

Professional Perspectives for Christian Senior Officers

Integrating Professional and Spiritual Life

Continually live as a whole person before God. Don't separate your profession from your faith. Integrity is a cherished characteristic of military officers. One definition of integrity is "*the quality or state of being complete; unbroken condition; wholeness.*" We believe God calls His people to oneness—integrating their faith, family life and profession. Daniel lived a unified life. He spent a lifetime in government service of such high quality that even his detractors recognized it as excellent. His faith in God was an integral part of the way he executed his duties.

The Principles that Guided Daniel

Daniel 6:1-5

Daniel was an experienced senior official who, although a foreigner, was selected by the king to become his first deputy. He would have a supervisory authority over all in the land except the king himself. Those who competed for the king's favors were jealous and set out to find ways to discredit him. But they were unable to do so. *Why?*

- He possessed "**exceptional qualities.**" He distinguished himself by his exceptional service.
- "**He was not corrupt.**" He did nothing for his own gain.
- "**He was trustworthy.**" He was absolutely reliable.
- "**He was not negligent.**" He knew what was expected; he prepared himself to perform his duties.

The only hope for his enemies was to find a charge that, "*has something to do with the law of his God*" (*verse 5*). Clearly, Daniel was an outstanding professional leader who was a man of God, and everyone knew it. *Now that is professional excellence!* How did he make his way through three separate administrations—each one of which was unfriendly to his faith—and achieve this reputation? What were the principles that guided his integration of government service and faith? What decisions did he make, what did he experience, and what did he observe?

Daniel 1

- **(1:8)** Daniel made a decision early in his life not to be defiled.
- **(1:12-14)** A creative alternative is available that won't require compromising God's Word.
- **(1:17-20)** God will bless, in practical ways, those who follow Him.

Daniel 2

- **(2:14)** When confronted with a challenge from authority react with reason and tact.
- **(2:17-23)** Have a support—and prayer group—from within your profession, and look to God for wisdom. Worship Him for who He is, and glorify Him in all areas of your life.
- **(27-30)** Do your work with humility, and give the credit to God. (see also ***Daniel 2:46-49***)

Daniel 3

- **(3:8)** Expect scrutiny.
- **(3:9-12)** Expect opposition to your faith.
- **(3:13-15)** Expect temptation of your faith.
- **(3:16-18)** Expect an opportunity to demonstrate the authenticity of your faith.
- **(3:19-27)** Expect justification by your faith.

Daniel 4

- (4:2-37) Continued, respectful, honorable, diligent service to an ungodly superior, while not compromising important biblical commandments, can lead a superior to God.

Consider the following elements of King Nebuchadnezzar's testimony:

- Glory to God
- His previous condition
- How God dealt with him in human terms
- His new condition
- Glory to God

Daniel 5

- (5:22-23) Assignment to a high position does not equate to greatness in God's eyes, nor does it allow license in performing the duties of such a position.
- (5:27) Leaders will be weighed against their responsibilities.

Daniel 6

- (6:1-3) Godly leaders can serve for ungodly superiors. Distinguished service will be recognized.
- (6:4) Godly leaders should be prepared for jealousy and antagonism from ungodly men.
- (6:4-5) Conduct must be such that no grounds or charges for corruption or negligence can be found.
- (6:6-10) Even though at times a creative alternative is appropriate (see ***Daniel 1:12-14***), sometimes it is not. Both circumstances and principle are important. Though Daniel did not obey the unlawful order, he did nothing new. He continued to do what he had always done. He was not rebellious; he was faithful.
- (6:14-15) It is important to know the source and quality of the advice you get. The impact from an ill-considered order may be great.
- (6:21-22) Be respectful of proper authority, even when the system has been used to bring harm or false accusations, or to put you at a disadvantage.
- (6:24) Deal with falsehood directly and quickly.

Let me encourage you not to compartmentalize, but to integrate excellent, professional leadership with spiritual leadership commensurate with your profession and your spiritual maturity. Let me also encourage you to understand the impact that you will have as a senior officer—and to make that impact positive both professionally and spiritually.

Have you made the necessary decision not to be defiled—so that God may fully use you in the position in which He has placed you?

Upon being reviewed by God (and your peers) for increased responsibility, will you be seen as a leader who has maintained integrity—one who is not negligent, but trustworthy?

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