



## **COUNTERCULTURE:**

### Lessons from the Book of Daniel

January 9, 2011

*Life as a Resident Alien*

Daniel 1:1-2

*...But our citizenship is in Heaven, from where we are expecting a savior...*

Phil 3:20

## Devotional Guide

### Monday

Grab your favorite Bible Commentary and read the introductory background information about the book of Daniel. Explore the following topics: authorship, timeline, primary characters, cultural/historical context, literary genre, and purpose. (Focus on the information about the first 6 chapters.)

### Tuesday

Read chapters 1-6 of the book of Daniel. Pay particular attention to the Spiritual Disciplines practiced by Daniel. Notice how they make Daniel internally strong, forming his good character, and are also externally focused as "they humanize and transform life for others."

### Sermon-based Small Groups:

Use any or all of these daily activities within the course of your meeting time. There is plenty here to help you take time to read scripture together, have discussion, challenge and encourage one another, and pray. Be creative, have fun, honor God.

### Wednesday

Read your sermon notes (other side) or write down what you can remember from the sermon (use the outline on the other side of this sheet). Ask God to open your eyes and increase your ability to discern the ways you are being influenced by cultural values that are counter to Christian values.

### Thursday

Pretend you are tasked with explaining our culture (Spokane, WA, Pacific NW, or USA) to an alien. What would be the good things you would highlight? What would you say are some idols served by our culture? What do we consider sacred? What things would you say are inherently good but often twisted by our culture? (For instance, consider how the culture of the Pacific NW values the great outdoors.)

Describe specific ways you experience the current post-Christian culture as a kind of exile. In what ways are becoming aware of our culture being apathetic to Christian faith?

### Friday

Watch some commercials on TV with some friends this weekend. Identify the values each ad is pushing. What do you notice about our culture from these ads? In what ways are you most likely to be influenced? What do you do to keep this influence from invading you?

### Suggested Resources:

The Life with God Bible (NRSV) edited by Richard J. Foster  
[www.biblestudytools.com](http://www.biblestudytools.com)

Resident Aliens by Hauerwas & Willimon

Radical: Taking Back Your Faith from the American Dream by David Platt



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## **Sermon Notes**

### **Background Information about the book of Daniel**

**Context: Exile**

**Main Point #1: Siege—Clash of cultural values**

**Main Point #2: Providence—God's role in cultural changes**

**Main Point #3: Sacred objects—Cultural twists**

### **Spiritual Discipline to focus on this Week:**

#### **Discernment**

Perceiving the differences between the Kingdom of God and the culture around us, not to judge, but to transform and redeem.

In the midst of life this week, especially when you feel strongly about something or you are faced with a choice about your actions, notice what is motivating you. What agenda are you trying to push? What are you valuing? Consider whether you are motivated by a cultural value or a something God values. Consider if your attitude or actions need to be realigned. How might God be challenging you to grow in good character? What good effect might you have on those around you?