



# SERMON NOTES

From In Touch With Dr. Charles Stanley

## REQUIREMENTS OF A GODLY INFLUENCE

**KEY PASSAGE:** Daniel 1:1-9 | **SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES:** Exodus 34:15 | Psalm 103:19 | Daniel 1:17-20; 2:9-23; 3:14-18; 4:18-19; 5:5-30; 6:3-22 | Matthew 5:16; 16:6 | Romans 8:28 | Colossians 4:5 | Hebrews 13:5

### ► SUMMARY

#### Influence is both a privilege and a responsibility.

It has the power to affect someone else's life or persuade a person toward a particular course of action. Influence can be either purposeful or passive, conscious or unconscious. But whatever form the power of influence takes, the most important factor is that it be godly.

### ► SERMON POINTS

Godly influence helps people understand the gospel, grow in their knowledge of Scripture, walk in righteousness, serve and follow Christ, support His work, and spread the message of His salvation.

Daniel is an example of someone whose godly influence reached to all those around him. As a Jewish youth, he was exiled to Babylon by King Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel was part of a group of Jewish teenagers chosen to be trained in Babylonian culture for three years and then enter the king's personal service. During his lifetime, Daniel was a godly influence to his friends, the king's servants, three Babylonian kings, and one Persian king.

#### Requirements of Godly Influence

Daniel's life demonstrates what's required to be a godly influence on those around us.

- **Strong Conviction About God's Word.** Daniel's first challenge in Babylon came shortly after he arrived. The king ordered that this group of youths be given

food and wine from his table. "But Daniel made up his mind that he would not defile himself with the king's choice food or with the wine which he drank" (Dan. 1:8). His strong conviction came from the Scriptures. The Lord had commanded the Israelites not to eat or drink anything sacrificed to idols (Ex. 34:15).

Daniel sought permission from the commander of the officials not to defile himself. He suggested a test in which he and his three friends would be given vegetables and water instead. After ten days, the official could evaluate their appearance.

Because Daniel held to his conviction and sought to obey the Scriptures, God gave him favor with the official, and he continued to withhold the king's food and drink. The Lord also blessed Daniel and his friends with knowledge, intelligence, and wisdom beyond all the other youths, which resulted in their promotion in the kingdom.

A conviction is something we believe because we're convinced and persuaded that it's true. And that's how we should feel about God's Word. It's infallible and inerrant, and it contains principles by which we are to live and by which we'll be judged by God. If we don't hold fast to Scripture, we'll be tossed about by every difficulty we face and begin making decisions based on our preferences, rather than the truths of Scripture.

- **Commitment to Our Convictions.** "Daniel made up his mind that he would not defile himself" (v. 8), and that's exactly what we must do as well. Commitment begins in the mind, but it's demonstrated in our actions. The true test of commitment to our convictions is whether we live

by them, not just when it's convenient, but all the time. Jesus said to let our light shine so people would see our good works and glorify God (Matt. 5:16). When we say we believe one thing, yet live another way, it ruins our witness.

- **Courage to Stand for Our Convictions.** Daniel and his friends bravely stood firm in their conviction to obey the Lord despite threats and dangers. They faced the anger of a powerful king, but remained faithful to their God. Daniel kept praying to the Lord when it was forbidden by Persian law, knowing that he could be thrown into a lion's den. And Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego refused to worship Nebuchadnezzar's statue, even though the penalty was death in a fiery furnace. In every challenging situation, they courageously obeyed their God and trusted Him to handle the consequences. And that's exactly what we're to do when our convictions are tested.
- **Confidence in the God of Scripture.** We must be convinced, not only that the Bible is true, but that God Himself is trustworthy. Every promise He makes in His Word, He will fulfill, and everything He says about Himself in Scripture is true. We may be quick to claim we trust God, but what happens when He tests our faith? When difficulties come, are we still confident that He'll keep His promise to walk with us through it?

To be a godly influence we need unshakeable faith. Like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, can we confidently say, "If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to rescue us ... but even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods nor worship the golden statue that you have set up" (Dan. 3:17-18)?

- **A Calm Spirit When Under Fire.** When our convictions are challenged, we must keep our focus on the Lord. If we don't, we'll become anxious, frustrated, fearful, or shaken. When Daniel heard that Nebuchadnezzar had ordered the death of all the Babylonian wise men, including him, his first response was to pray

(Dan. 2:17-18). When we turn immediately to the Lord when under fire, He'll calm our spirits and strengthen our trust in Him. He's sovereign over everything in heaven and on earth (Ps. 103:19), and He promises to take care of us and work all things together for our good (Rom. 8:28).

- **A Christlike Spirit.** We're never more like Christ than when we forgive. Daniel had many reasons to be bitter and resentful toward Nebuchadnezzar. He'd attacked his city, uprooted him from his family, and taken him captive in a foreign land. Yet there is no evidence in Scripture that Daniel held a grudge or ever retaliated. On the contrary, he faithfully served all the kings who were over him, without animosity. Sometimes our greatest influence on others is when they see us forgive those who wrong us.
- **A Consistent Walk.** Throughout his life, Daniel was consistent in his walk with God. He didn't proclaim one thing and do another, but lived with integrity. His uncompromising stance earned him the respect of his friends, the governing officials, kings, and an entire nation. His is an example every believer should follow. The consistency of holding to our convictions and walking in obedience to God is what makes our influence godly and effective.

#### ► RESPONSE

- You may not have the scope of influence that Daniel had, but you're influencing others—either for good or bad—whether you know it or not. Who in your life is listening to what you say and watching how you live? What kind of influence are you exerting on them?
- Are you convinced that the Bible is true and that God is trustworthy? Do your actions and attitudes support your claim?
- How do you usually respond when your convictions are challenged? What have you learned from Daniel's example that will help you stand firm in times of testing?

To purchase this message on CD or DVD, please visit [store.intouch.org](http://store.intouch.org) or call 1-800-789-1473.  
To download these Sermon Notes, visit [intouch.org/sermonnotes](http://intouch.org/sermonnotes).

