This page was exported from - Shelburne Free Press
Export date: Fri Oct 30 7:45:19 2026 / +0000 GMT

Christian Perspectives: Looking at the character of Daniel

How often has a child questioned the reason to carry out an undesirable task and been entirely dissatisfied by the response of ?It builds character!? Character is mysterious to a child but as we mature we come to understand that character is who you are when no one is watching. This is hardly a new revelation to most of us, but what is God's opinion of character? Let us take a look at the life of Daniel.

Daniel was born into an influential family and perhaps even the royal family of Israel though not the crown prince. When he was a young man his nation was defeated and he was carried to a far-away land where he was made to serve his conquerors. Throughout his life he had served this foreign power and the power that replaced it. Daniel had risen to a position within the Medo-Persian government that other local rulers were jealous of his power. In Daniel 6:4-5 we see the conundrum these rulers find themselves in:

The other administrators and high officers began searching for some fault in the way Daniel was handling government affairs, but they couldn't find anything to criticize or condemn. He was faithful, always responsible, and completely trustworthy. So they concluded, ?Our only chance of finding grounds for accusing Daniel will be in connection with the rules of his religion.?

Daniel's character meant that even his enemies couldn't find any hold to pull him down. Not only his enemies, but even the king Darius knew that God was the One who held Daniel's highest allegiance. As Matthew 5:16 says:

In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.

It would have been easy for Daniel to decide that the empire that crushed his people was not worth serving - they didn't even prioritize the things Daniel valued. But Daniel chose to serve whole-heartedly anyways. Paul reveals the mindset of Daniel and others like him in Colossians 3:22-24:

Slaves obey your earthly masters in everything you do. Try to please them all the time, not just when they are watching you. Serve them sincerely because of your reverent fear of the Lord. Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. Remember that the Lord will give you an inheritance as your reward, and that the Master you are serving is Christ.

Daniel's goal was not to please his Babylonian or Persian masters but his master in heaven - God - who is always worth serving.

Keeping good character is easier when you remember that on top of never being certain that no one is watching, even when no humans know what you are doing, God does see the good you do. Matthew 6:3-4 describes this principle:

But when you give to someone in need, don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. Give your gifts in private, and your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.

Over his lifetime Daniel served many rulers under two different empires. Many times even when his character and talents were recognized by one leader that leader's focus would be drawn away by more pressing matters and Daniel's contributions would fade into the background until he was needed again. Daniel would also need to win the respect of each new ruler. But Daniel remained faithful. In the first story I mentioned with the administrators seeking a flaw in Daniel's life, I had not drawn attention to the facts that by that point Daniel was serving the second empire and the 5th ruler after about 70 years of service. Keeping a clean record from those who seek your downfall is impressive by itself, but having a clean record after a lifetime of service is on another level. Daniel knew that whether it seemed to be having an effect or not, through the good times and the bad, he kept doing what he knew to be right. In Galatians 6:9 we read:

So let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up.

So when you see another child fail to comprehend the value of character, think to the life of Daniel and the lessons that we can learn from his example.

Andrew Gault

Elder at Bethel Bible Chapel Shelburne