

An Issue Always Worth Confronting!

Daniel 4:4-27



When you think of “confrontation,” there’s probably not a whole lot of good associations we make with that word. Maybe that’s why we avoid it like a hot stove (while most people are drawn to it like a moth to a flame, only to get burnt!). Nevertheless, sometimes we cannot avoid confrontation, and the key seems to be to ask the question: Is the issue involved valuable enough to warrant a confrontation? Living in a pagan culture where worship of false “gods” was a given and where rulers demanded unconditional obedience, Daniel

confronts idolatry. So should we – in our own lives first, then those cultural idolatries that threaten to destroy people groups, nations, and the world.

There’s several themes (found all through the Bible) woven together in the fabric of **Daniel 4**.

- **There’s the Theme of REVELATION and RESPONSE.** The Bible is a record where God reveals Himself AND His Will, people respond to that revelation. In a dream, God REVEALS something to King Neb. Also, through DANIEL, God reveals His MORAL WILL for even those who do not believe in God as he is actually revealed in the Bible.
- **There’s the Theme of IDOLATRY.** Some have said, and can affirm, that the entire story of the Bible can be seen as a struggle between true Faith and idolatry. Chronologically, the last command in the Bible is in **1st John 5:21**, “Dear children (speaking not as a superior but as a fellow loving family member), **keep yourselves from idols.**”
- **There’s the Theme of The Lord God’s RULERSHIP.** His sovereign ruler over all people, all over the world. The main thrust of Daniel Chapter 4 is about God making it clear: Rulers ruler ONLY b/c God allows them to rule. And when God wants to put an end to a human ruler, He can & He does & He will.

**** When you CONFRONT people (yourself and others – the major thrust of the chapter) about IDOLATRY, you are giving them (yourself and others) a HUGE GIFT! **** (& a huge pain in the neck)

1. What are the elements of GOOD / BIBLICAL confrontation?

- **Good confrontation includes an element of COMPASSION.** A word about our *disposition* . . . His compassion is clear in **Vs 19**. Daniel’s fear of God’s judgment coming on the King is OBVIOUS here! Daniel takes no pleasure

in telling the King of what's going to happen to Him. In fact, there's a servant-driven sadness the cringes to "tell it true & straight" to the King. If you don't CARE, don't CONFRONT! [Father w/daughter @ FPC . . .] You need to CARE enough to CONFRONT!

- **Good confrontation includes an element of CANDOUR.** This is clear in **Vv 20-26**. A word about *sentiment & obedience* . . . A God-given obedience is what drives us to tell it like it is to those we care about. Sentiment and obedience CAN live together in a Believer. Just as a loving parent would also be a protective parent telling the children to not stick bobby pins in electrical outlets, touch a hot stove, or throw a football on Lakeland Drive. We OBEY God when He tells us to confront others about their disobedience and idolatry, but it's also out of LOVE both for God AND for others that we confront others!
- **Good confrontation includes an element of COUNSEL.** We see this in **Vs 27**. A word about *balance* . . . When you confront, you the "confronter" are doing the "confrontee" no good at all IF you just stop @ telling them what is WRONG with what they are doing! [When I coached; when I teach guitar]. Confrontation minus counsel is just badgering, bullying, and bludgeoning someone. Counsel gives people HOPE. It introduces them to the concept of repentance = changing their minds and their actions (life direction). Don't confront / criticize unless you also present a positive plan of action. That's the pattern of BIBLICAL confrontation, "put off / put on" . . .

[Eg of all 3 . . . Doug Mallow and me . . . / give thanx to Pastors & Xn workers and all who care enough to confront!]]

2. What is the CORE SIN we must ALWAYS confront?

(in ourselves & others)

- **The SIN behind and under every violation of the Ten Commandments is: IDOLATRY,** it's FIRST a violation of the 1st Two Commandments! Under every behavioral sin is the sin of Idolatry.
(how this works out . . .)
- **Behind every LAW is a LAWGIVER.** The ultimate absolute Lawgiver is GOD. Whatever contradicts God's commands does not have GOD as it's source, but an IDOL. (how this works out . . . the king gave every indication in his life, formally and practically, of being an idolator . . .) Obey the GOVERNMENT, bow to ME, keep MY laws = sets up a conflict.

- **Idolatry is taking ANYTHING besides God and making it the ULTIMATE thing in our lives. Idolatry is taking a GOOD thing and making it a GOD thing so that it then becomes a BAD thing!** It happens when ANYTHING becomes ULTIMATE, a driving force in your life. Matthew Henry, “Pride makes a god of self, covetousness make a god of money, sensuality makes a god of the belly (passions); whatever is esteemed or loved, feared or served, delighted in or depended upon, more than God, that (whatever it is) is in effect what we make a god of.”
- There’s basically 4 root idols that drive OUR behaviors (behind and under every sin, remember, is the sin of idolatry). And at least 9 categories we need to be aware of. AND confront in our own life 1st, but also in the lives of others.

HERE ARE 4 ROOT IDOLS THAT DRIVE OUR BEHAVIOR (look for RECURRING THEMES & combinations)

1. **POWER**: a longing for influence or recognition / success. *If POWER (success, winning, influence) is my idol, my greatest nightmare is HUMILIATION (incompetence), people around me feel USED (only as important as you are to ME), and my problem emotion is ANGER. [“When YOU look bad, I look bad . . . “]*
2. **CONTROL**: a longing to have everything go according to my plan. *If I CONTROL (self-discipline, certainty, standards) is my idol, my greatest nightmare is UNCERTAINTY [don’t like to NOT be “in the know” or be able to engineer outcomes], people around me feel JUDGED / CONDEMNED [dumb b/c I don’t meet their standards], and my problem emotion is WORRY. = b/c there are come things you can’t control!*
3. **COMFORT**: a longing for pleasure. *If my idol is COMFORT, (privacy, lack of stress, freedom, feeling good about myself & my life choices), my greatest nightmare is STRESS / DEMANDS, people around me feel NEGLECTED [b/c if you’re in the way of my feeling good about myself, YOU are the problem / toxic / poison & I WILL avoid you], and my problem emotion is STRESS.*
4. **APPROVAL**: a longing to be accepted or desired [by some people group [even an “online community” or by a significant other]. *If I seek APPROVAL (affirmation, love, relationships), my greatest nightmare is REJECTON, people around me feel SMOTHERED, and my problem emotion is FEAR (of what people think)/ COWARDICE.*

The NW RANKIN situation . . .

In the Notes section of *Counterfeit Gods*, There's a helpful list of idol categories:

- **Theological idols** – Doctrinal errors that produce such distorted views of God that we end up worshipping a false god.
- **Sexual idols** – Addictions such as pornography and fetishisms that promise but don't deliver a sense of intimacy and acceptance; ideals of physical beauty in yourself and/or your partner; romantic idealism.
- **Magic/ritual idols** – Witchcraft and the occult. All idolatry is in the end a form of magic that seeks to rebel against the order of transcendent reality rather than submitting to it in love and wisdom.
- **Political/economic idols** – Ideologies of the left, right, and libertarian that absolutize some aspect of political order and make it the solution. Deifying or demonizing free markets, for example.
- **Racial/national idols** – Racism, militarism, nationalism, or ethnic pride that turns bitter or oppressive.
- **Relational idols** – Dysfunctional family systems of codependency; "fatal attraction"; living your life through your children.
- **Religious idols** – Moralism and legalism; idolatry of success and gifts; religion as a pretext for abuse of power.
- **Philosophical idols** – Systems of thought that make some created thing the problem with life (instead of sin) and some human product or enterprise the solution to our problems (instead of God's grace).
- **Cultural idols** – Radical individualism, as in the West, that makes an idol out of individual happiness at the expense of community; shame cultures that make an idol out of family and clan at the expense of individual rights.