

Session 1: Made to Make a Difference

GOALS

Main Idea: God has called you to be present in the world without being absorbed by the world.

Head Change: To discover how you can live faithfully for God in a culture opposed to his ways.

Heart Change: To develop a heart marked by humility, courage, and a deep love for others, even when other people confront or challenge you because of your beliefs.

Life Change: To live as a true ambassador of God's kingdom.

OPEN

Choose one of the following questions to begin your discussion:

Why did you decide to join this study? What do you hope to learn?

How challenging do you find it to maintain your distinctiveness as a Christian while still engaging with those who don't share your faith?

WATCH

Watch Session 1: "Made to Make a Difference" (19 minutes).

- Christians now live in a cultural context where faith is often viewed as a social ill.
- The book of Daniel illustrates how believers can remain faithful to God while living in a secularized—and often hostile—environment.
- Christians must boldly proclaim Jesus as Lord of all and refuse to compromise or endorse values that contradict God's truth.
- Followers of Jesus live distinctly—especially in areas like money, power, and sex—and reflect God's kingdom values rather than "Babylon's" self-centered narrative.
- Christians are called to stand out by living under the direction of a different King.

DISCUSS

Discuss what you just watched by answering the following questions.

1. How does the shift from the "positive" world to the "negative" world challenge Christians to rethink their approach to living faithfully for God in today's culture?
2. Read Daniel 1:8–15. How did Daniel and his friends demonstrate faithfulness to God in a foreign culture? What principles can you apply to living as a Christian in today's society?
3. Read Jeremiah 29:4–7. How does God's command to the exiles in Babylon to "seek the welfare of the city" challenge the way Christians engage with their communities today?
4. Christians are called to be different in areas like money, power, and sex. How do these differences reflect loyalty to a different king? How might they provoke opposition?
5. Christians are to be "in sync" not with the world but with God. How can believers stay attuned to God's direction while living in a culture that moves to a different rhythm?

REFLECT

Complete the following activities before watching the next session.

Read: Read Daniel 3:1–30. How does Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego's refusal to bow to the idol inspire you to stand firm in your faith when pressured to compromise?

Write: If you've sensed God speaking to you about standing firm in your faith when others are pressuring you to conform, take a moment to write out those impressions.

Pray: Ask God to give you the wisdom to discern which aspect of your culture you can embrace and which you must resist. Pray for courage to maintain your witness for Christ in the world.

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