**“Living at the Crossroads”**

*Daniel 1*

In 605 BC the Babylonian army under king Nebuchadnezzar marched west to conquer the world, which included the nation of Israel. Daniel and his friends, only teenagers, were torn from their land and taken to the capital city of Babylon as captives. Uprooted from their familiar home and religious setting and immersed in an alien culture, these young people were immediately faced with what it meant to live faithfully in a setting that was unsympathetic and even antagonistic to their faith. Daniel 1 tells us both the pressures they faced and how at least four of them responded to those pressures.

**Opening Question**

Recall your first days at college, camp or some other significant away-from-home time in your life as a teenager. What was it like? What were you thinking and feeling?

**Questions**

1. How were these young Israelites chosen and trained for the king’s special service (vv.3-7)? What specific tactics were used to give these young Jews a new Babylonian orientation (vv. 3-7)?
2. Daniel didn’t refuse to study courses that would have been forbidden back home (e.g. astrology, magic—Dt. 1810-12), so why do you think Daniel refused the cafeteria food at his new school/college (v.8; cf. Ezekiel 413-14)?
3. Religious reasons b) physical reasons c) cultural reasons d) he was a picky eater
4. Do you think he was making a big issue out of a minor problem? Explain.
5. What steps did Daniel take to provide a creative alternative to the king's plan (vv. 11-14)?
6. What impressed the king most about Daniel and his three friends (v.19)? What impresses you the most about them?
7. What might be some equivalent choices between God’s way and the “royal food” of the world today for:
8. Kids going to school?
9. Young people going to university?
10. People in religiously mixed marriages or families?
11. You at your place of work?
12. How can this groups pray for challenges facing our kids? Our young people? You?