

March 8, 2026

“Watching Our Consumption”
Lesson 1

Daniel 1:8-17
1 Timothy 4:7-8

Intro

The book of Daniel is divided into two parts. Chapters 1-6 concern Daniel and his companions in service to various kings. Chapters 7-12 consist of Daniel’s visions. Today’s lesson will come from the first half of Daniel. In 1 Timothy, Paul writes to Timothy instructing him about situations occurring in the Ephesus church. Specifically, Paul writes about countering false teachings that threaten the teaching of the Good News, and that cause distress within the church.

Read Daniel 1:8-17

1. vs. 8: Daniel asks for a different diet than the royal food and wine that was the official choice
Daniel and his friends were forcibly removed from Israel
Babylon takes the best from the lands it conquers and tries to “reprogram” them
They want them to accept Babylonian foods, customs, and gods
If they do this, they are less likely to rebel
Daniel refuses because he does not want to “defile” himself
This suggests there is something in the food that is against the Law of Moses
The word “defile” in Hebrew deals with ritual purity
It could be that some of the food may have been offered to idols, thus impure
It may be also that Daniel wants to stay connected to his Jewish upbringing
By eating the foods that are his custom, he maintains his spiritual identity
Daniel chooses to use his body through food as a way of honoring God

2. vs. 9: God is actively involved in Daniel’s life here
He causes the official to show “favor and compassion” to Daniel
This reminds us of the favor shown to Joseph in prison by the warden
The word “compassion” can also be translated as “mercy”
That is the sense here—the guard has mercy in considering the request
The phrase “favor and compassion (mercy)” shows up together many times in Scripture
Usually, they are describing God’s commitment to His people
(See Ps. 25:6, Is. 63:7, Jer. 16:5, Hosea 2:19, and Zech. 7:9)

3. vs. 10: The official may have compassion on Daniel, but he doesn’t immediately grant his request
He points out that the food is meant to provide energy and vitality
If Daniel doesn’t eat it, he may look worse than the others on the same diet
If Daniel looks worse, that will be a negative for the official—he will be executed
Also, the king himself has said this is the diet for this group
To reject what the king has ordered is dangerous
By not refusing Daniel’s request outright, the official is allowing him to pursue it

4. vs. 11-12: Daniel requests a trial run with the diet he wants to replace the king's choice
He says a 10-day trial would show there are no ill effects to this diet
This request is not just for him, but for the three others named here
 They are fellow Israelites, so have the same desire to maintain their identity
By suggesting the 10 days, Daniel is acknowledging the warning of vs. 10
The word "vegetables" can be translated as "seed"
This diet could include legumes and grains, and / or fruits and vegetables
 Daniel does eat meat as well in his diet (see 10:3)
One thing to remember is the purpose of the king's prescribed diet
It is a symbol of his power and privilege
 It can be obtained only by the king's permission
The simpler foods that Daniel asks for could be seen in a few different lights
 They could show a desire to stay connected to their lifetime identity
 They might be a way to show solidarity to conquered Judah
 This diet might be all those people have available to eat
As before, Daniel is choosing to use the food he eats as a way to honor God

5. vs. 13: The end result will be how Daniel and his friends look after the 10 days
He gives the official the power of decision—he doesn't demand
"Treat your servants in accordance with what you see"

6. vs. 14: The official agrees to Daniel's proposal
They get to eat the alternate diet for 10 days

7. vs. 15: The trial is successful!
They look "healthier and better nourished than any of the young men"
Normally, we wouldn't expect a 10-day trial to make such a huge difference
This situation shows God at work in Daniel's life because of his faithfulness

8. vs. 16: Because of how good they look, they are allowed an exception to the food served
The guard takes away the food and drink the king has ordered
Daniel and his friends are allowed to eat the vegetable diet they requested

9. vs. 17: God grants the four men benefits that will show His power and will benefit others
They have been granted "knowledge and understanding", which implies wisdom
They are learned men, who benefit from reading and studying
Daniel is granted the ability to have visions and dreams
They will serve in the Babylonian court and succeed
God's will is going to be done through those who have shown faithfulness to Him

Read I Timothy 4:7-8

10. vs. 7: Paul warns Timothy to avoid teachings that don't align with Christ
He specifically mentions "godless myths and old wives' tales"
False teachers were in the church whose teachings came from these two areas
If a teaching isn't based on what Jesus taught / lived, it isn't a teaching of the church

Paul gives Timothy a “to do” after beginning the verse with a “don’t”
The “to do” is to “train yourself to be godly”
Training suggests what an athlete does for the body to be ready to compete
Paul’s words mean to focus energy on living for Christ, as an athlete does for athletics
It goes beyond just avoiding evil; the goal is to pursue holiness

11. vs. 8: Paul acknowledges that taking care of the body through training has “some value”
It isn’t a worthless thing, a waste of time
But his phrase is that it has “some value”
The Greek word here indicates something small in comparison to something else
The other thing is “godliness”
Paul says godliness has value for “all things”
It is good for our present life as it brings peace, harmony, and contentment
These qualities cannot be fully attained by anything else besides godliness
These things also have value for eternity, unlike physical training
The body will die, but spiritual health lasts forever

Application: Both of today’s texts deal with making the right choices with our bodies and minds so that we continue to grow spiritually and honor God. Daniel and his friends were seeking to honor God in their bodies by not eating anything that had a taint of dishonor or ungodliness to it. We can act similarly in eating healthy foods, exercising, and being proactive about preventative care of our bodies. Paul reminds Timothy (and us) that taking care of the body is fine, but pursuing godliness is a higher, more important, priority. There is a greater gain to be accomplished that could ever occur by caring for the body alone. Both passages remind us to honor our bodies (physically and spiritually) so that we might honor God.

Prayer: Father God, You created all things and pronounced them good. Thank You for making us in Your image. Help us honor that image by making godly choices in how we treat our bodies and souls, so that we may bring glory to You in everything we do. In Jesus’ name, Amen.