

**Word notes Sunday 01/07/2012 Roy Wheeler
Different but not Indifferent (Daniel 1 & 2)**

Summary (read this bit out to remind cell members what was said on Sunday)

Key Text: Dan 1:1 - 2:25

Travelling in Africa Roy had experienced starkly living in a very different culture. Daniel and his friends were aliens in a foreign land, selected and trained including an expectation regarding their diet. Today we Christians are also living and working in a foreign land so Daniel has some things to say to help us be different and to be "in the thick of it", not apart from the world but to be salt and light. NB Daniel and the other Israelites were in the same "performance related pay package" as the rest - the same fate would befall them if any didn't perform. Would they fall in with the rest or choose to be different - 4 things set them apart and sustained them:

1, Convictions based on God's Word - God's word prohibited them from eating food offered to idols. The issue was they were people of conviction. This was not a matter of which food to eat but if they would choose to follow God. Are you a person of clear convictions based on God's word - if not you'll shift like the desert sand.

2, No Compromise – Daniel's response was to say after 10 days compare us then you must decide what to do - they wouldn't give in and eat the food if it didn't work but suffer the consequences.

3, Courage to stick by their convictions, not compromise and to trust God. Even though the other sorcerers had been told not to ask for more time, Daniel boldly goes to the King and asks for time!

4, Confidence - in God alone! There are many instances of their confidence in God in Daniel eg 3:17&18. Even if they were not to be saved from the furnace they would still not serve the King's false god. In Heb 10:35 we are exhorted not to throw away our confidence.

NB their promotion to higher position in the King's service was not the issue. When following God's way we don't always get favour but the overriding issue is no matter what the outcome I am going to be different.

You may not be in a position of influence but you can:

- 1, Be different in your attitudes and behaviour
- 2, Pray. There is great influence in prayers – the prayer of righteous is powerful (Jas 5:16).
- 3, Share your testimony, your experience of Jesus and your salvation. Remember the woman at the well and her testimony and how it touched so many in her town (John 4).
- 4, Do acts of kindness – remember we should be different but not indifferent!

Application (this is the bit where cell members get to participate. Lead discussions around these points)

Have you ever travelled to a very different culture? What was it like and how did you cope?

What experiences do you have of being different from others around you because of your faith? What happened and how did you explain the situation to others?

What are the main differences you can see between Christians especially yourself and our 21st century UK society? Are you salty?

Read Hebrews 10:32-39. How does the Hebrew Christian's experience relate to ours today? Does their story encourage you or worry you and why?

Witness (this is the bit where the cell talks and prays about how to share the Good News)

How does being salt and light relate to our witness? How do we love those around us yet retain our difference?