

## Group Resource

# Sermon Notes – Sunday, October 20, 2013

**Series:** Living in Godly Success!  
**Message:** Boldness and Godly Ambition  
**Scripture:** Daniel 1: 1-20

- I. We often ask the question, “*If we knew we couldn't fail, what would we do?*” Pastor Joseph reframed the question to ask, “**If we fully recognized our purpose, what would we do differently?**” God gives us boldness and strength to accomplish our created purposes.
- II. One of the principles of living in Godly success is that we are called to **Boldly pursue Godly endeavors with integrity, passion, and Godly ambition.**
  - a. Boldness is not ostentatiousness, excessive or unnecessary display. Godly boldness is the courage and confidence in approaching God and other people so that our Godly purposes may be achieved. <sup>2 TIMOTHY 1:7</sup> For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.
- III. *In Daniel 1, we are introduced to Daniel, a Godly man who exercised boldness and Godly integrity throughout his life. Taken captive to Babylon at a young age, Daniel rose to the office of prime minister and lived a model life of integrity and obedience to God. Because of Daniel's faithfulness, God blessed him with wisdom and the ability to interpret dreams.*
- IV. We must understand the rightful place of Godly ambition
  - a. The scriptures warn us of the dangers of selfish ambition
    - i. <sup>JAMES 3:16</sup> *For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.*
    - ii. <sup>PHILIPPIANS 2:3</sup> *Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves,<sup>4</sup> not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.*
  - b. When our ambition is purely self-centered or evil, it is a negative ambition. However, ambition is a positive characteristic when our goals are directed towards furthering the kingdom of God.
    - i. <sup>1 Corinthians 9:24</sup> *Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize.*
    - ii. We run in a way to get the prize by having confidence in the God that has called us. We don't have to be timid in furthering God's agenda. “For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” (Ephesians 2:10)
- V. Boldness and ambition must always be tempered with integrity and restraint
  - a. Unchecked boldness and ambition can easily lead to an unhealthy dependence on self and a lack of Godly wisdom. The more we achieve the goals that God has helped us to set, the more that we have to protect against those successes causing us to neglect God. (Deuteronomy 6:10-12)
- VI. We can learn several lessons about Godly boldness from the life of Daniel.

- VII. 1 - God gives us boldness to live confidently because He is with us**
- a. Our greatest reason for boldness in our endeavors is recognition that God, the sovereign ruler of the universe is present with us. Our authority is based on the one who sent us.
    - i. Moses recognized that if God wasn't with him, he didn't want to go. Moses said, "If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here." (Exodus 33:15)
  - b. The Apostle Paul challenged us to recognize that "If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31).
- VIII. 2 - God gives us boldness to define ourselves in his image**
- a. *DANIEL 1:6* Among those who were chosen were some from Judah: Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. <sup>7</sup> The chief official gave them new names: to Daniel, the name Belteshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abednego.
  - b. People will often define us by what they think of us, but God defines us based upon whom He created us to be. Daniel had boldness to retain his Godly identity even though he was forced by others to take a different name. He didn't let outside influences change his identity in God.
- IX. 3 - God gives us boldness to show restraint and self-control**
- a. *DANIEL 1:8* But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way.
  - b. It takes boldness to say "No!" Godly boldness opens doors but it also keeps doors shut that were not meant to be opened.
- X. 4 - God gives us boldness to fear God above others**
- a. *DANIEL 1:9* Now God had caused the official to show favor and compassion to Daniel, <sup>10</sup> but the official told Daniel, "I am afraid of my lord the king, who has assigned your food and drink. Why should he see you looking worse than the other young men your age? The king would then have my head because of you."
  - b. While we are called to respect leaders and those in authority over us, Godly boldness causes us to fear God above all others. We have to ask ourselves, "What are we NOT doing that God has called us to do because of our FEAR of what OTHERS will say or think?"
- XI. 5 - God gives us boldness to be different while in pursuit of every endeavor**
- a. *DANIEL 1:11* Daniel then said to the guard whom the chief official had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, <sup>12</sup> "Please test your servants for ten days: Give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink. <sup>13</sup> Then compare our appearance with that of the young men who eat the royal food, and treat your servants in accordance with what you see." <sup>14</sup> So he agreed to this and tested them for ten days. <sup>15</sup> At the end of the ten days they looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who ate the royal food. <sup>16</sup> So the guard took away their choice food and the wine they were to drink and gave them vegetables instead.
  - b. The fear of being different can cause us to compromise our integrity and Godly purpose. It takes boldness to be content that Christians are aliens and strangers in this world. Daniel didn't let his differences stop him from achieving his Godly purpose. He was content without the choice food and learned how to excel with what God had granted to him.
- XII. 6 - God gives us boldness to humbly grow in knowledge**
- a. *DANIEL 1:17* 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. <sup>18</sup> At the end of the time set by the king to bring them into his service, the chief official presented them to Nebuchadnezzar. <sup>19</sup> The king talked with them, and he found none equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; so they entered the king's service. <sup>20</sup> In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters in his whole kingdom.
  - b. We are called to boldly gain knowledge and understanding without redefining our identity in Christ. It was God that gave Daniel, "knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning." Daniel could have used this knowledge to eliminate God from his insight but he used his growth in knowledge to deepen his heart for God and to make a kingdom impact.
- XIII.** Daniel provides a great example of boldly pursuing Godly endeavors with integrity, passion, and Godly ambition. As a result, God was able to use him mightily in Judah, Babylon and throughout the world.

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- 1) Share a personally challenging experience that you had to exercise boldness to overcome?
- 2) As you reflect back on last weekend's sermon, what one principle or insight stands out as being particularly helpful, insightful or difficult to grasp? Were you challenged in any area of your personal walk with God?
- 3) What are you passionate about? How can/do these areas further God's agenda? **Read** 1 Corinthians 10:31; Colossians 3:17; 1 Peter 4:10-11.
- 4) **Read** the following scriptures. What do they reveal about Godly Boldness? Acts 4:23-31; Ephesians 6:19-20; Proverbs 28:1.
- 5) Boldness is directly connected to knowing our true identity in Christ. If we don't fully realize our identity, we will be timid in furthering our Godly purposes. Can you identify who you are in Christ Jesus and what are some of the purposes that you were created for? How can you exercise boldness in these areas?
- 6) How do you differentiate between Godly ambition and selfish ambition? Should Godly ambition exist for things outside of the four walls of the church? If so, are there any constraints on that ambition? **Read** Matthew 16:26
- 7) Pastor Joseph asked the question, **If you fully recognized your purpose, what would you do differently?** What is your answer? Make a prayer to God. Lord, give me the boldness to \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in your goal) so that I can \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in how your goal fits a Godly purpose).

Example: *Lord, give me the boldness to not run away from difficult conversations with unbelievers at my workplace or co-sign ungodly conversations so that I can see people come to Christ at my workplace.*