



Thriving in Opposition

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Big Idea: Daniel modeled respectful resistance.

Key Texts: Jeremiah 29:1-9; Daniel 1:5-8

1. Understanding Jeremiah 29 as background to Daniel 1 should influence the way we understand Daniel's actions. At the very least, we are encouraged to see Daniel's actions are based upon receiving and applying God's word. In what ways are your actions based upon receiving and applying God's word?
2. Of the four responses to living in Babylon, where Babylon symbolizes a worldly or oppressive regime, can you think of examples for each of these:
 - a. Violence
 - b. Withdrawal
 - c. Assimilation
 - d. Respectful resistance

Is violence ever legitimate? When is withdrawal appropriate?

3. Consider the examples of Esther, Joseph, and Daniel. Both integrated into 'minority life' with different levels of assimilation and yet the outcome was the same: God's people were strengthened, and the faith could be practiced. What do these different stories suggest to you about assimilating into a foreign culture as a minority people? Does the same outcome lead to the conclusion that the ends always justify the means? Does it matter how we do something as long as it all works out in the end?

4. Practically speaking, Daniel 1 shows that Daniel worked out his respectful resistance with the following commitments:

- a. Teach me what you want: do not do it is not the same as do not understand it.
- b. Call me what you want: I refuse to allow what they call me to stop me from doing what God has called me to do.
- c. Live how you want: We moan that people do not respect us, but maybe we get what we give.

Which of these three is the hardest for you to accept? Why?

5. Look at the following two conclusions:

- a. Rigid responses stifle respectful resistance.
 - i. What is correct about this statement?
 - ii. Where could this statement be misused?
- b. Christians focusing on their moves, not God's movement, miss their calling.
 - i. What is correct about this statement?
 - ii. Where could this statement be abused?

6. What is your major takeaway from this message?