



A publication of **DISCIPLE**, the adult discipleship ministry of Triangle Community Church.

**Talk** together about the glory of God's kingdom. —Psalm 145:11  
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. —Joshua 22:5

Triangle Community Church aims to be a “transforming church”. We exist to be used by God as He transforms ordinary people into extraordinary followers of Jesus Christ. TCC believes not only that life-change is possible—but that it is to be expected. Growth is God's will for his people. But transformation does not happen by accident. It requires intentional, intelligent, action. I Timothy 4:7 instructs you to “discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness.” Since “**Talking Points, Walking Points**” is intended both for individual reflection and for group discussion, questions vary in degree of vulnerability required. Generally it is best to begin group discussions with questions which involve less personal disclosure—but don't linger there. Be sure to “dive deep” too! The questions which require the greatest openness and honesty, as well as those in the section entitled “**Digging Deeper in your Daily Quiet Time**”, are perfect for private reflection.

## Questions for Reflection

- What is a typical situation in your line of work that could lead to unethical practices?  
What examples have you heard of when this happened, whether at your workplace or another?  
What do you think you would you have done if you had been working there at that time?
- How would you advise a friend who comes to you concerned about a co-worker's ethics?
- Read 1 Peter 2:9-25. What principles does Peter give for living as believers among the ungodly?  
How might these be applied in your workplace?  
What does the example of Christ add to your understanding?
- Read 1 Peter 3:13-17. What attitudes does Peter tell us to have if we suffer for doing good?
- Is there any practice in your workplace that your conscience is bothering you about?  
What can you do about it? Will you?

## Application-Challenge

**When you need to take a stand for righteousness:**

- Begin with prayer.
- Go to the source of the problem, if possible.
- Offer alternative solutions to the problem.



## Sermon Summary

Work is so hard, and we have to put in so much effort to achieve the most modest of results, because God cursed creation in response to Adam's sin. Sin introduced an element of futility into the work system which also negatively impacts us as workers. As long as sinners like us work with and for other sinners, there are going to be interpersonal conflicts, power struggles, and jealousy. But believers can make a difference by serving others and by being change agents on the job (Matthew 5:13–16). At times you are going to be called upon to take an active stand against evil (Romans 12:9). The Old Testament story of Daniel shows us how.

Daniel and other godly, exceptional Hebrew youths were taken captive by the Babylonians (Daniel 1:20). Through the sovereignty of God, Daniel would eventually rise in the Babylonian government to the position of prime minister. Daniel and his friends walked faithfully with God in a hostile, pagan culture. They show us that we must take a stand when asked to do something wrong or which violates our conscience. On pain of death, Daniel and friends were commanded to worship an idol—a violation of the first two commandments. Now they liked their jobs; they loved their lives, but not enough to participate in this great evil (Daniel 3:16–18). They accepted Babylonian names and education, but they refused the pagan diet which consisted of unclean foods and would implicate them in idolatrous worship (Daniel 1:11–16).

You may be asked to lie to a customer, to cheat a vendor, or to ignore a regulation that governs your industry. You may be asked to recommend someone for a job—yet you doubt their competence or character. You may be asked to push a flawed product that you wouldn't buy for yourself. When faced with situations such as these, remember the courage and convictions of these Hebrew youth. To act contrary to your conscience is to sin (James 4:17).

Furthermore, you need to take a stand when it is within your power to protect people from harm. Daniel did this (chapter 2). The king had concluded (accurately) that his advisors were a bunch of frauds, and so demanded that they and their families be killed. Daniel and his friends were considered part of that group, so their lives were also in danger. With God's help Daniel gave the king a correct interpretation and was able to save the lives of all the wise men in Babylon (including the ungodly ones). Instead of using this opportunity to throw them under the bus and advance himself, he sought to save their lives. Daniel judged the king's decree as contrary to a biblical worldview and used his position and God-given wisdom to thwart it.

God may have placed you where you work in order to thwart some evil. Suppose you know that coworkers are abusing alcohol or drugs and endangering the lives of others. If you're an accountant or financial planner, you have the responsibility to try to talk others out of what you believe to be bad investments. God doesn't want his people to stand idly by and allow others to suffer. What should you do? First, pray for wisdom and favor. Then go to the source of the problem, to the person who's in a position to do something about it. Share your concerns. Make sure you clarify the facts. Appeal to them to do the good, right, moral thing. Make your appeal using the categories of morality and justice. Having such a conversation may jeopardize your job, or at least make job advancement unlikely. We must have the courage of our convictions. We are to be agents for good in the world. When we see evil we need to take a stand and then trust God to handle the consequences. That is what it means to walk by faith.

Finally, offer creative solutions to the problem.

It is one thing to point out a problem,  
it is another to offer a creative solution!

Daniel and his friends did that.

It worked out for them, and maybe it will in your case as well.

"All that is necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing."

Jesus said you are the light of the world. Church, let's let our lights shine!



### Talking To God About This Week's Message

*"Heavenly Father, today I want to be a 'doer' of the Word, and not just a 'hearer'. Amen."*

### Talking To Others About This Week's Message

If a neighbor or friend at work asked you, "What kind of stuff do they talk about at your church?", how would you summarize the most important elements of this week's sermon and the key lessons you intend to apply to your life? How would you explain it in **plain language** anyone could understand?

## Digging Deeper in your Daily Quiet Time

*The Book of Daniel was written in order to encourage dispirited Jews during a lengthy, difficult time in which powerful, ungodly, often harsh rulers appeared to control their destiny. Sounds kinda like our situation, doesn't it?! Let's learn from Daniel and his godly friends...*

### Monday—Read Daniel 1

- According to v. 1-2, pagan Babylonia attacked the Jews. According to v. 2a, who decided the winner? What do you think about that?
- The Babylonian king decreed that some of the conquered Jews would serve in his court, as his advisors (v. 3-7), four of them being Daniel and his friends (v. 6). According to v. 3c, from what strata of Jewish society were they taken? According to v. 4a, how old were they?
- What phrases in v. 4 are used to show that Daniel and friends were well-balanced youth: physically strong and handsome, socially experienced and well-liked, mentally keen and well-educated, and spiritually devoted to the Lord?
- According to v. 4b-7, the king was not interested in having wise, godly, exceptional **JEW**s as his counselors—he wished to conform them to the pagan Babylonian mold? Note the name changes: “Daniel” meant “God is my judge” in Hebrew. Now he was called “Belteshazzar”—Babylonian for “Bel protect his life” (Bel was the name of a Babylonian god). “Hananiah” (Hebrew for “Jehovah is gracious”) became “Shadrach” (“the command of the moon god”); “Mishael” (Hebrew for “Who is like God?”) became “Meshach” (Babylonian for “Who is like Aku,”—one of the heathen gods); and “Azariah” (Hebrew for “Jehovah is my helper”) became “Abed-nego” (“The servant of Nego,” another heathen god). How long were these youths subjected to this “re-education” process (v. 5)? Relate this to Romans 12:1-2 and your struggles with godless American culture.
- How risky was the request of v. 8-16...to Daniel and his friends? to the commander of the officials?
- According to v. 9 and 17, how was God involved in this experiment? Was the outcome certain?
- What risks are you taking to “swim against pagan culture”? Is the outcome certain? How do you need God to save you in this endeavor?

### Tuesday—Read Daniel 2 and complete the following chart:

Kingdom	Verses	Symbol
Babylon (606-539 BC)	Daniel 2:36-38	<i>the head of gold</i>
Media-Persia (539-330 BC)	Daniel 2:32, 39	
Greece (330 BC-150 AD)	Daniel 2:32, 39	
Rome (150-500 AD)	Daniel 2:33, 40	
Anti-Christ's Kingdom	Daniel 2:41-43	
Christ's Kingdom	Daniel 2:34-35; 44-45	

- Remember—**which** of these kingdoms did Daniel serve (1:1)? If you were Nebuchadnezzar (King of Babylon, the “head of gold”), how would you feel...
  - in comparison to the others merely being silver, brass, iron, clay and stone?
  - in comparison to the others merely being the arms/chest, thighs, legs, and feet?
  - in light of the fact that the others displace you on the world scene? (Note the obligatory greeting found in Daniel 2:4; 3:9; 5:10 and 6:21!)
- When the Book of Daniel was written in 535 BC, how many of those kingdoms existed? How many are yet future? What do you conclude from that?

### Wednesday—Read Daniel 3

- Reread 2:47. Hadn't Nebuchadnezzar “become a true believer”?! How can you explain the event of Chapter 3:1-7?
- This event took place twenty years after the event of Chapter 2. During that time Neb clearly forgot what he'd learned. Apparently he **didn't** forget what **his** part of the statue was made of (compare Daniel 2:32 and 3:1)! Why are “God-honoring lessons” so easy to forget while “self-honoring” thoughts are so easy to recall and act upon? How have you see that to be true in your own life?
- According to v. 8, who tried to get Daniel and friends killed? According to 2:2-10, 24, who did Daniel save from certain death? Explain this.
- Relate these events to Romans 12:14-21 and to how you should operate in the workplace.

### Thursday—Read Daniel 4

- This chapter is a first-person account. Who is speaking (see v. 4-6, 10, 13 and 18)?
- If you dreamt v. 10-12, what emotions would you feel? How would you feel about the content of v. 13-17? What do you think you'd do?
- According to v. 27, what did Daniel suggest that he do?
- Twelve months (v. 29) elapsed between Daniel's advice (v. 27) and Neb's musings in v. 30. What should he have done during that year? Did he?
- With a dream as vivid as 4:10-26, and a warning as pointed as v. 27, **what in the world** explains the events of v. 29-30?!
- Neb's declaration in Daniel 2:47 didn't “stick”. What do you think about that of 4:34-37? Will it have more staying power?
- What warnings in Scripture do you routinely dismiss? What **should** you do? **Will** you?

### Friday—Read Daniel 5

- Another twenty years elapse between Chapters 4 and 5. Now Neb's son, Belshazzar, is on the throne, and he threw a party (v. 1-4). According to v. 4, was Belshazzar any better than his dad at learning lessons? How do v. 3 and 23 show particular contempt for the One True God?
- In v. 1-4, Bel is the picture of confidence. Write down all the words that describe his state of mind and body in v. 5-9. Why the change?
- What greeting did the queen give in v. 10? But did he “live forever”? See v. 30. How long did he last? What do you learn from this?
- V. 13-16 are the words of a deflated, desperate man. What is Daniel like (v. 17)?
- From what you know of the biblical doctrine of man, why are the events of v. 20 and 22 not surprising? [Need a refresher? See Romans 1:18-23.]
- When you look at the ungodliness of America today, **why** do you think our political and media leaders **don't** “see the handwriting on the wall”? Do you see it? [Need a refresher? Read 2 Peter 3.] In light of this truth, what should we believers be doing?

### Saturday—Read Daniel 6

- Daniel, the teen of Chapter 1 is now the elder statesman (in his eighties). What has changed over the years (see 1:17-20 and 6:3, 10)?
  - Darius set up a system of 123 satraps and commissioners (v. 1-2) “so that he might not suffer loss” (v. 2d). “Negligence and corruption” (v. 4d) were a problem. According to v. 4b, was Daniel guilty of any of that? What do you think drove the jealousy of the other satraps and commissioners? What do you think are the chances that they **did** have their finger in the till?
  - According to v. 3c, what opinion did Darius have of Daniel? Did Darius ask Daniel for his opinion of the law proposed in v. 8-9? How stupid was that?!
  - According to v. 5, what did the evil, jealous leaders conclude about Daniel? What are the chances that your co-workers would say the same of you?
  - Daniel **could have** reasoned: “*Everybody's doing it. I'm an old man now; I've served the Lord faithfully all my life. One little compromise now, at the end, won't do too much damage. Hey—aren't I more useful to the Lord alive than dead?*” Have you ever thought something like that? What did you do?
  - According to v. 14, what opinion did Darius have of Daniel?
  - See Matthew 14:6-10 and 27:22-26 for similar acts by cowardly leaders. Why do some of God's choice people live (such as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, in 3:16-27; and Daniel, in 6:19-23) while others perish (such as John and Jesus, in Matthew 14 and 27)?
  - Read Hebrews 11:32-35a and 11:35b-38. What makes the difference between these two groups? Was the former group more faithful? More approved by God? According to Hebrews 11:39a, **how many** of the folks in v. 32-38 “gained approval through their faith”?
  - Is the “survive the flames” outcome more God-honoring or faithful than the “perish in the flames” outcome? Why or why not? Who decides?
  - Read Romans 8:28-39. Do you ever feel like a “sheep destined for slaughter” (v. 36)? If so, what else are you (v. 37)?
- Let's decide to be present-day Daniels!