

Daniel Two

CONVICTIONS AND COURAGE



EXPLORE THE SCRIPTURES

Read chapter two regarding Nebuchadnezzar's first dream and Daniel's response. If possible, scan it two or more times. Try multiple Bible versions if you'd like. (See [BibleGateway](#) for online versions.) Obviously, being asked to interpret a dream is not an ordinary work request. Even so, as you read the chapter, pay attention to the work issues involved: the challenge to perform, relating to coworkers, the potential for failure and unexpected rewards.

Discuss: Daniel's World

1. "Perform or die" (Daniel 2:6). That was the demand Nebuchadnezzar made of all his advisors, Daniel included. How did Daniel exhibit courage in the face of this unreasonable demand from the king? Where do you think this courage came from? How did Daniel keep this perspective in the face of this incredibly tense situation?
2. At the end of the chapter, the king promotes Daniel and, at Daniel's request, promotes his friends. Why do you think the king promoted a foreigner to such heights within the kingdom and granted him so much influence?
3. In addition to power and authority, Daniel's promotion included significant wealth. (See verses 46–49.) From what you have seen so far of his character, how do you think Daniel responded to acquiring riches and becoming a ruler?
4. How do you imagine the rest of the exiles from Judah (the southern kingdom of Israel) responded to the news that Daniel had been made "ruler over the whole province of Babylon and chief prefect over all the

wise men of Babylon” (v. 48)? Do you think they were excited, happy, hopeful, envious or judgmental? In what ways might his people feel they were being betrayed?

Discuss: My World

5. Have you ever had an unreasonable request from a boss, teacher or someone in authority? How did you respond? How was courage (i.e., “kingdom fortitude”) or fear involved in your response? Following the example of Daniel, how do you hope you might respond the next time you are faced with such a request or demand?

6. Do you expect God to show up in the hard places of your life and work and in the lives of those who don’t worship the Most High God? Explain.

7. Many people stand up for God and are not promoted. How might Daniel’s experience create false expectations of God’s response?

8. What expectations do you have about advancing in your career? How do you hope to respond if you are promoted? What might you do if you are demoted or if things do not advance very quickly? How might such setbacks affect your view of God and your relationship with Him?

Convictions

9. A conviction is a well thought through conclusion that you are willing to embrace, act on and, if need be, suffer for. Daniel and his friends had such convictions. List one or two of your convictions that you have embraced, acted on and are willing to suffer for regarding your vocation. (For example, “Don’t panic. Pray!”)
10. What might shake or disrupt these convictions? What might fortify them?

PAUSE TO PRAY

Take time alone to pray. Listen to God and tell Him your heart. Consider asking Him for godly convictions and courage as you live as an exile. Are you aware of anything He is inviting you to? After, pray together as a group.

SUGGESTED MEMORY VERSE

Daniel answered the king and said, “No wise men, enchanters, magicians, or astrologers can show to the king the mystery that the king has asked, but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and he has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days. Your dream and the visions of your head as you lay in bed are these.” (Daniel 2:27–28 ESV)

GOING DEEPER (OPTIONAL)

Image Selection

Find one or two images that represent your views of true courage. See the collage at the end of this section or find an image on www.vibrantfaith.org¹ or some other website.

Describe your image or images and why you were drawn to them. As you reflect on what you selected, what emotions surface within you? How do this image and your response to it connect with having courage in the workplace?

Other Faiths/Non–Faith

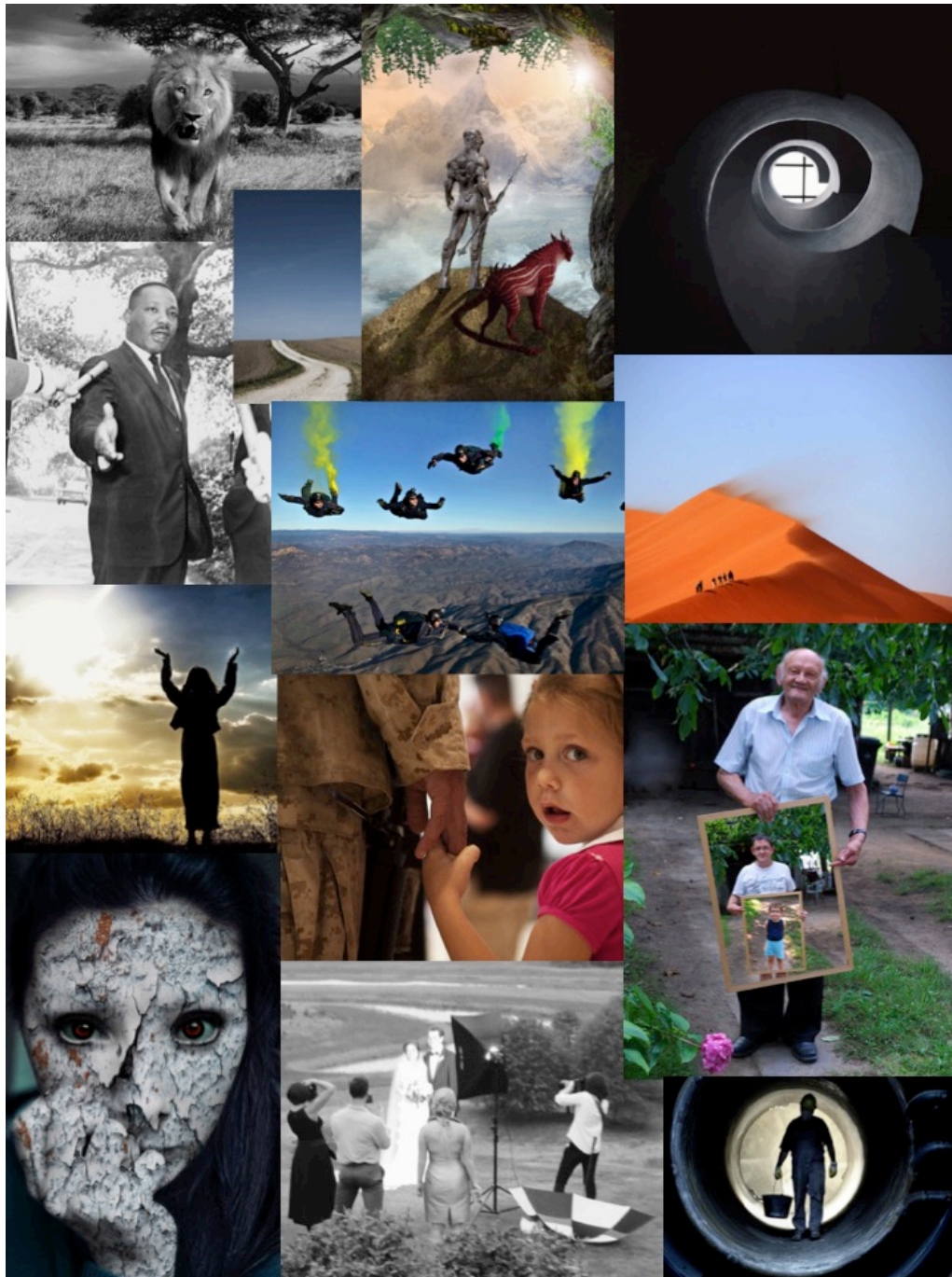
One challenge to our convictions can come from people of other faiths. On your campus or in your workplace, how do you relate to people of other faiths or people who claim no faith? What difficulties do you find in relating to people who come from such different perspectives?

If you sense that some people no longer care very much about faith, sin and guilt, this article, “The Issue of Shame in Reaching People for Christ: When Guilt–Free Isn’t Enough,” explains why some people feel this way and what you might do about it. (Available as a free download at: www.ralphennis.com/spiritual-formation.html.)

If you are looking for more of a philosophical explanation of why so many different perspectives are possible, read the article *A Space Beyond: Perspective on Various Spiritualities* (available at the same website).

¹ This website provides 2000+ high–quality images through a curated, searchable database. Vibrant Faith is a Christian organization committed to taking “the best research and academic insight, ground and deepen it with Christian theology and instill an evangelical spirit of ministry to help congregations strengthen families to nurture faith.” Subscription required.

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- Describe your selected image or images and why you were drawn to them.
- As you reflect on what you selected, what emotions surface within you?
- How does this image and your response connect with having courage in the workplace?