

Authenticity

Presented by Julie Busteed

Air Dates: April 27 – May 1, 2026

Day One

Is your workplace a difficult environment? Are you being asked to participate in things that don't align with your biblical convictions? Many of us find ourselves in situations like that. Maybe it's a new HR requirement or a training course you're expected to attend. How do you authentically respond in a way that is both respectful to your employer and doesn't go against your faith?

The Old Testament prophet Daniel gives us a powerful example. Let's look at Daniel's life and the lives of his friends to see how they navigated challenging circumstances and how you and I can apply those same principles in our workplaces today.

Here's some background: Israel had been conquered by the king of Babylon, who took many of the most capable young people into his service. In Daniel 1:3-5, we read these young men were chosen for their intelligence, appearance, and ability to learn. They were brought into the king's palace, trained in Babylonian language and culture, and given food and wine from the king's table.

Daniel and his friends, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, were among those taken. They were uprooted from their homes and everything familiar, placed in a foreign culture, and immersed in new beliefs and practices. Even their names were changed, as if their identity and heritage were being erased.

They were also to eat the king's food, which on the surface sounds like a perk. But Daniel resolved not to defile himself by eating it. Some suggest the food may have been sacrificed to idols or considered unclean, though the text doesn't clearly say that. What I do see is Daniel chose to honor God in the one area he could control. In a place where so much had been taken from him, he remained faithful in what was still within his power.

Daniel respectfully asked for permission for himself and his friends to abstain. He proposed a ten-day test to eat only vegetables and drink water, and in the end, he and his friends were healthier and better nourished than those who ate the king's food.

Daniel was in a situation where nearly every aspect of his worship and culture had been stripped away. He couldn't go to the temple. He couldn't observe the usual practices of his faith. Yet he held onto what he could—his devotion to God. He chose to honor him in a small but significant way.

What about you? Are there aspects of your workplace that feel outside your control? Where the environment seems hostile to your faith? Is the language inappropriate? Are the practices unethical? Do the expectations feel compromising?

Where might God be inviting you, like Daniel, to take a respectful but firm stand? How can you authentically and respectfully respond in a tough situation and trust God will be with you and provide a way.

Day Two

Do you work in a hostile or competitive environment where your coworkers are contentious and will do anything to get ahead. That's a difficult place to be day in and day out, but with God's help, and lessons we learn from his Word, you can be a light in that place.

For example, look at Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. We read in the Bible about how they were targeted for their faith. Nebuchadnezzar, the king decrees that as soon as anyone hears the music they are to bow down and worship his golden image, which is the very definition of an idol. Anyone who doesn't obey will be thrown into a blazing furnace.

Of course, these young Israelite men are God worshippers, and so they do not follow this order. And the other Chaldeans, or maybe we could call them coworkers, observe their behavior and call them out—basically tell on them to the king. Nebuchadnezzar confronts them himself and kind of gives them one more chance to worship him. Listen to their reply:

King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty's hand. But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up (Daniel 3:16b-18).

Did you hear that? They are so confident God would rescue them. They know he can do it. They have heard the stories of how God rescued the Israelites from Pharaoh, how God parted the Red Sea and led them in the wilderness, how God went before Joshua and the walls of Jericho came down from the trumpeting of the horns. They know God can save them. Then this phrase—*But even if he does not*—they will still not worship any other God. They have faith in an everlasting God, even if he doesn't save them from the immediate fiery furnace.

And the end of the story is they do get thrown into the blaze—so hot the men who threw them in died. But they are not there alone. When king Nebuchadnezzar looks in, he sees four men walking around. God was there with them in it. And when they came out, not a hair was singed. God not only miraculously saves them as no one else could do, but because of their beliefs and behavior it is an example to everyone how great and mighty God is.

I hope this encourages you to be your authentic, genuine self at work. May you find your identity in Christ and know you can trust him for anything! Even if you can't see how it could possibly resolve itself, you and I serve and worship a God who can do mighty and miraculous things, even in a contentious and hostile workplace. Trust him to guide and help you. You just might be an example to others and glorifying to God.

Day Three

Do you find it difficult to be honest when you have to deliver bad news? It can feel risky especially when the outcome might affect your job or your relationships. The Prophet Daniel's life gives us a picture of what it means to be an authentic follower of Christ in tough moments.

In Daniel chapter 5, Daniel serves under a different leader, yet he continues faithfully in his role. By this point, he has years of experience and a strong reputation, but his ultimate allegiance remains with God.

The king hosts a lavish feast, openly displaying his power and wealth. In his arrogance, he orders the sacred vessels taken from God's temple in Jerusalem to be used at the party. Not only are they misused, but the king and his guests praise false gods of gold, silver, bronze, iron, wood, and stone instead of honoring the living God.

Suddenly, the mood shifts. A hand appears and writes a message on the wall. The once-confident king is filled with fear.

After exhausting all other options to determine what the message says, someone suggests calling Daniel to interpret the message. It's interesting that Daniel wasn't the king's first choice. Perhaps, deep down, the king already knew he had crossed a line and didn't want to face the truth.

When Daniel arrives, he speaks with respect but also with courage and clarity. He refuses the king's rewards, making it clear his message is not influenced by personal gain. As an authentic follower of God, Daniel is not driven by approval or advancement but by obedience to God.

He reminds the king of how God dealt with Nebuchadnezzar and then confronts Belshazzar directly. He tells him plainly he has not humbled himself, he has dishonored God, and his kingdom will be taken from him. It is a hard message and a dangerous one to deliver.

Yet, Daniel speaks the truth and leaves the outcome in God's hands. The outcome was King Belshazzar was slain that same evening and his kingdom was conquered by Darius the Mede. Daniel's example challenges us. Where are you being called to speak truth right now? Maybe it's in your workplace or in a relationship, and you're afraid of the consequences.

Being an authentic follower of Christ doesn't mean being harsh or defensive. It means speaking truth with humility and respect, without compromising. It means trusting God enough to obey him, even when the outcome feels uncertain. Like Daniel, we can choose faithfulness over fear and trust God with whatever comes next.

Day Four

Do you work with people who seem jealous of your success? How do you live as a Christ-follower in that environment without becoming defensive on one hand or a doormat on the other?

Daniel, once again, gives us a powerful example. By this point, Daniel has likely been in Babylon for around 60 years, and he's serving under a new leader King Darius. His work ethic, integrity, and excellence set him apart so clearly that the king plans to promote him and *set him over the whole kingdom* (Daniel 6:3). Daniel's coworkers grow jealous and begin looking for a way to bring him down.

Scripture tells us, *they could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent* (Daniel 6:4). When they can't find any fault in his work, they shift their strategy. They convince the king to issue a decree: for 30 days, anyone who prays to any god or person other than the king will be thrown into the lion's den.

Daniel now faces another test. Will he compromise? Will he adjust quietly to protect himself? I wonder what I would have done. I might have been tempted to find a middle ground. "I'll still pray, just not publicly. Just for a little while." But not Daniel.

He remains steady. He continues his established rhythm of prayer, openly and consistently. He doesn't become loud or combative; he simply refuses to compromise his devotion to God. His enemies "catch" him, report him, and the consequence is severe: Daniel is thrown into the lion's den. And God intervenes. Daniel is not harmed. God shuts the mouths of the lions.

What's striking is Daniel wasn't spared from the trial. He still went into the den with those lions. But God protected him. Through Daniel's quiet faithfulness and unwavering trust, God's power and glory were put on display for all to see even to the most powerful ruler of that time.

Remember, no matter who your boss is, no matter how leadership shifts around you, God is still sovereign. He does not change. As followers of Christ, we are called to serve him first with integrity, consistency, and courage. And when workplace dynamics feel unfair, when others undermine you,

when it seems like doing the right thing is costing you, don't lose heart. Daniel didn't avoid the pit, and you may not either.

But in those very places where you feel most vulnerable God is able to show up in powerful ways. Your faithfulness becomes a platform for his glory. Stand firm. Not harshly. Not passively. But faithfully. And trust God with the outcome.

Day Five

I've been looking at the book of Daniel and focusing on how he and his friends lived and worked in a foreign and often hostile environment—maybe similar to your workplace. Daniel and his friends were taken captive when they were young, probably late teens or early twenties. They were chosen to be part of the king of Babylon's workforce because they were deemed to be the best of the best.

In each scenario that is found in the early chapters of Daniel, it's evident these men worshipped God. They knew their history, the stories and promises. They continued to trust God even though they were not at home and able to worship in the temple. And instead of getting sour or depressed or turning against God, their faith increased with each trial that they faced. And it's possible they spent the rest of their lives in a foreign land, in the waiting and in the place that they did not belong. And still they didn't turn from God.

They faced trials most of us will never face like being tossed into a fiery furnace or a lion's den, to name a few. What an example they are. What an encouragement their faith and trust is to me. It was also encouraging to the writer of Hebrews where they are mentioned in a list of other faithful prophets. Who through their faith were saved from the mouths of lions and were kept from harm in the fiery furnace.

I also wonder if they were familiar with this Psalm of David. It certainly applies to them and to us.

*The Lord is my light and my salvation—
whom shall I fear?
The Lord is the stronghold of my life—
of whom shall I be afraid?
When the wicked advance against me
to devour me,
it is my enemies and my foes
who will stumble and fall.
Though an army besiege me,
my heart will not fear;
though war break out against me,
even then I will be confident (Psalm 27:1-2).*

*I remain confident of this:
I will see the goodness of the Lord
in the land of the living.
Wait for the Lord;
be strong and take heart
and wait for the Lord (Psalm 27:13-14).*

I hope this encourages you when you are in a hard place at work or with relationships, that you will *be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord* no matter what. Because he is trustworthy and faithful.