

Going Deeper

WITH

A LIFE THAT MATTERS



From Restlessness to Making a Difference:

Five Perspectives that Govern
a Man or Woman God can Trust

BY RON HUTCHCRAFT

FROM RESTLESSNESS TO MAKING A DIFFERENCE: FIVE PERSPECTIVES THAT GOVERN A MAN OR WOMAN GOD CAN TRUST

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We are living in incredible times unlike any other, and the choice to live an ordinary life is not an option. God has set before us a powerful example in the Bible of an extraordinary life. Daniel's assignment from God was to live for Him in a time that was very much like our own—a world with rapid changes. He lived in a time when it looked as if the wrong was winning one victory after another. We live daily in a time like Daniel's. Most of us would say if we looked over our lifetime, things have changed dramatically and the tides have turned against the right.

In Daniel's world, unbelievers had been used by God to bring punishment on his people and people couldn't understand why. Young people were forced to study pagan world views. Daniel and his friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, were plunged into Babylonian schools where they were forced to learn all the pagan signs and the religion. There was massive pressure on believers to conform in order to succeed. Israel's best and brightest young people were carried away by King Nebuchadnezzar and taken out of their country. There was massive pressure on them to conform or they would lose their lives.

Daniel was a victim of forces beyond his control. He was a good guy and not part of the problem in Judah, but he was carried away and could have easily had a victim mentality his whole life. When he was just a kid and in the most turbulent years of his life, he was ripped away from his family. His personal life was thrown totally upside down. He was thrown headfirst into a completely pagan culture, even though he was a follower of God. He didn't have a temple to go to anymore because it was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. He didn't have a church or a support group. Daniel was on the front lines serving four major world rulers, as three kingdoms and four rulers rose and fell. At least two times in his life he was under a death sentence.

Despite his situation, he was a human lighthouse piercing the darkness. His life shows us how to start strong, run steady, and finish well. God called Daniel "dearly beloved" and "highly esteemed." He had the applause of heaven.

He was an amazing guy in the middle of turbulent times. First of all, he was God's witness to some of the most powerful men on earth. Secondly, he was the steward of God's vision in his generation. God gave him a view of the future that no one else in his generation had. Thirdly, Daniel saw through the rise and fall of empires to the end of time. He was given an exclusive glimpse of the Son of God in all His glory.

Daniel was a guy worth finding out what his secrets were. He's a man for our times. He crossed the finish line uncorrupted, uncompromised, and undiminished. He was God's man for all seasons and he shows us the secrets

of a life well lived. The choice to live an ordinary life is no longer an option.

Daniel was a rock in a world of sand castles. He was a man God could trust. Let's discuss the five perspectives that govern a man or woman God can trust so that you can follow Daniel's example and live an extraordinary life!

You Carry God's Name

The first perspective that governs a man or woman God can trust is you carry God's name. The origin of the name Daniel is Hebrew and it means "God is my judge." Ezekiel means "God is my strength" and Joel means "Jehovah is God." These are all men who were named with God's name.

There's something very significant when you have an 'el' at the end of Hebrew names like Daniel, Ezekiel, Joel, and many others. It means "Elohim." When you read "God created the heaven and the earth," that was Elohim. When you read the word for God in the Bible, it's Elohim. When Jesus says, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken Me?", He's saying, "Elohim, Elohim, why have you forsaken Me." Elohim was the God of the whole world. The name Daniel was very appropriate for him because he was going to be an ambassador to a pagan world.

Daniel 1:6-7 says, "Among these were some from Judah: Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. The chief official gave them new names: to Daniel, the name Belteshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abednego." These new names were Babylonian pagan names that all had to do with their pagan gods. They changed Daniel's name for their benefit, but they never changed who he was. He said, "I carry God's name." They could call him whatever they wanted to call him because Daniel knew who he was.

If you're going to be God's man or God's woman, you will not be defined by your culture or environment. You won't be defined by your position, because God does not use chameleons. There are a lot of Christians who are chameleons—changing with their culture or environment. God doesn't want Christians to change colors depending on how things are going or who they're with. We wander from our destiny when we forget who we really are. Daniel survived all that change and was a rock in a sand-castle world because he never forgot who he was.

If you belong to Jesus Christ, the Bible tells you who you are. 2 Corinthians 6:16-18 says, "For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: 'I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people.' 'Therefore come out from them and be separate,' says the Lord. 'Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters,' says the Lord Almighty."

If He's the king and you're a son or daughter of His, you are a prince or princess. If you know who you are as Daniel did, you carry God around inside

you. The people of God were first called Christians in a town called Antioch, 2,000 years ago. They didn't call themselves that, but lost people looked at them and called them "little Christ" because his followers reminded them of Jesus Christ.

Wherever you are, no matter what change takes place, whatever changes in your seasons, whatever changes in your health, whatever changes in your environment, you are always carrying the name at which every knee must bow, every demon falls down, and storms cease. Daniel carried God's name and so do you. When you bear the name of Christ, live a life worthy of His name. Don't ever forget the name you carry.

You're Playing to an Audience of One

The second perspective that governs a man or woman God can trust is you are playing to an audience of one. Daniel worked for Darius, the pagan king, who was the most powerful man on earth at the time of his reign. Daniel 6:20 says, "When he came near the den, he called to Daniel in an anguished voice, 'Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to rescue you from the lions?'" Even King Darius knew that Daniel, though he worked for the most powerful man in the world, didn't live for him. He played for an audience of one.

You could be a Daniel wherever you are if you say, "I know who I'm playing for and who I report to. I play to an audience of one. I've decided who I'm going to please." John 8:29 says, "The one who sent me is with me; He has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases Him." Will you make it your life motto to always do what pleases Him? Don't care what anybody else says, but want His approval instead. Something radical happens in your life when you decide you only need the approval of the Creator of the universe. There's only one person we've got to please.

Proverbs 16:7 says, "When a man's ways are pleasing to the Lord, he makes even his enemies live at peace with him." You don't please people by trying to please them. Please God instead. In Galatians 1:10, Paul got it right. He said, "Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ." No man can serve two masters. You cannot be a man-pleaser and a God-pleaser at the same time.

When you hear the voice of God telling you which direction to turn, you shouldn't care about the approval of anybody else. His voice and approval is all that matters. Are you making Him smile? Would He be proud of how you handled that situation?

Amidst all the voices of people telling you how they'd like for you to be and what they'd like you to do, go straight to that still small voice. Choose to listen to the only voice that really matters in the end.

Life is so much simpler when you decide to live totally for Christ. It really is easier and it just simplifies life. The ambivalence will tear you apart.

Remember that you are playing for an audience of one.

You're Uniquely Qualified by God

The third perspective that governs a man or woman God can trust is you are uniquely qualified by God.

Daniel 1:4 describes Daniel as a young man "without any physical defect, handsome, showing aptitude for every kind of learning, well informed, quick to understand, and qualified to serve in the king's palace." He and the other men were gifted by God. He put them in a place where they didn't even know what He put them there to do. In Daniel 5:14, King Belshazzar tells Daniel "I have heard that the spirit of the gods is in you and that you have insight, intelligence, and outstanding wisdom." This made Daniel very qualified to the king.

Daniel was uniquely qualified for what God put him there to do. The same applies to you. Your gifts are not random. The place where you are is not random. You have been put where you are with the gifts that you have to make a unique difference for Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 2:10 says, "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." Do you think you're doing them? Are you settling for less?

There are things God had in mind for you to do, like Daniel, for which He has uniquely qualified you. You might think there's not very much you can do. You might think you're not tall enough, you can't sing, you can't preach, or you're not very smart. Whether you believe it or not, God has uniquely qualified you to do the things He has prepared for you to do.

You have everything you need to do what God put you here to do. It might be easier to tell your children or your grandchildren that, but everything you need for what God put you here to do, you have. And what you don't have, you don't need. Remember that you're uniquely qualified by God.

You're Making Unholy Places Holy Ground

The fourth perspective that governs a man or woman God can trust is you're making unholy places holy ground. King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream. Daniel says, "No wise man, no enchanter, no magician, no diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about. But there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come. Your dream and the visions that pass through your mind as you lay on your bed are these."

Daniel walks into this sea of occult darkness and he glorifies the God of heaven. A believer in Jesus Christ that is living in a spiritually hostile world, which we all do, has three choices.

- You can become a cocooner. You build a little Christian cocoon and you

say, "The world is so evil, I'm going to put me and my family into this cocoon. We can't possibly stand up against this kind of evil." Daniel was not a cocooner.

- You can be a conformer. You say, "Well, you know, I've got to get along and, you know, this is how they do it where I live...where I work."
- You could be a make-a-difference person like Daniel and be a transformer.

Daniel chose to live his life fully for God. He did not retreat into a little spiritual cocoon, nor did he conform. He never withdrew from or succumbed to his culture. Instead, he faithfully lived to be a light in a dark place. Does that describe you?

Jesus said in Matthew 5:16, "In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven." You are the light in this world. Jesus also said in John 17:15 and 18, "My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one...As you sent Me into the world, I have sent them into the world."

Dark is always dark if there is an absence of the light. Christians stand around blaming people in this world for their wrong choices and behavior. Don't blame any of them. If it's dark, it's because the light isn't shining. It's God's people, not the other folks that have the problem. It's dark because of the absence of the light.

We will have all eternity to celebrate being a believer in Jesus Christ. Right now, we have a short time to help some people be in heaven with us. It's not a good idea to put all the lights clustered in one big room together. You've got to light up the place where you are, and be fully engaged while fully God's.

You are where you are to punch some holes in the darkness. Daniel made unholy places holy ground by his example, and that's your mission today.

You Represent Your King With Excellence

The last perspective that governs a man or woman God can trust is you represent your king with excellence.

We can go back to the book of Daniel to see some examples. Daniel 1:20 says, "In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters in his whole kingdom." Daniel 6:4-5 says, "The administrators and the satraps tried to find grounds for charges against Daniel in his conduct of government affairs, but they were unable to do so. They could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent. Finally these men said, 'We will never find any basis for charges against this man Daniel unless it has something to do with the law of his

God."

Wouldn't you like somebody to say that about you? We have looked you up and down and couldn't find anything wrong except you're too much into God. They couldn't find anything wrong with Daniel. Everything he did, he did with excellence. No matter what you're doing, there is only one kind of effort worthy of your King and that would be your very best.

Colossians 3:17 says, "Whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." It says to do it all in His name. Later, in that chapter verses 23-24 say, "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving."

Anything you do as a follower of Jesus Christ should be with all your heart, whether it be in your work, when you listen to somebody else, when you pray, when you study, or whatever else you are doing. Set a standard of excellence. Jesus is the most worthy of our work. You are serving the Lord Christ.

Sometimes churches, pastors, and even the one you love most will let you down. You're not doing it for them. You serve the Lord Christ. Do it for Him. He's worth all your heart. If nobody appreciates what you are doing, you should still do it with all your heart because it is for the Lord Christ. That's how Daniel lived, serving God's purpose in his generation.

Your Father's always watching how you play, so play your best for Him and make Him smile. Through every storm and every season of your life, you can live in the eye of the storm anchored to the all-powerful God and making a difference that will last forever. Wherever you go, represent your King with excellence!

To make a difference and be a man or woman God can trust, remember to carry God's name, remember to play for an audience of One, remember that you're uniquely qualified by God, remember to make unholy places holy ground, and remember to represent your King with excellence. Follow Daniel's example and live an extraordinary life!

About Ron Hutchcraft

Ron Hutchcraft is committed to communicating the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the lost in their language and to motivating and equipping believers to communicate Christ to the lost in their world. In all he does, he seeks to reach the lost and the young with the life-changing message of Jesus Christ.

As President of Ron Hutchcraft Ministries, Ron and his team specialize in developing authentic, relevant, and creative tools to reach people with the message of Jesus. A veteran of over 48 years of youth and family work, Ron

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For more information about Ron Hutchcraft Ministries, visit www.Hutchcraft.com.

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