

Leader's Notes for "Inverted"

Week of January 7, 2018

NOTES TO LEADERS: We will be walking through the first six chapters of Daniel. There we see that God was always present and working even though the culture was upside down. Daniel and others lived by faith in ways that were honoring to God and wise, gracious, and influential with the people.

SHARE IT

Was there a time when you felt out-of-place? Are there ways that you think our culture is "inverted?"

NOTES TO LEADERS: This could be when you moved, when you joined a group (for me, military), when you were injured or sick, or when you went to Jr. High. In all these situations, the culture was different and difficult.

STUDY THE BIBLE

What are some things you notice about Daniel's upbringing and character?

NOTES TO LEADERS: He came from nobility, he had upbringing that taught him to put God first, he knew how to speak with authority, he could overcome fear, and he had close friends.

What do we learn about the Babylonian king and culture? ("King" occurs 128 times in six chapters.)

NOTES TO LEADERS: Powerful, wealthy, religious, authoritarian, idolatry, knew that it was better to assimilate than to annihilate, seeking wisdom and religious favor with gods.

What was Daniel's concern about the foods and wine? (See Leviticus 11:4,7; 17:14. Note that the king's food and wine were offered to idols.)

NOTES TO LEADERS: Though it is not said in the text, it was common for food and wine to be offered and therefore blessed by their gods. In addition, Jews did not eat certain foods, especially meats (pork, horse, etc.). Daniel's concern wasn't health but that he honors his God. To do this was high risk.

How did Daniel and friends respond to their culture, leaders, and God?

NOTES TO LEADERS: Their response was to trust God, even though this meant risk. In addition, they were gracious and respectful with others.

How was God working even in this situation?

NOTES TO LEADERS: Throughout these chapters, we see God is sovereign over kings (used 128 times), still providing a future for Israel, and powerful in the visible and invisible world. In this chapter, God (1) gave them favor and compassion with supervisors and the king, (2) gave them supernatural growth and healthy, and (3) God gave them knowledge, intelligence, ability to understand dreams and visions, and (4) God gave them longevity.

DISCUSS TOGETHER

Our focus is on how we live “right-side up in an upside down world?” Do you think American culture is, in some ways, upside down?

NOTES TO LEADERS: DANGER! DANGER! Beware of the drift toward complaining or objecting. There are, of course, many things that we would like to be different. Please allow people to identify what is difficult or wrong without making this a gripe-fest or pity-party. We don't need to be anti-culture. Remember: The goal is to talk about how God can work in and through us in our culture. The goal is faith in and honor to God.

Contrast Daniel and friends with their new culture. How might this compare to our situation?

NOTES TO LEADERS: There are many contrasts of Daniel and Babylonian culture. The purpose of this question is to think through how we, as followers of Christ, are called to be different without being obnoxious or complaining.

God prophesied and allowed their captivity into that culture. What can we learn about living a “resolved” (1:8) life in our culture while being an influence for God? What is healthy and unhealthy?

NOTES TO LEADERS: Restated, How do we live resolved to glorify God in all ways while engaged in a culture that is living contrary?

What does it look like to apply the four “Keep Central” statements from Sunday?

NOTES TO LEADERS: The four statements are . . .

1. Christians have always lived in oppositional cultures
2. Our enemy is Satan, not people
3. God calls us to rescue people, not the culture
4. Disagree with opinions, not people

Grace to you,
Steve