

Rejecting the Government Meal Plan

Daniel 1; Coast Community Church; Pastor Earl Miles; 9-12-2021

The question is, *How do we live to please God in light of Daniel 1?*

1. We should not be surprised when governments oppose the true God and his people.

- The 'land of Shinar' is the area where the 'Tower of Babel' was attempted in the pride of man.
- Earthly 'gods' can seemingly give success and overcome other 'gods' according to the will of the true God!
- Cultural assimilation is the goal of pagan governments.
- Daniel and his friends continued to use their own names as reflected in the passage.
- Daniel and his friends refused to eat the king's food. – Romans 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Deuteronomy 8:3; Matthew 4:3-4

2. We should not be surprised when believers suffer for the sins of others in their nation.

- Israel was apostate and was being judged for her sins and Daniel suffered in the exile although he was faithful to God. – 2 Kings 20:12-19; 2 Kings 24:1-4
- Like Joseph, Daniel was suffering because of the sin of others (namely, his apostate nation) but God was with him.

3. We must trust that our God is in control of the governments that be and is at work to protect and provide for his people.

- Earthly kings have successes and losses according the will of the Heavenly King! - Proverbs 21:1; Proverbs 16:33
- God is present and active throughout these earthly events and under a pagan government and in the care of his people. – Psalm 33:13-22

4. We must be prepared to serve our government.

- We should not overlook or undervalue the common grace gifts, abilities and wisdom that are found even in pagan kings.
- Believers can and should serve faithfully in pagan governments. - Jeremiah 29:4-7
- Daniel was in the 'king's personal service' (5, 19) as he served Nebuchadnezzar, but ultimately the God of heaven! - Romans 13:1-7

5. We must be prepared to disobey our government.

- Daniel was concerned with not 'defiling' himself and therefore, being unfaithful to his God. - Acts 4:18-20; 5:27-29
- The king was giving them his 'choice food' (the best he had) so the problem wasn't health concerns but faithfulness concerns.

- Slavery, even at the highest level, includes things like control of food, knowledge, ‘names,’ and ‘service.’
- Daniel determined an act of ‘civil disobedience,’ but he also suggested an ‘alternative’ that would still achieve the goal of the authority. Daniel wasn’t simply ‘defiant’ but was reasonable and ‘creative’ and ‘compassionate’ in approaching the situation.
- Daniel risked suffering and death because kings had the power of life and death. (he could also ‘forfeit his head to the king’ – verse 10) - Matthew 10:27-33
- The Lord Jesus followed human authority until it conflicted with the will of His Father and He died, in part, because of his rejection of human authority. – Matthew 17:24-27; John 5:18

Government Mandates

What do we do with government mandates?

- What if our job is on the line?
- What if our life is on the line?

Every situation is an opportunity to trust God for what we need and to love according to God’s Word.

Principles of Relating to Government

- The Rule: We are to gladly submit to governing authorities.
- Exception 1: Except when they oppose the Law of God (Word).
- Exception 2: Except when they oppose the Law of the Land (Constitution).
- Qualification 1: We may voluntarily and temporarily suspend the exercise of our rights if it seems wise and good.
- Qualification 2: We may suggest a legitimate and reasonable alternative to the government requirement when possible, rather than simple defiance.
- Definition of Love: Love is defined by God’s Word, not government mandates.

Government Mandates – 3 Positions:

- “It is a sin not to follow the mandates.” No. (Romans 13:7-10)
- “It is a sin to follow the mandates.” No. (1 Corinthians 9:19-23)
- “Every person must be fully convinced in his own mind.” Yes. (Romans 14:5)

The church should allow believers to come to their own conclusions and reject condemnation of others and despising of others.

The church should be prepared to love and support believers, regardless of the decision and the consequences that may follow.