



Sacrifice or Secret

Matthew 5:14-16 (NIV)

"You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

Being a light isn't so much a sacrifice but the secret to true success.

Daniel 1:1-7 (NIV)

In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. ² And the Lord delivered Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the articles from the temple of God. These he carried off to the temple of his god in Babylonia and put in the treasure house of his god. ³ Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, chief of his court officials, to bring into the king's service some of the Israelites from the royal family and the nobility—⁴ young men without any physical defect, handsome, showing aptitude for every kind of learning, well informed, quick to understand, and qualified to serve in the king's palace. He was to teach them the language and literature of the Babylonians. ⁵ The king assigned them a daily amount of food and wine from the king's table. They were to be trained for three years, and after that they were to enter the king's service. ⁶ Among those who were chosen were some from Judah: Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. ⁷ The chief official gave them new names: to Daniel, the name Belteshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abednego.

Daniel knew:

I. We must be tested before we can be trusted.

- Daniel knew that we shine brightest in darkness.
- God uses the trials of Babylon to reveal the authenticity of our faith. (Daniel 1:8-14)

2. Compromise cripples success.

- Compromise occurs when we are more concerned with being a star than being a light!
- Compromise is the bowl that conceals our light!
- Compromise is coloring outside the lines! (Romans 12:2)
- When we compromise nothing historic happens!

Daniel 1:15-20 (NIV)

At the end of the ten days they looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who ate the royal food. ¹⁶ So the guard took away their choice food and the wine they were to drink and gave them vegetables instead. 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. ¹⁸ At the end of the time set by the king to bring them into his service, the chief official presented them to Nebuchadnezzar. ¹⁹ The king talked with them, and he found none equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; so they entered the king's service. ²⁰ 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.

3. That being a light is not so much a sacrifice but the secret.

- Choosing to be a light removes the ceiling!

Proverbs 16:7 (NIV)

When the Lord takes pleasure in anyone's way, he causes their enemies to make peace with them.

Proverbs 3:5-6 (NIV)

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; ⁶ in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight