

## **PEOPLE OF GREAT INFLUENCE Prt 2**

### **1. Test of identity**

*Daniel 1:5 And the king appointed for them a daily provision of the king's delicacies and of the wine which he drank, and three years of training for them, so that at the end of that time they might serve before the king. 6 Now from among those of the sons of Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishaël, and Azariah.*

*7 To them the chief of the eunuchs gave names: he gave Daniel the name Belteshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishaël, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abed-Nego. 8 But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself. 9 Now God had brought Daniel into the favor and goodwill of the chief of the eunuchs.*

- Your ability to influence people or situations is also determined by the amount of authority you carry around.
- In our normal course of life, you will realize that a person who has the greatest authority has the highest influence in a space – just think about your situation, how much influence teachers have their students, coaches have on their athletes etc.
- Now, almost all authority is delegated authority and the highest authority is found in God.
- This tells me something, the closer one is to God the higher ones authority and the higher ones authority, the more influential that person is.
- When you have spiritual authority, you can change the course of people's lives – the sick gets healed, the demon possessed gets delivered, the heart broken get restored.
- Now what is the key to accessing this level authority?
- The key to accessing God is living a life of holiness
- That brings me to the second test you will face in your quest to becoming a person of influence

### **2. Test of holiness**

- Lend me your ears because this is very important – the subject of holiness is no longer very popular in the body of Christ
- More and more we have shunned away from talking about it because we feel that it is anti-grace.
- Holiness is seen as archaic and old fashioned – it is seen as seeker unfriendly.

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- Let me say that in the absence of holiness, the church is powerless and therefore lacks influence.
- Holiness is like the power cable that connects the appliance to the power source
- The devil is determined to making you powerless – that is why your holiness is being tested.
- The holiness of the four Hebrew boys was tested

### **.1 What is holiness**

- When we hear of holiness, there is a temptation to say it is moral uprightness, we think of someone who does not drink, someone who does not engage in premarital sex, someone who is not materialistic and the like.
- Seeing holiness as merely moral upright, is simply an incomplete picture of this idea.
- If holiness is all about doing good, then a lot of pagans are holy because some of them are morally upright.
- Yes this is just part of holiness but it is not the premise of holiness – when we see holiness as a matter of morals, we have missed the point and we can never achieve it that way.
- It is impossible to be holy when we see it as simply dos and don'ts – it becomes legalistic and takes us back to the days of the law.
- The word holy, in Greek is (qadosh, hagios), it carries a strong secondary connotation of moral purity. But moral purity is not, first and foremost, what Scripture is talking about. Instead, the most basic meaning of the word is to be "set apart" or "dedicated" to God—to belong to God
- Before we even talk about morals, God is interested in a direct and personal relationship whereby you are exclusively His – this is a set apart life.
- Before we are ever called to be good, we are called to be holy – into a living relationship with God

*Hebrews 8:10*

*10 This is the covenant I will establish with the people of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.*

- To be God's people implies that we should give God our whole hearts, serve him with all our light and strength, and have no other object of worship or dependence but himself

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- Our holiness, was made possible by Jesus who connected us with God – so we cannot talk of holiness unless Jesus is in the picture.
- Holiness is only possible when Jesus has totally consumed us
  - *Romans 5:10 For if, when we were enemies of God, we were reconciled to Him through the death of His Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through His life!*
  - *Ephesians 3:12 In Him and through faith in Him we may enter God's presence with boldness and confidence.*
  - *"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me (Gal. 2:20).*
- Our desire to shun sin is a byproduct of our relationship with Jesus – it is when we seek for a deeper walk with Jesus that we will shun immorality in our lives.
- Daniel and his friends valued holiness – their relationship with God. They were not prepared to sacrifice it by any means
- When you treasure a relationship, you will protect it with your life. They placed their lives on the line in order to preserve their holiness.

*Daniel 1: 8 But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.*

- The issue was not so much about avoiding to get drunk, the issue was that the food was defiled – it had been offered to idols and by eating the food, they felt that they were paying homage to the pagan Gods.

### **.2 How to preserve your holiness**

- It's a matter of choice
  - Daniel purposed, resolved in his heart, he decided not to defile himself
  - We cannot blame external circumstances on the quality of our relationship with Jesus
  - We choose to let go of our old lives in order to get closer to Jesus – lets not be double minded about this.
  - Joshua asked people to choose whom they were going to serve
- Speak out your convictions – 2 Cor 4:13

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- Daniel requested that he might not defile himself
- When you speak out, everyone knows where you stand – you can be among them, but let them know your stance on issues
- Speaking creates a level of accountability for yourself and for the people around you
- Know that with God on your side, you are in the majority
- The result of them passing the test of holiness was that they were able to influence the type of food that was being eaten.
- It sounds like it was a small matter but this was a big blow to the kingdom of darkness as homage was no longer being given to pagan gods. This was the beginning of revival.
- You never know who will be touched by your resolve to honour God

### **3. Test of association**

- Having been in Babylon for a period of time, the 4 young men faced their first challenge whilst serving the king.
- The challenge was so serious that it threatened their existence.
- The king had a dream which scared him and for some unknown reason he placed an unrealistic expectation on his magicians to tell him the dream and then to interpret it.
- This had never been done before and his magicians were out of words – they could not do this. The king then gave a decree that all the magicians be put to death. This included the four young men.

*Daniel 2:11 "It is a difficult thing that the king requests, and there is no other who can tell it to the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh."12 For this reason the king was angry and very furious, and gave a command to destroy all the wise men of Babylon. 13 So the decree went out, and they began killing the wise men; and they sought Daniel and his companions, to kill them.14 Then with counsel and wisdom Daniel answered Arioch, the captain of the king's guard, who had gone out to kill the wise men of Babylon; 15 he answered and said to Arioch the king's captain, "Why is the decree from the king so urgent?" Then Arioch made the decision known to Daniel. 16 So Daniel went in and asked the king to give him time, that he might tell the king the interpretation. 17 Then Daniel went to his house, and made the decision known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, 18 that they might seek mercies from the God of heaven concerning this secret, so that Daniel and his*

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*companions might not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. 19 Then the secret was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. So Daniel blessed the God of heaven.*

- This move threatened their existence and it needed a special type of relationship in order to fend it off.
  - The next test you will face is the test of association
  - Your ability to influence is also determined by the association you keep.
  - The other magicians were good for nothing, they could not change the situation. In actual fact the king had already started killing them
  - Daniel being the person who was in front of this matter, needed the right type of association to change the course of events.
  - The bible says *Daniel went to his house, and made the decision known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, that they might seek mercies from the God of heaven concerning this secret*
  - He needed an association that was connected to God
  - The young men that Daniel went to were men of faith – when they heard of the matter, they did not go into a panic state. They did what they knew best to do
  - The company you keep will shape your future – show me your friends and I will show you your future
  - Connect with people that are going where you are going
  - You are as strong as your network – the chain is as strong as its weakest link
  - Daniel took on the responsibility because he knew that back home, he had the right association.
  - Your association can either make you or break you.
  - You know how it is – people always ask about who the real leader is, almost saying that there is someone behind the scenes who makes all the decisions.
  - The value of your relational assets will determine the extent and quality of your influence
- Proverbs 13:20 He who walks with wise men will be wise, But the companion of fools will be destroyed.*

*2 Corinthians 6:14 Don't team up with those who are unbelievers. How can righteousness be a partner with wickedness? How can light live with darkness? 15 What harmony can there be between Christ and the devil? How can a believer be a partner with an unbeliever? 16 And what union can there be between God's temple and idols? For we are the temple of the living*

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*God. As God said: "I will live in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they will be My people. 17 Therefore, come out from among unbelievers, and separate yourselves from them, says the LORD. Don't touch their filthy things, and I will welcome you.*