

## **Daniel Says, "No!"**

**AIM:** to teach my students how to learn to say, "No!"

**POINT OF CONTACT:** Ask your students how many different languages there are in which they know the word "no." It would be well to find several languages in which you know the translation of the word "no" before you go to class. As you ask these and make a list of them, you are repetitiously reminding the students of that little two-letter word.

**INTRODUCTION:** The Jews were in captivity. Daniel was a highborn young man who had been carried away as a slave. In the foreign land, there was need for people of this race to be assistants in the household of the king. The king asked for some young men who could be trained and could learn the wisdom of the Chaldeans. Throughout all of the Israelites, the young men who were highborn and who fit the other qualifications were chosen for this training. We find that in the end only four young men were chosen to stand before the king, and in one of these we take particular notice-the young man, Daniel.

Daniel had been given the privilege of living in the household of the king and eating from the king's table. Then Daniel realized that he could not eat of the meat from the king's table because it was unclean, or had not been killed properly, or had been offered first to idols; and under any of these circumstances, he could not eat it. One of the greatest verses in the Bible is Daniel 1:8, "But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat..."

Learning to say "no" takes years of work and labor. Daniel's ability to make the right decision came from many years of judgment and right decisions. Notice the decisions where Daniel had had to say "no."

### **I. "NO BLEMISH."**

In Daniel 1:4, the word "blemish" means "an external something that causes a person to look inferior." There had to be a time when Daniel said "no" to the current fads, fashions, fallacies, etc. He determined that he would look decent. (Impress upon your young people that, though the world says you can wear hippie attire and not be a hippie, it is impossible for you to look like a hippie and not be classed as one.)

### **II. "WELL FAVOURED."**

See Daniel 1:4. The word "favoured" here means "to look upon kindly." It means someone who is courteous or kind, who has the social graces, who can be looked upon by others with favor at their first meeting. (Sunday school classes are not only places to teach our children the Bible, but we should also teach courtesies-not to interrupt the teacher, to sit in the proper place, etc. All of these things are the marks of a well-trained person. Somewhere Daniel had to say "no" to disobedience.)

### **III. "SKILLFUL IN ALL WISDOM."**

Read Daniel 1:4. This means in simple language that these people had to have "horse sense." Children must be taught to make decisions that are decisions of intelligent thought. Children can be taught to make decisions properly. There had to be a time when Daniel had to say "no" to harum-scarum, helter-skelter decisions.

### **IV. "CUNNING IN KNOWLEDGE."**

See Daniel 1:4. This means that the candidates for assistants to the king had to be well educated. There is not a thing wrong with education. Our young people should be made to understand that a well-educated person has an instrument for use in the business of God. There are many who spend too much time talking about education, but some tend to swing in the other direction and play down the value of being educated. What a good place to teach our young people that they need to have a good academic education! Somewhere Daniel had to say "no" to dropping out of school.

### **V. "UNDERSTANDING SCIENCE."**

Read Daniel 1:4. To understand science, one must know what makes science work, or the first cause. No one

can ever understand science until he puts God in His proper position. Daniel somewhere had to say "no" to theories that even in his time would tend to remove God from the position of cornerstone of all sciences.

#### **VI. "ABILITY IN THEM TO STAND IN THE KING'S PALACE."**

See Daniel 1:4. The word "stand" here is the word that we would use in the sense of a person standing before another waiting for orders. It signifies a position assumed, and the expression as a whole means that the candidates had to be willing to be assistants. They had to be willing to take a second place and to aid and assist the one in first place. Not everybody can be President of the United States. There are many more Cabinet members than there are Presidents. There are more councilmen than there are mayors. There are more Sunday school teachers than there are departmental superintendents. There are more assistants than there are pastors. Someone has to be willing to subordinate man's natural desire to be the boss and be willing to take a second place for the good of the kingdom. Daniel somewhere had to say "no" to his own desires for advancement. Note, however, that when all the rest of the kingdom had fallen apart, Daniel continued. See Daniel 1:21.

#### **VII. "DANIEL PURPOSED IN HIS HEART."**

Notice Daniel 1:8. Daniel had made up his mind ahead of time what was right and what was wrong. All boys and girls should decide as youngsters what they will do and what they will not do. They should know what is right and what is wrong so that when the time comes for the decision to be made, the decision has already been made many years past. Daniel said, "I am not going to eat the king's meat." When the time came for it to be eaten, Daniel did not have to decide then, with perhaps much emotional appeal for him to do it. Daniel had to say "no" to things before he knew what the temptations might be.

#### **VIII. "WOULD NOT DEFILE HIMSELF WITH THE PORTION OF THE KING'S MEAT."**

Read Daniel 1:8. Daniel had to decide that if something seemed doubtful, then he would not do it. In all likelihood, the meat that he was to eat would not be the proper meat for an Israelite to eat. He did not know for certain, but there was the likelihood. So Daniel said, "If there is any possibility that this is wrong, then I will not do it." What a place to teach your pupils that if something smells wrong, they should avoid it! If food is in the refrigerator for too long a period and it begins to smell doubtful, the proper thing is not to eat it to see whether you get some intestinal upset, but rather, throw it away. Daniel had to learn to say "no" to things that other people would not consider wrong.

#### **IX. "NOR WITH THE WINE."**

Also in Daniel 1:8, Daniel learned that liquor in any shape, form or fashion is wrong. This one thing has been the ruination of more people than most any other thing. They say that a little bit is all right. If wine in itself is wrong, then even a little bit must be wrong. (Spend much time here with your students telling them that alcohol must not ever have any place in their lives.) Daniel, living in a kingdom where people were prone to drink a lot and gamble often, most certainly had to say "no" to alcohol.

#### **X. "NOW GOD HAD BROUGHT DANIEL INTO FAVOUR."**

See Daniel 1:9. Proverbs 16:7 tells us that it is possible for even those who would be your enemies to look upon you with favor. There are many people who dislike the stand of people who take a definite stand on any subject, but the world will respect a person who can take that stand without becoming ugly in so doing. Daniel had to learn to say "no" to man's natural tendency to be unkind to his enemies.

#### **XI. DANIEL WANTED TO BE RIGHT WITH GOD.**

When the king said, "We will pay your expenses and provide you with food," Daniel said, "I would rather not eat that food," full well knowing that the king would certainly not want to educate a stubborn rebel to work in his kingdom. If Daniel began to disagree with the kind of food that was given him, he would automatically be regarded as a person difficult to work with and probably would never have the opportunity for personal advancement. Yet he said, "I must do what God says to do." (Impress upon your class members that success is based not on what the world thinks but on what God thinks!"

#### **XII. THE KING'S SEED.**

The king said, "I want only those candidates who are members of the right family." (Impress upon your class that good employers recognize the fact that good Christians make the best employees; but certainly if a young person is going to do anything in the business of God, he must be of the family of God. This is the best place to take a few minutes and impress upon our class members that they are either children of the Devil or children of God. Constantly affirm that a person becomes a child of God, [a member of the right family] only by being born into that family. Try to lead the lost ones in your class to Christ this Sunday.)

### **XIII. CHILDREN.**

Read Daniel 1:4a. The king had said that he wanted those who trained to work in his kingdom to be young men. They would probably have been somewhere between 12 and 14 years old. Their training was begun in the areas that would make them good assistants to the king. (Teacher, please realize that training that will make your youngsters of use as adults cannot be begun when the youngsters become adults. The training that makes a youngster choose the right mate cannot begin when he starts looking for a wife or when she begins looking for a husband, but the training that makes a person by habit do the right thing must come so early in life that the child has never learned any other method of operating!)