



Today we begin a new series in the Book of Daniel. The challenges we face as Christians today are not unlike what Daniel experienced in ancient Babylon. The subtitle for this series is “10 Commitments to Make When Life Closes In”. There are times when career, family, and other pressures make it feel like life is closing in on us. Trials squeeze us so much that we don’t always know what to do next. Today, we will discuss Daniel 1:1-7 and our first commitment: “I Will Live as an Exile.”

SCRIPTURE: Daniel 1:1-7

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How would you describe the culture in America today? What types of behaviors, attitudes, and general feelings would you mention? How have things changed in America regarding job pressures or family life in the last fifty years?
2. Ecclesiastes 1:9 says, “What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun.” Why do we often see cultural mistakes repeated throughout history? What makes societies so prone to repeat mistakes of the past? What are some examples?
3. Read 2 Chronicles 36:14-21, and answer the following questions:
 - a. What do these verses teach us about God’s word to Judah? What happened that caused Judah to be taken into captivity in Babylon?
 - b. Judah was like her sister, Israel, who was also taken captive because of her unfaithfulness to God. However, in Judah, there remained a remnant of those who were faithful to God even though the nation, as a whole, wasn’t. Today, we see America is not unsimilar to Judah in that we have fallen away from God’s commands as a nation. As Christians, we, too, can feel like captives because we are living in a nation quickly becoming far removed from the things of God. What examples in our culture and country reveal America’s spiritual decline and show that we have turned our back on God as a nation?
4. According to Daniel 1:3-5, why were Daniel and his friends, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, taken to Babylon by Ashpenaz under the king’s order? What was the king’s plan for these men, and perhaps others like them, once they were taken captive? Why was it important for the king of Babylon to “re-

educate” these men?

5. What change was made to each man’s identity when taken into captivity? Why is this important to note? How do we see our current culture seeking to change the identity of those who believe in Jesus?
6. We realize in reading about Daniel’s life that some things never change, as we saw in Ecclesiastes 1:9, “nothing is new under the sun.” Wickedness remained unchanged in the strategy to separate people from God and remove Him entirely from their lives/identities. What similarities do you see between Babylon in the time of Daniel and the culture in America today?
7. Much like Daniel, we are called to live as exiles. This world is not our home. As we wait for our Savior to return and take us to our heavenly home, how can we live as faithful exiles before the Lord? What does 2 Corinthians 4:17-18 tell us about the troubles of this life?
8. What can we learn from the story of Daniel that can help us when we face confusing or uncertain seasons in life? How can you serve one another in your small group when these seasons arrive?