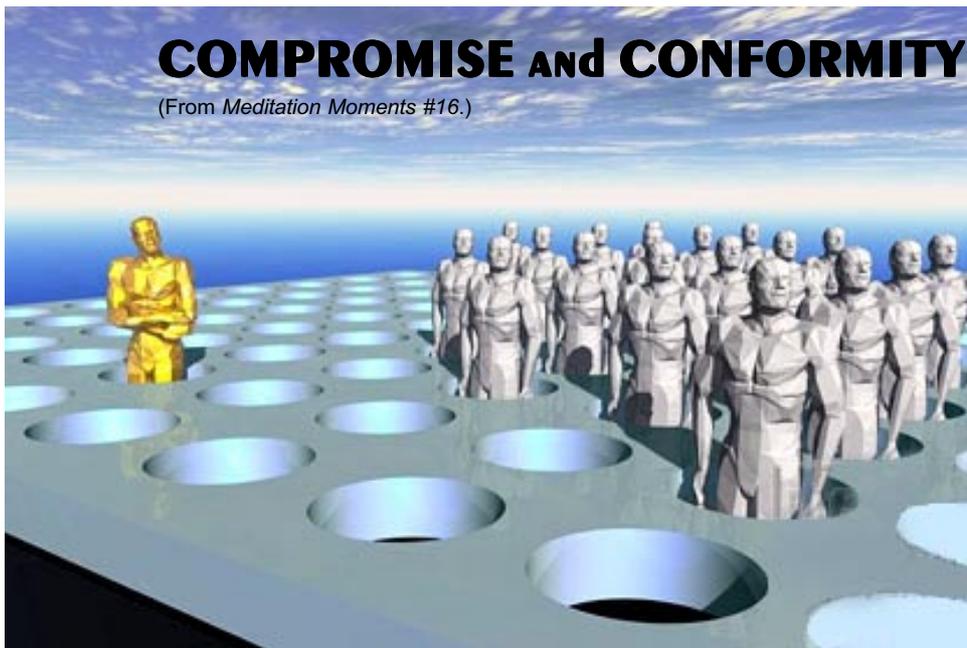


**DOES THE BIBLE TALK ABOUT PEER PRESSURE? READ THE FOLLOWING EXCERPT FROM AN OLD RADIO PROGRAM BY VIRGINIA BRANDT BERG.**



## COMPROMISE AND CONFORMITY

(From *Meditation Moments* #16.)

One of the most compelling stories in God's Word is about four teenagers in the first chapter of the Book of Daniel. For Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, had asked for "some of the children of Israel ... in whom there was no blemish, but good-looking, gifted in all wisdom, possessing knowledge and quick to understand, who had ability to serve in the king's palace."<sup>\*</sup> The king's eunuchs were to teach these young men the learning and language of the Chaldeans, to take these Israelite teens and make them real Babylonians.

It goes on to say, "The king appointed them a daily portion of the king's meat and of the wine which he drank, so nourishing them three

**YOU HAVE CHOSEN THE ROUGHEST ROAD, BUT IT LEADS STRAIGHT TO THE HILLTOPS.—JOHN BUNYAN**

**IF GOD HAS CALLED YOU, DON'T SPEND TIME LOOKING OVER YOUR SHOULDER TO SEE WHO IS FOLLOWING.**

**LET IT BE KNOWN ON WHOSE SIDE YOU ARE. IF OTHERS CAN'T TELL, SOMETHING IS WRONG.**

**LAST, BUT BY NO MEANS LEAST, HAVE COURAGE—MORAL COURAGE, THE COURAGE OF ONE'S CONVICTIONS, THE COURAGE TO SEE THINGS THROUGH. THE WORLD IS IN A CONSTANT CONSPIRACY AGAINST THE BRAVE. IT'S THE AGE-OLD STRUGGLE—THE ROAR OF THE CROWD ON ONE SIDE AND THE VOICE OF YOUR CONSCIENCE ON THE OTHER.—GENERAL DOUGLAS MACARTHUR.**

years," and at the end of that time they were to stand before the king.

These young men were Daniel and Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and Nebuchadnezzar was a king given to the cruelest of atrocities. But young Daniel "purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank." [Note: *The Israelites were forbidden by Old Testament laws to eat certain foods.*] "Therefore, he requested of the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself. Now God had brought Daniel into the favor and goodwill of the prince of the eunuchs."

"And the chief of the eunuchs said to Daniel, 'I fear my lord the king ... for why should he see your faces looking worse than the young men who are your age? Then you would endanger my head before the king.'" Then Daniel and Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego made up their minds that they would not partake of the king's dainties. Daniel asked if for 10 days they could just eat their own food; then the chief of the eunuchs could judge which was better.

At the end of the ten days "their features appeared better and fatter in flesh than all the young men who ate the portion of the king's delicacies." It goes on to say, "As for these four young men, God gave knowledge and skill in all literature and wisdom; and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams." Then later, when Nebuchadnezzar called for the four, "in all matters of wisdom and understanding about which the king examined them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm." And because Daniel wouldn't compromise, in the long run he was exalted above all the king's other counselors.

It's a wonderful story—how fearless these young men were! It seemed as though much more could have been theirs if they had been willing to conform to the Babylonian way of life, but they wouldn't!

So many young people want to belong; they want to be accepted. But this story shows how a small decision can have a great effect in the years to come. If Daniel and his friends had compromised early in life, they would not have stood their ground later. There would never have been the wonderful stories of Daniel in the lions' den, or of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the fiery furnace.

At the entrance to any line of action that calls for a change to a higher level of conduct, there stands this decision: whether or not you're going to stand out for Jesus Christ and the only real standard for today, the Word of God; or whether you are going to do that which is expedient, and compromise.

There's an allegiance that is one and undivided in the Christian. It's a devoted, dedicated life—a life surrendered to the Christian ideal. Therein lies its power.

<sup>\*</sup> The Bible verses are from the New International Version and the King James Version.