

THE NEW SHAPE: DON'T BE SHAPED BY THE WORLD

Daniel 1



The story of Daniel is rich and full of lessons on how a Christian can navigate an ungodly world and not conform to its ideologies. Daniel and his friends found themselves amongst the young men that were taken into captivity by king Nebuchadnezzar. Once in Babylon, the king commanded that these men be taken in to be taught the ways of the Babylonians so that they could be fit to serve in the king's palace. It shows that the world takes you and repackages you to suit its need.

In the Bible, Babylon is painted as a city where perversion and evil are seen as the day's order. It is a place that wants nothing to do with God and is filled with every wicked thing that one can think of; immorality, idolatry, and corruption, to name a few. And in today's world, Babylon represents the same thing - a system that is a war with God. We live in a world that appreciates evil and shuns godliness; day after day, humanity wants to distance itself from God.

The system operates by imposing itself on you, telling you how to live, dress and think - giving you an identity. Daniel and his friends found themselves in a similar predicament: their names were changed [forced identity], and a diet was prescribed [controlled consumption]. The identity that this world encourages leads humanity to become a lesser version of what God intended. The prescribed diets are all the ungodly ideas that the world reinforces to corrupt your thought life.

The Bible calls the king's meal delicacies, meaning they were enticing and tempting to one's appetite. But no matter how it was presented, Daniel and his friends refused to defile themselves with that food. They held on to their identity regardless of the rot around them, and that is the stance that every believer should have - refusal to conform.

It is a new shape that enables you to not conform to the imposition of this world, and this new shape is what is birthed in when you receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour. You can escape the corruption of this world by committing your life to Jesus. The Bible says, "who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father" [Galatians 1:4 NKJV].

Committing your life to Jesus allows the new shape to find expression on the outside. Being born again makes you a new person on the inside [you receive a new shape in your inner-man]; and your commitment to God allows what is on the inside to come out. It is a decision you make in your heart, and the Holy Spirit helps you live it out.

Speaking of Daniel, the Bible says, "Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself..." [Daniel 1:8]. What have you purposed in your heart? Is it aligned with God's plans, or is it a pattern of this world? To purpose your heart to godliness is to acknowledge that He alone is Lord over your life and surrender everything to Him. If you don't purpose your heart to something, you will be swayed by everything that presents itself to you. Purposing in your heart to honour God with your life is the open arms that allow the Holy Spirit to continue to shape you. You shine before man when the Holy Spirit shapes you because you become different. The new shape brings about superiority, thus, making you more than an ordinary man.

Daniel 1:18-20 [NKJV]

"Now at the end of the days, when the king had said that they should be brought in, the chief of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar. Then the king interviewed them, and among them all none was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; therefore they served before the king. And in all matters of wisdom and understanding about which the king examined them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers who were in all his realm."

With the new shape comes a higher life and a superior way of thinking. The new shape is not an idea but a reality that can be translated from your inner man to all areas of your life. Daniel and his friends went on to change their times' political and religious setting; you can do the same, provided that you stay yielded to the Lord.

