

Daniel 1: God honors our commitment through the boundaries we set to remain morally separate from culture.

Step 1 in cultural assimilation: Physical (political) control.

Daniel 1:1-2

Step 2 in cultural assimilation: Reeducation.

Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, chief of his court officials, to bring into the king's service 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. (Dan 1:3-5)

Step 3 in cultural assimilation: Redefined identity (self-reference).

Among those who were chosen were some from Judah: Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. The chief official gave them new names: to Daniel, the name Belteshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abednego. (Dan 1:6-7)

Daniel's response: Resolution (thought/will) and practical (strategic) opposition.

Daniel 1:8-14

Outcome of the undivided heart: Physical and spiritual blessings. God honors their commitment.

At the end of the ten days they looked healthier and better nourished 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. 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. (Dan 1:15-17)

Daniel 1:15-21