the Lord, knew that he should honor Him by bringing offerings because everything comes from Him. We should take care not to cultivate in ourselves a Belshazzar-like mentality. This king showed that he was able to divert the offerings which were meant for the Lord alone. As children of God, we should never think nor act like Belshazzar. On the contrary, we should always be grateful for what God has done or

will do for us. Our offerings are another way of showing how much we glorify and worship our God. When I **bring offerings** to the Lord with a joyful heart, I maintain the "God First" principle in my life. Let us therefore be grateful!

Dear children from the whole world, today is the end of this wonderful adventure of Daniel's life. What did we learn from him? (*Give the children time to answer*).

- 1 Day 1: I commit myself
- 2 Day 2: I cultivate
- 3 Day 3: I build
- 4 Day 4: I keep fit
- 5 Day 5: I get organized
- 6 Day 6: I manage
- 7 Day 7: I bring offerings

We would like to know how, in your daily life, you will put into practice all that you have learned during this week. Tell us your joys and even your difficulties. Send them as drawings and/or testimonies to this email address gcstewardship@gc.adventist.org. Our team will intercede in prayer for you and your family. These eight days spent together should help and encourage you to apply the "God First" principle. Think constantly of these two letters from the alphabet: **G** and **F** (**God First**). Dear children of the whole world, the time has come to say goodbye, and if we do not meet on this Earth, let us meet when Christ comes!





GOD FIRST

ADVENTIST STEWARDSHIP MINISTRIES

