

Daniel chapter 1

Negotiation is part of life. It is common on large purchases or in a work place. For example, I have negotiated on car and house purchases. I often negotiate with management and project leaders at work place for task assignment, deadlines, etc. How can we have wisdom in negotiation and can result in an agreement like a win-win situation especially when you are in a disadvantaged position? We can learn a lot from prophet Daniel, but today we'll concentrate on his wisdom in the negotiation process that is in line with God's will.

Daniel is a prophet in the Old Testament (around 600BC). Daniel was born in the royal family. However, Judah was a weak country at that time. When he was just a young man, he was captured in Judah and exiled to Babylon, in which now Iraq. Daniel chapter 1 is about the time Daniel just arrived Babylon, and was selected to be trained to serve the King. Later chapters of Daniel are about Daniel's prophecies and his service to other kings (Babylonian and Persian kings).

1) Situation that is difficult and you are in a disadvantaged position

a. Difficult or challenging situations occur in life

Daniel was taken in captivity to Babylon to serve a foreign king. It must be very difficult for Daniel when he left his comfortable home, and needed to adjust to a foreign culture and to serve a foreign authority. In your daily life, you might also encounter awful situations. Let's see how Daniel dealt with it, and will you respond as Daniel did?

b. The first thing to do is to evaluate the situation

The first thing Daniel needed to do was to obey the rules of the existing foreign king. The authority assigned him a new name. Daniel did not feel depressed nor act defensively due to the situation. He must be carefully evaluated the situation including the pro and con of his options of action as well as what God want him to do at that time. He remained calm. That is the first step we should have when we face a challenge and plan for the next action such as negotiation.

2) Proposed solution has to be in-line with God

Your plan must be in-line with God's will. Daniel sought after God's desire.

a. What is God's desire

Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine. He stood solid on God's desire, and not afraid to ask the chief official for permission not to defile himself (verse 8).

b. Propose a solution that is in line with God's teaching

Proper Communication includes negotiation has to start with understanding the other side. The guard, although he has higher authority than Daniel, he must also follow his higher authority's command (verse 10). Daniel understood that but Daniel has to keep God's non-defile command. Based on the description of Daniel in this book, he is a man that often pray to God and seek God. He thought of a possible solution that is likely after he sought God's help. Daniel then proposed to the guard that was Daniel and his friends would just eat vegetables and drink water for 10 days as a test. This approach was negotiated and agreed upon (verses 12-14).

3) One has to have faith in God

One has to rely on God and continue be faithful during the whole process.

a. Testing period or waiting period

Daniel did not know the result, but he acted on his agreement with the guard. After 10 days of vegetables and water, he and his friends looked healthier and better nourished than others. After the 10 days and got the approval, Daniel and his friends had to be consistent for the remaining 3 years. They gave knowledge much better than others at the end. Thus, one has to be continuously close to God in order to get His wisdom and help (John 15:5-8), and be able to continue the endurance for completion (Hebrew 10:36).

b. Result that can glorify God

In verses 18-21, it described the King was impressed by Daniel and his friends in terms of knowledge and their superiority than others, and got accepted to serve the King. Their actions brought glory to God. As stated in John 15:8, bearing fruit brings glory to God.

I had situations at work that need negotiation with management. Although my interactions with management were not as tough as Daniel's situation but the experience can be applicable to your situation. I remember one time that I need

to complete a task with a very tight schedule. I understood the management's situation because failure of that task on time could mean loss of a large dollar amount to the company and might affect my director's employment. I agreed with the management to do it with a win-win proposal: the company needed to purchase a proper software that I have selected ASAP, and my part is to work overtime and weekend to try to complete it. The exception was that I would not work on Sunday because of Sabbath. After the agreement was made, I worked with all my ability and prayed to God to give me wisdom to complete the task. I was diligent during that period. Finally, I completed the task successfully with a budget below their initial budget estimate. I was rewarded for the accomplishment.

In conclusion, Daniel's example can help us to deal with difficult situations with authority. We need to practice the process of doing things in-line with God's desire, and at the same time we can work with the authority for a solution. God can help us to accomplish the task and bring glory to God.