

April 23, 2023

## **RESOLVED: Better Choices, Better Life 2 - I am ready**

It's true that better choices lead to a better life, but the last thing I want to sound like teaching in this series is a parent who nervously says to their teenager going out the door with a date, or with friends, "*Make good choices.*"

People don't make good choices just because they are reminded to make good choices. There is much more involved than that. God knows that, and like a good parent, he is involved in the training process, helping us **GET READY** to make better choices.

Human nature in pride will say, "Oh dad", or "Oh mom", dismissing the statement "*Make good choices,*" as unnecessary. We all do that, not just teenagers.

We all assume naively that we will do just fine making the choices we want out of life. We know what we want, right?

Little do we know that it isn't as simple as that. Making good choices is a battle, and **battles are won by people who are battle ready.**

I am resolved.  
I am ready.  
I am consistent.  
I am devoted.  
I am kind.  
I am faithful.

### **HOW TO GET READY**

#### **ROUND 1** (Daniel 1)

By way of review...

- **PRE-DECIDE to be Faithful**

That's what Daniel and his friends did in chapter 1.

When your values are clear, your decisions are easier.

**Daniel 1:8** “*But Daniel RESOLVED not to defile himself*” with the pagan values of Babylon. **He Pre-Decided to be faithful.**

- **PRE-SOLVE your pressure-points**

The key to the word, “Resolved” is in the word “SOLVE” “Resolved” does not mean RE SOLVE over and over again. It means to be determined, and resolute, to pre-decide ... We must **PRE-SOLVE** our pressure-points. That’s how you become resolved!

When faced with \_\_\_\_\_ (this situation),  
I have pre-decided to \_\_\_\_\_ (take this action).

Don’t wait for the time of temptation to decide how to fight it. That doesn’t work. That’s as absurd as the Olympic athlete thinking he can win the gold at the event without preparation or practice before the event.

**To win the battle over temptation we must become battle ready.**

**Pre-Decide to be faithful to God**

**Pre-Solve according to God’s clear values.**

## **ROUND 2** (Daniel 2)

Where “Round 1” strengthened their resolve, “Round 2” strengthened their resolve for a lifetime filled with battles while living in exile. Here’s what happened. **I want you to pay attention to how God was involved in their training.**

King Nebuchadnezzar had a bad dream. He is convinced it means something.

King Nebuchadnezzar is a pagan polytheist. So he summoned his “*magicians, enchanters, sorcerers and astrologers*”. (Daniel 2:2)

**King:** Tell me my dream. Then tell me what it means.

**Sorcerers:** Tell us your dream and we will interpret it.

**King:** Nope. You tell me my dream *then* interpret it. I know your tricks. If your powers are legit tell me my dream, first, so that I can trust your interpretation!

**Sorcerers:** That's impossible. No King has ever asked this. No sorcerer can do this. Only the gods. And the gods do not walk in our midst.

*Daniel 2:12–13 (NIV) This made the king so angry and furious that he ordered the execution of all the wise men of Babylon. <sup>13</sup> So the decree was issued to put the wise men to death, and men were sent to look for Daniel and his friends to put them to death.*

Arioch, the commander of the king's guard, goes and tells Daniel what he has to do before he rounds up everyone for execution. Daniel asked why the king was so harsh. The executioner explained the interchange between the sorcerers and the furious king.

### **So what does Daniel do in this seemingly impossible situation?**

First, he wisely and humbly goes to the King and asks for a chance to pray that he might interpret it. He's given one day. If you want to be battle ready do as Daniel did.

- **ASK others to PRAY**

*Daniel 2:17–18 (NIV) Then Daniel returned to his house and explained the matter to his friends Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. <sup>18</sup> He urged them to plead for mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that he and his friends might not be executed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.*

Prayer is not one sided, and neither is training to be RESOLVED. When you commit to be faithful to God, God commits to be faithful to you!

- **EXPERIENCE God for yourself**

*Daniel 2:19 (NIV) During the night the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision. Then Daniel praised the God of heaven*

What a celebration of praise this was!! God is faithful!!!

**Daniel broke out into SONG!! (the formatted poetic section 2:19-23).**

**Daniel's love, joy, and peace soared as a gift from GOD!!!**

**SO DID HIS RESOLVE!**

If you don't have a personal relationship with God that is filled with joy, back up to Round 1. Start there. Then move to round 2 with God's help.

**Without personal experience with God providing you with this love, joy, peace, and confidence, you will ever make it through Round 3!**

### **ROUND 3** (Daniel 3)

#### CRISIS

- Nebuchadnezzar makes a golden idol, forcing all the leaders of Babylon to bow to it in worship and allegiance to the “god of Babylon”.
- Daniel’s praying friends’ Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (also leaders, but not in the royal palace) are **RESOLVED** and refuse to bow! **WHERE’S DANIEL!?**
- Daniel was elevated to the king’s court at the palace (end of chapter 2).
- That’s brought to the king’s attention by none other than those jealous of Daniel’s new elevated position.

*Daniel 3:15 (NIV) . . . if you are ready to fall down and worship the image I made, very good. But if you do not worship it, you will be thrown immediately into a blazing furnace. Then what god will be able to rescue you from my hand?”*

Nebuchadnezzar just challenged God and put himself above God. You should read the rest of the story to see how God handles that.

*Daniel 3:16–18 (NIV) Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to him, “King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. <sup>17</sup> 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. <sup>18</sup> 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.”*

When you are battle ready you can say these three things:

1. *“I know my God is able to deliver me.”*
2. *“I believe that my God will deliver me.”*
3. And **YET**, you have the submission to say, ***“But even if he does not, I will still trust, worship, and serve him.”***

How do we get to that kind of battle readiness?

- **MAGNIFY the scenarios**
  - Magnify the **best case scenario** for remaining faithful.
    - *“God will deliver us”*
  - Magnify the **worst case scenarios (if you OBEY)**
    - *“Even if he does not”, . . . (we will not cross the line)*

- Magnify the **worst case scenarios (of disobedience)**  
**They know their scriptures!**

*Numbers 32:23 (NIV) . . . you may be sure that your sin will find you out.*

**VVCC is all about helping you take steps from wherever you are to where God wants you to be.**

**Do you know the quickest way from wherever you are to where GOD DOES NOT want you to be?**

Step out of bounds! **Would you like to know a really good way to stay inbounds?** Put more distance between you and the line of temptation.

How do you put distance between you and temptation?

**Re-orient yourself.** Turn your face to the center instead of the tempting edge. Reorient your heart.

If you ever find yourself standing at the brink of stepping out-of-bounds it means you are standing too close to temptation. I want to show you what it takes to ...

- **DRAW the line**

**God makes very clear what are the Solid out of bounds lines.** If we want to follow God, the right choice is always to draw the line that honors God!

I'd like to add another concept (not included in Daniel 3).

Draw the **“wrong for me” dotted line.** “Wrong for me” dotted lines create greater distance between us and our own particular temptations.

**I have many “wrong for me” dotted lines in place. Why? Kingdom work is a battle. I know I lose if I take myself too close to the line.**

**When I stay on my side of the “wrong for me” dotted line, I’m no longer tempted!**

Why be tempted when you can eliminate the temptation!!

## Are you battle ready?

- Pre-decide to be faithful
- Pre-solve your pressure-points
- ASK others to PRAY
- Experience God for yourself
- Magnify the scenarios
- DRAW the line. Train and be strict with yourself, for God's sake and yours.

Talk It Over

RESOLVED

Part 1- I am Ready

## SMALL TALK

1. What works for you to put distance between you and temptation?

## VIEWPOINT

2. **Read Ephesians 6:11-13.** Why do we need to be battle ready?
3. How did Daniel and his friends become battle ready (review message notes)? Which part of this message was most impactful for you and why?
4. What was Daniel's and his friends' part in strengthening their resolve? What part did God play in strengthening their resolve? Hint: How did **Daniel 2** ("Round 2") prepare Daniel's friends for **Daniel chapter 3** ("Round 3") and how did God direct that resolve strengthening episode?

## GETTING PERSONAL

5. If it's true that battles are won by people who are battle ready, can you think of a battle you have won and how God helped you get ready for it?
6. What experiences has God used to strengthen your resolve? What part did you play in that? What did God do that helped grow your faith and faithfulness?

## **MAKING PROGRESS (THIS WEEK)**

7. Which battle readiness strategy to put distance between you and temptation will you work on this week?