

YOU'RE ABOUT TO BEGIN A JOURNEY THAT COULD CHANGE YOUR LIFE FOREVER. ARE YOU READY?

During the course of this study, you'll discover the life of Daniel, a courageous young person who took a stand for Christ. By boldly accepting the challenge God put before him, Daniel changed an entire nation! Believe it or not, if you listen to God's call on your life, you can find confidence in Christ and make a difference in this world too!

This experience will stretch your faith and give you the tools that will help you live a life that reaches out and changes others as you share the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

In the following five sessions, you will uncover the qualities that made Daniel a leader for God.

1 DARE TO BE DIFFERENT >> 2

Those who dare to be different for God are destined to make a difference in the world.

2 DARE TO BE DISCIPLINED >> 18

The better you know Jesus, the better you can help others get to know Him too.

3 DARE TO BE DISCERNING >> 36

The ability to endure tough challenges and influence others for Christ hinges on commitment, character, companionships, and choices.

4 DARE TO BE HIS DISCIPLE >> 54

We can point others to Christ by following His example of self-sacrifice and humble service.

5 DARE TO BE A WITNESS >> 72

A clear presentation of the message of Jesus is essential for people to receive the forgiveness and new life He offers. This is Good News that people need to hear and we must be prepared to tell.

Think about how God can use you to reach others in your life, your family, your neighborhood, your school—if you follow Him like Daniel did. Go ahead, we dare you! Take a moment right now, and pray that God will speak to you through His Word from these pages ...

1 D2BD

LESSON ONE

Dare To Be Different



Those who dare to be different for God are destined to make a difference in the world.

The world is full of followers—people who tend to go with the flow and conform to the culture around them. But God is looking for leaders—people who aren't afraid to stand up and be different. You may have heard it said, "If you don't stand for something, you'll fall for anything."

When God asks you to be different, He's not asking you to be weird or strange (although some people view Christians that way), nor does it mean being different just for the sake of being different. Here's the deal—God created you special. He created you with intention—not only to love Him, but to be His representative to a world that's looking for leaders. As you follow God's purposes and live by His standards, you'll think, act, and live differently than people who don't follow Jesus. That will make you different ... but in a really good way!

Daniel understood that as a follower of God, he should live differently than the culture around him. He knew other people were watching and how he lived would reveal the authenticity of his faith and the power of God.

Consider all of the differences Daniel faced. He was taken from his home to a *different* country, immersed in a *different* culture, subjected to a *different* routine, lived with a *different* family, ate *different* food, and received a *different* name. He was in a *different* world altogether, faced with the challenges of what he would do with his faith.

This is like the challenge you're facing as you proceed through middle school and into high school. Things are changing. Like Daniel, you have to decide whether these changes will have a positive or a negative effect on you—and whether you will have a positive effect on others.

Daniel didn't allow the pressures and practices of the surrounding culture to change him in a negative way. Instead, he determined to change the culture in a positive way.

By daring to be different, Daniel was destined to make a difference in his world. As you trust Jesus and let His life and message show through you, God can help you make a difference in your world.

REMEMBER:



God created and saved you not just for your own benefit, but so you can influence others for Him.



By pursuing God and His purposes above all else, you're making a choice to be distinctly different from your culture and those who don't follow Jesus.



As you resist pressure to conform to the world's pattern, God can work through you to bring positive change and lead others into a personal relationship with Jesus.

X TREME TRUTH

Daniel 1:1-21

(Refer to the following script for the in-class reading of this session's Bible text.)

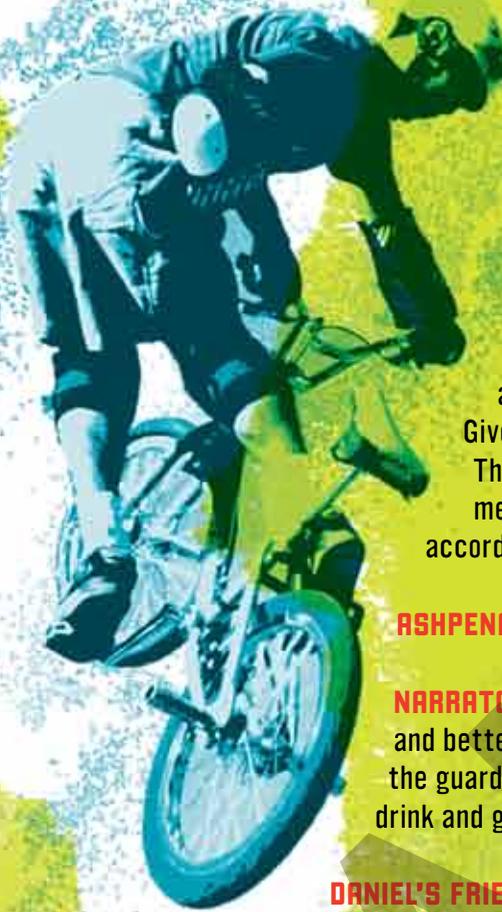
NARRATOR: In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. And the Lord delivered Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the articles from the temple of God. These he carried off to the temple of his god in Babylonia and put in the treasure house of his god.

KING NEBUCHADNEZZAR: Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, chief of his court officials, to bring in some of the Israelites from the royal family and the nobility—young men 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 was to teach them the language and literature of the Babylonians. The king assigned them a daily amount of food and wine from the king's table. They were to be trained for three years, and after that they were to enter the king's service.

DANIEL'S FRIENDS: Among these were some from Judah: Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. The chief official gave them new names: to Daniel, the name Beltshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abednego.

DANIEL: But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way.

ASHPENAZ: Now God had caused the official to show favor and sympathy to Daniel, but the official told Daniel, "I am afraid of my lord the king, who has assigned your food and drink. Why should he see you looking worse than the other young men your age? The king would then have my head because of you."



DANIEL: Daniel then said to the guard whom the chief official had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, "Please test your servants for ten days: Give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink. Then compare our appearance with that of the young men who eat the royal food, and treat your servants in accordance with what you see."

ASHPENAZ: So he agreed to this and tested them for ten days.

NARRATOR: At the end of the ten days they looked healthier and better than any of the young men who ate the royal food. So the guard took away their choice food and the wine they were to drink and gave them vegetables instead.

DANIEL'S FRIENDS: To these four young men God gave knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning. And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds. At the end of the time set by the king to bring them in, the chief official presented them to Nebuchadnezzar.

KING NEBUCHADNEZZAR: The king talked with them, and he found none equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; so they entered the king's service.

NARRATOR: 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. And Daniel remained there until the first year of King Cyrus.

BACK-IT-UP <<

EACH DAY THIS WEEK, take a look at what else the Bible says about taking a bold stand for God and about the effect that our relationships can have on our influence for Christ.

ROMANS 12:1-2

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.”

PRACTICE: What can you do differently today to honor Jesus with your attitude, words, and actions?

PRAY: Ask God to help you live by the pattern of *His* Word rather than the pattern of the world.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:17

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”

PRACTICE: What old habit or behavior can you break or change with God’s help, starting today?

PRAY: Ask Jesus to help you reflect on His “newness” in your life each new day.

EPHESIANS 2:10

“For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”

PRACTICE: In what practical way can you help or serve someone today?

PRAY: Give thanks to God for the abilities and opportunities He gives you to honor Him.

GALATIANS 2:20

“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”

PRACTICE: In what specific ways will people see Jesus’ character through your life today?

PRAY: Thank Jesus for giving His life for you and for living through you.

2 CORINTHIANS 6:17-18

“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.”

PRACTICE: In what way do you need to separate yourself from ungodly behavior today?

PRAY: Pray for wisdom and strength to avoid spiritually compromising situations.

1 PETER 2:11-12

“Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul. Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.”

PRACTICE: Demonstrate God’s love and kindness toward as many people as you can.

PRAY: Ask God to help you live with an eternal perspective rather than an earthly one.



God created you with the ability to honor Him and make a positive difference in the world. Your life will have the most meaning, joy, and purpose when you determine to live it the way God intended. “Doing your own thing” will never bring you the peace, comfort, and fulfillment that you can have by following Christ. If you’re not afraid to be different for Jesus, He can use you to lead others to Him.

STRATEGIES FOR SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION:

- Set a reasonable goal and stick to it. For example, try to memorize just one or two verses per week.
- Be familiar with the larger passage, or context, in which the verse is found.
- Read the verse aloud several times with a lot of feeling.
- Don't just scan the verse. Read it intently, like you would a love letter.
- Memorize a phrase at a time. Add more as you learn it.
- Quote word-for-word to build confidence and accuracy.
- Repeat the reference (the address) of the passage before and after you say it.
- Meditate on the verse (think or chew on the meaning and consider how it applies to your life).
- Use the verse over time to help you commit it to memory.

3. You need to be able to **clearly present the Gospel**—the Good News about Jesus—and help a person understand how to start a relationship with Jesus.

We'll work on this more in the upcoming sessions. But as a starting place, take some time to read through the "Steps to Peace With God" witnessing tool that you were given. Start to learn those four simple steps. We'll practice using them later in the course. **For now, learn Step 1 and memorize two Bible verses** that go along with this step.

HERE THEY ARE:

STEP 1 God loves you and has a purpose for your life.

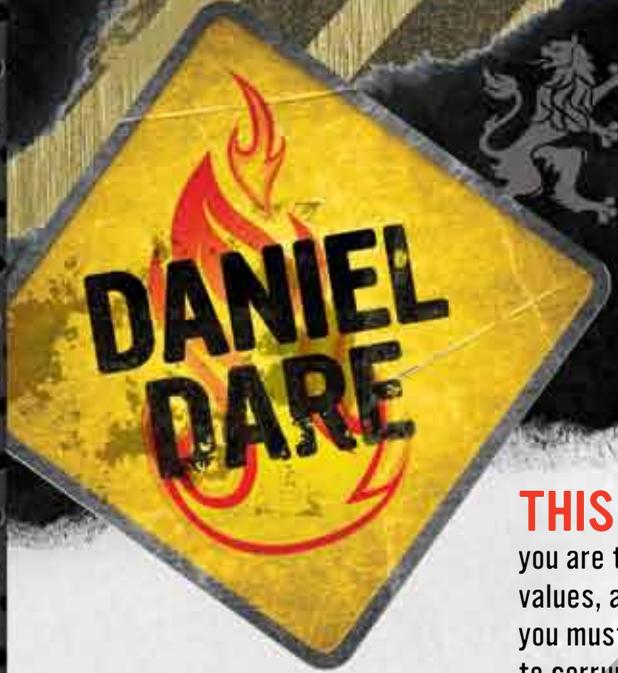
STEPS TO PEACE
WITH
GOD

Take time to memorize these two verses along with Step 1 of the presentation. Review these things daily throughout the week until they are set in your mind.

John 3:16: **For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.**

John 10:10, NKJV: **I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.**

MEMORIZE THIS!



Assignments for Servants of the Most High God. **I DARE YOU!**

THIS WEEK, make note of several ways in which you are tempted or pressured to compromise your faith, values, and relationship with Jesus. In these situations you must **be like Daniel**—make a deliberate choice not to corrupt yourself spiritually, but instead to do what pleases and honors God.

Think about what it means to be corrupted. Metal that is corrupted rusts away and loses strength. Politicians or police officers who are corrupt are “sellouts” willing to take a bribe and eventually go to jail. Do you want to see your faith and your life corrupted?

1. List each event you recall and honestly describe how you responded. Be prepared to share one of your stories in the next class session.

 **THE SITUATION**

 **THE CHOICE YOU MADE**

2. In the space below, describe two or three situations in which you deliberately chose to be different from others around you in your attitudes, words, decisions, and actions. Note how your choices could affect your witness for Christ and influence others in a positive way.

3. Is there any aspect of life in which you have not dared to be different in a way that would please God? Maybe something about your behavior isn't setting the best example or it's sending out the wrong message about being a follower of Christ.

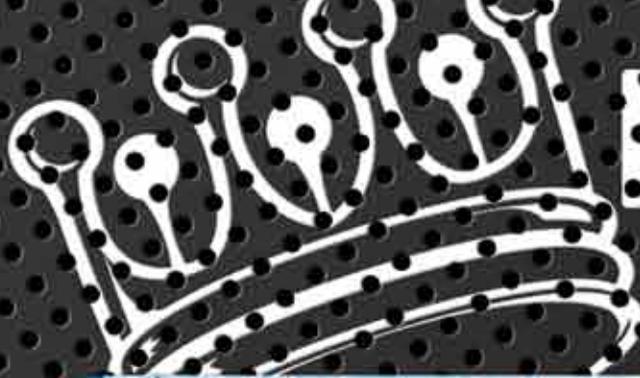
(or)

Perhaps you're daring to be different and taking a bold stand for God. Now you're ready to step out and really make a difference for Jesus. Maybe you can invite some new friends to a youth event. You might even have an idea to start a new ministry.

Get alone with God and talk to Him about one of the issues above as it applies to your life. Renew your commitment to stand up for Christ. Ask Jesus for help, guidance, and boldness to take the steps necessary to accomplish His plans and impact others for Him.

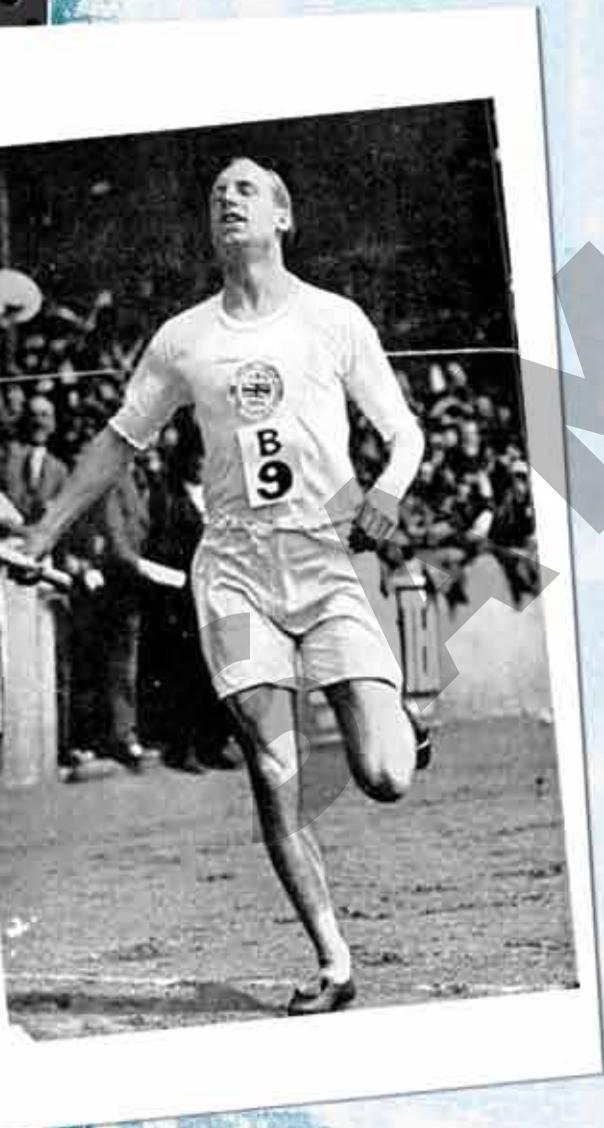
DANIEL LOG: 

Log on to DaretoBeaDaniel.com/DanielLog for special bonus activities—like an online journal, exciting games, and video content. To access the activity this week, log on with the following pass code at the prompt: **DIFFERENT**.



HEROES OF THE FAITH

Eric Liddell



Nations take a lot of pride in their Olympic athletes. People expect the utmost effort from those chosen few who are gifted enough to represent their countries at the games. That's why many people in Great Britain didn't know what to make of Eric Liddell. Before the 1924 Paris Olympics, the track star announced that he would not participate in his best event—the 100-meter dash. Why not? Because the trials for the race were scheduled for Sunday!

Eric Liddell was a celebrated rugby player and runner in his native Scotland. A devout Christian, Eric came from a family of missionaries and was preparing for the mission field himself. He had always believed Sunday to be “the Lord’s Day.” For Liddell, that meant Sunday was for worship and rest. Running in the Olympic trials on a Sunday would violate what Liddell believed—so he chose not to run in the event at all.

Some people were angry with Eric Liddell for choosing to stand by his convictions. But they were just as pleasantly surprised by his success at the Paris Olympics. Liddell won both the bronze medal in the 200-meter dash and an unexpected gold medal in the 400-meter dash.

Eric Liddell went on to join his family in China as a medical missionary. He was always a popular Bible teacher and preacher. He spread the message of Christ in China from 1925 to 1943. In 1943, he was imprisoned in a Japanese internment camp with other missionaries and their families during World War II.

Even in confinement, Liddell encouraged his fellow prisoners with Bible studies and prayer times. He also organized games for the youth and children in the prison camp. He spent early mornings and late nights in prayer and personal Bible study, often reading God’s Word by the light of a peanut-oil lamp. He died from the effects of a brain tumor in 1945, just a few months before the war ended. Liddell’s bold stand for Christ and the impact of his faith as a young man are portrayed in the motion picture *Chariots of Fire*. Even more impressive, however, are the numerous testimonies of his faith and devotion from friends and acquaintances.

 **WHAT DO YOU THINK OTHERS THOUGHT OF ERIC’S REFUSAL TO COMPROMISE HIS DEVOTION TO GOD?**

 **WHY DO YOU THINK HE WASN’T AFRAID TO DO THINGS THAT BROUGHT CRITICISM OR PERSECUTION FROM OTHERS?**
