

A LESSON ON HAVING A GOOD TESTIMONY
FROM THE LIFE OF DANIEL" (Dan.
1:8; 6:4,5,10,16-28)

What kind of testimony do you have before others? Does it honor God and influence others in the right way? When people meet you or someone mentions your name what do they think of you?

It has been said that, "There's a Bible character with whom everyone of us may be associated." The mention of some folks name naturally makes one think of Judas... to mention another one thinks of the Pharisees, critical and fault-finding. The mention of others reminds one of the rebellious crowd associated with Korah. But some would remind us of the disciples...

You have probably heard someone say, "I don't care what people think about me as long as I know it isn't true." But when it comes to serving the Lord and being used of Him it is vitally important for us to have a good testimony before others. When a person doesn't present a good testimony before others he can be a great hindrance for others to come to know the Lord. His life can become a spiritual stumbling block rather than a spiritual stepping stone. As we look at the life of Daniel we find an illustration of a man of God who presented a good testimony before others. Notice two things which were said of Daniel, "an excellent spirit was found in him" (Dan. 6:3) and he was, "a man greatly beloved" (10:11). Now I want you to see how important it is to have a good testimony before others. But just how does one go about to acquire this? I believe if we will look at Daniel's life we can find this answer. How do you get to have a good testimony?

Notice...

I. THE SECRET OF DANIEL'S GOOD TESTIMONY (Dan. 1:8)

Daniel had purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself in disobeying God's Word. He had said, as it were, "I have already made up my mind about certain things and God being my help, I'm not going to do them." Daniel knew what the Word of God said prohibiting certain foods for His people and he was determined to honor God by obeying His Word. So in

order to do this he sought a way around the orders which the king had given concerning him and his Hebrew brethren who were captives in a foreign land.

Someone has said." if you have your mind already made up about things, the devil's temptations are easier to fight off." This is what God's people in our day need to do. We need to purpose in our hearts and have our minds made up about certain things. We need to say, "by God's help, I'm not going to drink or do drugs. I'm going to keep myself pure for my husband or wife to be. I'm not going to commit adultery or fornication or I'm not going to be a church tramp. By God's help I'm going to be in church Sunday mornings, Sunday nights, and Wednesday nights if possible' I'm not going to sit home when I ought to be in church." This is the secret to having a good testimony before others - it is to purpose in your heart ahead of time about sinful things. Then when temptation comes it will find no fertile soil in which to grow.I believe this is why Joseph did not lose his testimony when Potiphar's wife made her advances toward him.I believe this is why Shadrach, Meshach. and Abednego would not bow down and worship Nebuchadnezzar's golden image. I believe if you and I acquire a good testimony and keep it we've got to do what Daniel did and purpose in our hearts about certain things before God.

II. THE SAYING WHICH DANIEL'S ENEMIES DECLARED ABOUT HIM (Dan. 6:4,5)

What a testimony Daniel had! When his enemies looked at his life to find something to throw at him or use against him they couldn't find any fault in him. He was said to be faithful. He rightly discharged his duties and fulfilled his responsibilities. Moreover, he had a excellent spirit in whatever he did. He didn't go around complaining and grumbling or griping about his work. He didn't have a critical spirit, a selfish spirit, a bitter spirit, an ungrateful spirit, or a rebellious spirit, he had an excellent spirit! We can't help from being reminded of the testimony of our Lord when we read of what was said of Daniel. He was Christ-like in how he lived his life before others. Now just suppose your worst enemies were to scrutinize your life and search for something to use against you. What would they find? Would there be some way about you that would render your witness for Christ as void ? Would they find the

kind of spirit that a Christian ought to possess? Or would they bring up some questionable habit you have and use it to condemn you saying it's something a Christian ought not to do? Recently I read of an incident where a person was speaking of what a good testimony a certain young person had. Another person doubted and questioned whether these words were true. The person responded by saying "If you don't believe me, ask his mother who is standing right here." "It has been said, "If you really want to know what kind of character a person has just ask those in his family." What kind of report would your family members give concerning you?

III. THE STEADFASTNESS WHICH DANIEL DISPLAYED UNDER PRESSURE (Dan. 6:10)

The real measure of our character is no doubt revealed when we find our self confronted with various temptation and trials and we are tempted or coerced and pressured to do certain things.

Daniel was pressured not to pray to God for some thirty days by order of the king's decree which his enemies had schemingly prodded him to enact. To do so would place his life in jeopardy. But what did Daniel do? Daniel kept on doing what he had been accustomed to doing. He continued to pray three times a day just as he had always done in the past.

Herein lies a principle in having a good testimony before others. Daniel kept on spending time with God. Daniel didn't deviate from his usual and rightful routine. This is the big problem of many in our day - they simply are not consistent. They are not consistent in attending church, they are not consistent in their giving, in the example they should set before their loved ones. Note failure to be consistent was the problem that led David to do wrong.

Not only was Daniel consistent but he spent time with God. This is the reason for a multitude of problems for God's people in our day - they are not spending time with God. They don't have a daily devotional time where they read God's Word and pray- Here's a red flag to serve as a warning. When people stop spending time with God, they're not going to have much of a testimony for God.

IV. THE SALVATION AND SUCCESS WHICH DANIEL ENJOYED DESPITE THE EFFORTS OF HIS ENEMIES (Dan. 6:16-28)

The Bible says, "no matter of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God" (6:23). Daniel was saved from the mouth of the lions and his enemies were destroyed because he believed in God and honored God in his life. Notice herein is a great principle which we may apply to our own lives. God told Eli, "for them who honor me I will honor, and they who despise me shall be lightly esteemed" (I Sam. 2:30). The three Hebrew, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, were also saved from the fiery furnace because they also refused to worship Nebuchadnezzar's image. Not only was Daniel spared destruction for honoring God in his life, but he also prospered for a very long time (Dan. 6:28). I believe a testimony of honoring God in our lives will not only spare us destruction, but I believe it will also cause us to prosper spiritually. How prosperous spiritually are those who have no testimony for the Lord? Not very much! But when a person has a good testimony there's no limit to how God can use them to touch and impact the lives of others. I believe after looking at Daniel's life we can see the value of having a good testimony and honoring God in our lives. The question for us to consider now is this - do I have the kind of testimony that honors God and is my life influencing others in the right way? If not, then a decision is most assuredly in order.
