

# Living By GOD's Standard In An Ungodly World

**: They would not bend, they would not bow and they would not burn**

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Scripture Ref: Daniel Chapters 1, 3 & 6

## Introduction

### City Cat

A city cat was looking for dinner last night. It suddenly spotted a mouse. It was also looking for its dinner. The cat froze and slowly crawled towards the mouse. When it looked like the right distance, the cat ran to pounce on the mouse. In lightning speed, the mouse quickly retreated into the nearest manhold.

The mouse felt safe underneath in the manhold even though the cat was meowing angrily above. Suddenly there was silence and the little mouse heard the pounding of paws, the sound of the pounding grew fainter and fainter. The mouse thought: "Cat ran away". Then the mouse heard the barking of a dog. The barking grew nearer and nearer. The little mouse concluded: "Oh, cat ran away because dog chasing cat".

When everything was quiet again the little mouse felt the coast was clear. Slowly, bit by bit, the little mouse stick out its little head out to make sure the coast was indeed clear. Just as it sticked out its head was high enough out of the manhold, it suddenly felt a powerful slap and it flew out of the manhold. It landed on the roadside dazed. The little mouse found itself between the paws of that city cat.

As the cat lifted up the poor little mouse between its paws, the cat said to the little mouse: Little mouse, you know, living in the city is hard. You've got to be bi-lingual".

- Moral of the story: sometimes to achieve your goals in life, you've got to compromise. Is that right?
- As the title of this topic suggests some of us work in an environment whereby our Christian principle & values are challenged. How should we respond to these challenges?

(i) Corporate World

- You may be working in a corporate world (or even smaller workplace) where "politicking" is prevalent. I know there is a saying in a MNC Bank: "Your worst enemy is your colleague." You don't know who may back-stab you. Your colleague may be nice to you face to face but behind you, the things he / she says about you is not so nice.
- The unwritten motto seems to be: The only way to climb the corporate ladder is to climb on top of your colleague's head. Do all these sound familiar? Welcome to the corporate world.
- In the corporate world, doing the work is the easier part, managing people that's the tough part.

(ii) Business World

- Perhaps you're a Christian businessman. You may face even greater challenges. This particularly so if you're doing business in countries where corruption is rampant. Just step out of Singapore, you'll see corruption in almost all our neighboring countries (in varying degrees).
- If you don't give bribes to the government officials you won't get your licence or contract.
- How do you, as a Christian businessman, deal with corruption? It's not easy. Can we compromise a little bit? Everybody is doing it. Otherwise, how to survive? Surely God understands.

### (iii) Professional World

- Professionals are not spared either.
  - recently we're seeing doctors' practicing licences are suspended for over-charging and performing procedures which they're not qualified.
  - we read in newspapers frequently of lawyers stealing clients' money, paying commission to property agents for passing clients to them, lawyers paying car workshops for introducing clients to claim damages for car repairs ("ambulance chasers"). All these practices are illegal.
- I'll share with you my 12 years of experience as a practicing lawyer in Malaysia where my Christian principles and values were challenged every day.

### Who need this message?

- I believe this morning's message is relevant to every working person. It does not matter what work you do, where you're working & how long you've been working.
- You may be a school teacher, a civil servant, or a nurse in a hospital. You may be a banker, or such other corporate executives in a corporate. You may be a professional such as a doctor, lawyer, engineer, accountant, architect etc.
- Whoever you are, this message may be relevant to you.

### How to live a Godly life in an ungodly World?

- How can we live by God's standard in an ungodly world? Today, especially in a competitive society like Singapore, we strive hard to do well in our career or in our business (nothing wrong with that).
- What becomes wrong is when we try to achieve that by unjust, unethical, illegal and ungodly means which you know God would not approve.

- Or should we just entrust our work or business to God. Do our best and leave the result to him?
- So it's faith vs. want. It's not easy. No one says it's easy. It's never easy. But it's the right thing to do.

Where should we get our inspiration from?

- I suggest we draw inspiration from the book of Daniel. Daniel and his 3 friends faced extreme challenges in the environment they were working in.
- How did they manage not only to survive without compromising but also got promoted in the king's court even though their lives were threatened.

## **(1) Daniel & His Friends in King's Palace (Daniel 1)**

### (1) Enrolling into Royal Academy

- When the Babylonians under the King Nebuchadnezzar overran Judah and Jerusalem in 586 BC, the Israelites were deported to Babylon.
- It was during this time (605 BC) that Daniel and his 3 friends were deported to Babylon. They found themselves working in the palace of King Nebuchadnezzar.
- Daniel and his friends were chosen to enter the King's royal service because of their good looks and talent.
- To qualify as the King's royal assistants, they had to go through a 3 years academic study in Chaldean language and literature and possibly in mathematics, astronomy, history, science and magic.
- These royal scholars must not only have good brains they must also look good. So they were fed with the King's choice food and wine.

- Before Daniel and his 3 friends could enroll into the royal university, they must first adopt heathen names assigned to them by the king himself.

### Hebrew Names to Heathen Names

- (i) "Daniel" (which means "God is my judge") was changed to
  - "Beltshazzar" ("Bel = chief of Babylonian god. Beltshazzar means "Chief of Babylonian god protects my life")
- (ii) "Hananiah" (which means "the Lord shows grace") was changed to
  - "Shadrach" (which means under the command of Aku, Moon God)
- (iii) "Mishael" (which means "who is like god") became
  - "Meshach" (which means who is like Aku, Moon God, i.e. making him a "Moonie")
- (iv) "Azariah" (which means "the Lord helps") became "Abednego"
  - (which means "Servant of Nego – the God of Learning")

- What's in a name? We shall see.

### (2) Why did the King change their name?

- It was to "Babylonise" these Jews who would be the elite members of the King's palace ("crème de la crème")
- So they were expected to abandon their Jewish heritage, their religion and their God. Instead they were supposed to become like Babylonians, adopt Babylonian culture and religion (and their gods)
- Did Daniel and his 3 friends compromise by agreeing to adopt these heathen names which had religious connotations?
- If they refuse to adopt these heathen names given by the king they may be executed.

- Perhaps Daniel figured that he was better-off in serving God alive than dead.
- & commit his life to God & let God use him where God has put him
- For the record, Daniel went on to serve 4 Kings (2 Babylonian kings & 2 Persian Kings).
- Imagine the influence God used him to exert on these Super-powers at that time.

### (3) Daniel's resolution Not To Compromise

"But Daniel made up his mind (resolved) that he would not defile himself with the King's choice of food or wine" (Daniel 1:8).

- Why didn't Daniel want to eat the King's food? Best food.
  - Perhaps they contain meat forbidden under Jewish dietary laws.
- So what did he do?
- He sought permission from the commander in charge (for himself and his 3 friends) to be excused from eating the King's food.
- The commander must have flipped & said "What? Are you crazy? Do you want my head chopped off? (Dan 1:10)
- Daniel then negotiated with the commander. He said "Ok, ok just give us vegetables and water. Let's try out for 10 days. You see whether we look better or worse". (Dan 1:12-13)
- Because "God granted Daniel favor and compassion in the commander", (Dan 1:9), the commander agreed.
- At the end of 10 days, their appearance was better and healthier. In other words, they looked even more handsome and healthier than those who ate the King's food. So you guys out, here's the secret. If you want to look more handsome and healthy, be a vegetarian! But, no char kuey tiao.

- Meanwhile, God gave Daniel and his 3 friends special knowledge in literature, science, vision and dreams (so they had a degree in “Dreamnology” which will prove to be very useful in Daniel’s career)
- At the end of 3 years studies, the king interviewed all the candidates. He found Daniel and his 3 friends 10 times better than all the magicians in the entire kingdom (Dan 1:19). So these 4 Jewish lads scored “A1s” in all their exam papers.

### Summary

What can we learn from this short passage in Daniel Chapter 1.

- (i) Daniel and his 3 friends decided from Day 1, they would not compromise in honouring and obeying God by defiling themselves.
  - This would prepare them for the trials they were going to face later.
- (ii) They were prepared to accept the name change but it didn’t change their values inside.
  - You can change me outside but not what’s inside. So what’s in a name?
- (iii) They did not abandon their values & principles because of the new environment in their workplace.
  - They did not adopt the philosophy: “When in Rome, do as the Romans do”

### Lesson:

- They would not compromise. In other words, they would not **\*bend**.
- One key lesson I learn from Daniel Chapter 1: Don’t lose your Christian values and principles in our workplace.

- If you're an employee. Conduct yourself as a Christian employee. If you're the boss, conduct yourself as a Xian boss.
- If you're a businessman, be a Christian business. Don't participate in corruption.
- If you are a professional, be a Christian professional, don't indulge in unethical or illegal practices.

- **Don't be like chameleon. Don't let your environment change you and your values.**

### My 12 Years' Experience As A Christian Lawyer In Kuantan

- When I started my practice many years ago in Kuantan (as a poor young lawyer), I decided on Day 1 that I would depend on God for my practice and not to dishonor God by earning through unethical or illegal practices (which was & still rampant in Malaysia).
- I decided on Day 1 that I've no desire to be a rich lawyer. I entrusted my law practice to Him, knowing that God will be my provider. He did. He provided all my needs.
- So when I closed a file, I refunded / every single cent in my client's a/c to the client. I also refunded all interests earned from any fix deposits put in the bank to my clients relating to property transactions. Most, if not all, lawyers don't do that because the law says you only need to refund if the client asks. But how can the client ask unless he knows he has such right. No lawyer would advise his / her rights. Except this lawyer. So I did not become a rich lawyer.
- Through the years of practice, I was able to get into the panel of several banks. For conveyancing / property lawyers this is a "gold mine" ("rice bowl"). Lawyers become rich by getting into the bank lawyer's panel because this is where you get on-going work from the bank.
- But bank managers don't give you business out of the goodness of their hearts. They want "kick-back". Eg, for a RM 200,000 loan,



the legal fees may be RM 2,000. The bank manager may want 20% (i.e. RM400) or more. Most lawyers agree. Of course the more bribes you give, the more work you get.

- That's why bank branch managers in town were "kings" – rich and powerful. 3<sup>rd</sup> most powerful people in town (below Sultan & Mentri Besar)
- To keep the bank managers happy, you've to entertain them not just with lunches & dinners in the best restaurants in town. In an extreme case (that I know), taking the bank manager to Thailand for sex.
- Every festive season (e.g. Chinese New Year, Hari Raya etc) we're supposed to give them "ang pows" (i.e. money).
- My practice was to buy a hamper and give it to the bank. One day I had a call from one bank manager who was unhappy with my hamper. He said he had enough hampers to fill his whole house. He went on and on.
- The long and short conversation was: Take your hamper back and just give me cash. In other words, bribes.
- I didn't. Within a month I was removed from this bank's panel lawyers.
- How can I, a Christian Leader of my church, participate in such corruption? My church members respected me, they looked up to me. How could I preach the Word and do something which totally contradicts God's teaching? I couldn't.
- Because I did not bribe bank manager throughout my 12 years of practice in Kuantan, I was removed from the bank's panel of lawyers – one by one. My "rice bowl" was broken but the lord provided me other work.
- I understand the price we have to pay in honouring God in our business dealings & even in our career.
- In the end I was left with almost no bank panel. I decided, if I can't beat them ( I don't join them) I quit: That was when the Lord called me to leave Malaysia to study for my Masters in Law in London.

- God then brought my family & I back to Singapore where I can practice without paying bribes.
- the banks pay me (for my services), I don't pay them

### Blessings in Obeying God

- Just to share a word of encouragement.
- It does not mean when you obey God, you lose out.
- Yes, you may lose some business (maybe that business not meant for you), but God (in my experience) has His wonderful ways of more than compensating you in other ways, if you obey and honour him.
- God may also bless you and your family in other ways in a non-material way years later.
- I'll share how God blessed us at the end of this sermon.

## **(2) Fiery Trial of Daniel's 3 Friends: They Would Not Bow & They would not Burn. (Chapter 3)**

### Background: (Daniel Chapter 3)

- We saw in Daniel Chapter 1, Daniel and his 3 friends would not compromise in defiling themselves by eating the King's food.
- In Chapter 2, Daniel successfully (with God's help) interpreted King Nebuchadnezzar's dream (when all the king's magicians failed to do so).
  - He was promoted to be the governor of the entire province of Babylon.
  - He appointed his 3 friends to be his assistants, taking charge of the administration over the province of Babylon.
- In Chapter 3, the King decided to build a golden statue. All the government officials were commanded to assemble and bow to worship King Nebuchadnezzar's golden statue.

- Whoever did not bow down to worship the golden statue would be burnt alive in a furnace of fire (used for baking bricks).
- It so happened during this particular time, Daniel was away on official duty as the governor.

### They Would Not Bow & They Would Not Burn

- Some of the astrologers (probably out of jealousy) reported to the King that certain Jews, (namely Daniel's 3 friends), refused to bow and worship the King's golden statue despite the King's decree.

#### (i) 3 Friends Summoned to King's Court

- King Nebuchadnezzar flew into a rage and ordered Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego to be brought before the King.
- This was (roughly) how it went: (Daniel 3: 14-18)

- "Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, is it true that you 3 fellas refused to bow down and worship my golden statue?" No answer.

- "Ok, I'll give you one more chance. If you bow down and worship my golden statue then all will be well. However if you refuse I'll throw you 3 into a blazing furnace. What god will be able to rescue you?" King issuing challenge.

- 3 friends' reply to the King

- "O Nebuchadnezzar (didn't even addressed him as "King") we don't really need to give you an answer ("we don't need to defend ourselves") Note: The defiance

- "If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God whom we serve is able to save us. He will rescue us...."

- "Even if he doesn't, O King, we will never serve your gods or worship the golden statue"

Note: The confidence they have in God

- Wow! How can you talk to a King like that?

(ii) 3 Friends in Fiery Furnace (Trial)

- The King got so angry & ordered Daniel's 3 friends to be thrown into the blazing furnace (temperature heated 7 times hotter than usual)
- The fire was so hot that the soldiers who threw Daniel's 3 friends into the fiery furnace were killed instantly
  - but Daniel's 3 friends were unscathed.
- What was even more amazing. King Nebuchadnezzar saw there were 4 men in the fiery furnace.
- He asked his advisers; "Didn't we throw 3 men into fiery furnace How come I now see 4 men? The 4<sup>th</sup> man looks like a divine being ("son of the god"). (v.25)

- Lesson: If you are obedient to God, when you go through trials (whatever trials), God is with you. Isn't that comforting?

- He commanded Daniel's 3 friends to step out of the fiery furnace. The King found that their hair were unburnt, their clothing unburnt and there was not even any burning smell. (v.27)

(iii) Aftermath of the Trial

- The King praised the God of Daniel's 3 friends because their God had sent his angel to rescue them. (v.28)
- The King issued a decree that anyone who spoke against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego will be put to death and their houses destroyed.
- The King then promoted these 3 Jewish friends to even higher positions in the province of Babylon.

### Summary

- So Daniel's 3 friends refused to bow to worship the King's statue;
  - even though they were faced with the ultimate punishment – death penalty by burning.
- Because they honoured God, God honoured their obedience by saving them from the fiery furnace.
- Because they did not bow, they did not burn.

### Lesson

- (i) God will honour those who honour him.
  - Daniel's 3 friends were promoted because they honoured God.
- (ii) God is with us when we go through even our most difficult trials.

## **(3) Daniel's Trial: Thrown Into Lion's Den (Daniel 6)**

### Background

- We've seen the trial of Daniel's 3 friends, Now it was Daniel's turn to face his trial.
- This happened after the Babylonia Kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar was overthrown by the Persian Empire under King Darius.
- Daniel ended serving in King Darius' court (he served 4 kings: 2 Babylonia Kings & 2 Persian Kings)

### Jealously & Politicking In King's Court

- King Darius divided his kingdom into 120 provinces and he appointed a prince to rule over each province. The King had appointed Daniel & 2 others to be the commissioners (or administrators) over the 120 princes.
- The King like Daniel very much because of his extraordinary spirit ("great ability"), he was more capable than all the rest

(commissioners & princes); he put him in charge over the King's entire empire.

- This meant Daniel was above all of them & they had to report to him. They, obviously, didn't like that.
- The “green-eye” monster reared its ugly head (jealously)

- What do some colleagues do when another colleague is suddenly promoted above him/them?
  - he and his colleagues start to gang up together to plot his downfall.
  - he'll start to find fault with him, his work, his character, his morality & whatever else they can find.

That was exactly what Daniel's enemies did.

- They started to “politic” in King's court
- So they formed a “committee” and they came up with this long “check-list” which Daniel may be accused of:

Check list (Dan 6:4)

- (i) Daniel's integrity: Has he been taking bribes or took part in any form of corruption? [Yes] [No].
  - Sorry to tick “No” box – he was clean as a whistle
- (ii) Daniel's Work: Has he been neglecting his work? [Yes] [No]
  - Again, they have to tick the “No” box: he was never negligent. Very Hardworking
- (iii) Daniel's morality: Did he engage in extra-marital affairs? [Yes][No]
  - He's not even married. Anyway this guy is a workaholic & he's boring. He's either working or praying. This guy has no life, man.

- Then one of them said: “Did you say Daniel spends a lot of time praying? Hey, guys, can’t you see? This is where we can fix him. He has a ‘weakness’ after all.”
- “How do you mean?” “We’ll get the king to pass a law that prohibits everyone from praying for a certain period of time.”
- We’ll make sure that this law will contain a “penalty” clause which provides that anyone caught violating this law will be sentenced to death by throwing him into the lion’s den.
- Quite simple really. In this way, we’ll get rid of Daniel permanently.

### King’s 30 Days “No – Prayer” Law

- So Daniel’s enemies formed a delegation to meet the King. They convinced the king to issue such a (silly) “30 days No-Prayer” law
- When Daniel heard that such a law had been passed. He went home and did what he had been doing all the time
  - It was prayer as usual
- He knelt down in his upper room, with windows open towards Jerusalem and prayed to his God
  - he would do this, as usual, 3 times a day.
- Now with the law coming into effect, not surprisingly his enemies caught him praying to his God during this 30 days period
  - so they reported this to the king.
- When the king heard this, he was not angry with Daniel but angry with himself.
  - he shouldn’t have signed such a stupid law.
  - he tried to find ways to save Daniel (because he loved Daniel) but could not find a way out.
  - this law signed by him was irrevocable. So he felt trapped.
- The king said to Daniel “May your God save you”.

- Reluctantly the king ordered Daniel to be thrown into the lion's den
- That night the king couldn't eat and couldn't sleep (no entertainment)

### Why couldn't Daniel Compromised?

- If you were Daniel, what would you have done?
  - (i) The king had passed a 30 days no-prayer law.
    - 1stly, if I were Daniel, 30 days don't pray lor.
      - Surely God understands. It's the law!
    - After that can pray forever
  - (ii) 2ndly, if I were Daniel, I would pray with my windows shut (just for 30 days)
    - What's the difference – windows open or shut? Can still face Jerusalem (whether windows open or shut)
  - (iii) 3rdly, I will not pray 3 times a day. Too risky.
    - Just pray one time at night will do (when everyone is sleeping).
    - After all the Bible never says must pray 3 times a day
- For the record, Daniel did not entertain such thoughts.

### Daniel in Lion's Den

- Daniel refused to compromise and continue to pray to his God as before – even though it violated the king's law.
- So Daniel was thrown into the den of hungry lions.
- A strange thing happened:
  - that night the lions in the den suffered a jaw problem: locked jaw.
  - the lions could not open their mouths, they were shut.



- the lions lost their appetite and decided to skip dinner that night.
- so Daniel spent the night sleeping with the lions.

### Aftermath of Daniel's Trial

- Very early the next morning before the break of dawn, the king went to the lion's den to see whether there was anything left of Daniel
- King shouted: "Daniel, did your god save you?"
- Daniel replied: "O king live forever, my God send his angel to shut the lion's mouths so they would not hurt me" (Dan. 6:22).
- The king was overjoyed that Daniel was totally unharmed because he had trusted his God to save him.
- The king then ordered Daniel's enemies, their wives and their children thrown into the lion's den instead.
- Daniel prospered during the reign of King Darius and King Cyrus. (Dan 6:28)

### Summary / Lesson

- Like his 3 friends, Daniel did not compromise.
  - he did not choose the easy option (just don't pray for 30 days)
- Because he honoured God, God honoured him & prospered him.
- Q: Are we prepared to entrust our work or business to God?
  - see how God will honour us without compromise?

## **Closing**

- In all these 3 episodes in Daniel chapters 1, 3 & 6 there is one consistent theme: no compromise.
- You saw at the end of both Daniel's trial and his 3 friends' trial
  - because they honoured God, God honoured them.
  - They were all blessed. They got promoted.
- In closing, allow me to share with you how God blessed me and my family

### God's Blessing In My Ministry & In Our Lives

#### **(1) God's Blessings In My Ministry**

##### **(i) Strong body – life church**

- As I explained earlier, I was a leader of my church in Kuantan. My church was not a big church (like most East Coast churches). But we were a vibrant church under our Pastor Hugh Smith.
- Our church body-life was very strong. We spent a lot of time together after work in church especially on weekends.
  - playing table-tennis in church (I was good & they respected me)
- When we were not playing games or doing other things in church, they would gather in my house – almost every night!
  - So every night was an “open-house”. They don't need appointment. They just turn up in our home.
- Privacy? What Privacy? They never heard of that word! But I didn't mind.
- Church members who had problems would just turn up in my home for counseling at night.
  - a women with black-eye turn up in my home. She has been beaten by her husband.

- another lady who was having some problem with her husband turned up in my house
- a dog owner whose German shepherd ("Toro") died, he turned up in my home to ask me to ask God to resurrect his dog (I did as he asked) but God didn't resurrect the dog.
- a girl called my home one evening to talk to a pastor before committing suicide (I managed to save her by introducing her to Christ)
- I remember bringing one young brilliant accountant to Christ in my home (now Chief Auditor in top Malaysian bank)
- We had weekly bible studies in my home with young adults.
- The rest of the nights were spent just talking all sorts of "rubbish" just fun stuff.
- Whatever we were doing, the nights never end without sending one of the boys to buy supper for everyone!
- We had such a great time.
- Some of these boys were tough guys, we called them ("The Hardy Boy") after the TV series. One of them was killed in Sydney.
- But I would rather see this bunch of restless naughty boys spending time in the Church Chairman's home – than roaming around doing bad things.

**(ii) Chee Seng**

- There was one of them I want to mention particularly. His name is Chee Seng.
- He would come riding in his motorbike into my home, hang around, and then leave without saying anything.
- like he was in his grandfather's house!
- Many years later I met him in KL (he had married with a beautiful wife, had a MBA)

- he shared with me this incredible sharing. He said:
- “Bro Sin Liang (that’s how they addressed me); do you remember the times I used to go to your home?”
- I said: “Of course, you come in & go out in your motorbike like your grandfather’s house” (joking)
- Chee Seng said: Do you know that those times I spent in your home was the most meaningful time in my life!”
- Wow! You could have knocked me off my chair with a feather!
- Through the years, after we all left Kuantan, I met many of them. They all said the same thing.
- “Those years I spent in Kuantan, in Kuantan Baptist Church was the most meaningful time of my life!”
- As I look back, I can’t help but to feel what we did in Kuantan was something “magical”
- “magical” because God was with us.

**(ii) Investing in peoples’ lives**

- As I look back those years we spent in Kuantan
- They were the most fruitful years of my life.
- If I have to do it again. I would
- Whilst others were busy investing their time, money and efforts in making money
- I now realize what Ethel & I were doing in Kuantan we were busy investing in peoples’ lives.
- And all this time, we were doing this
- we had little knowledge but we had so much passion
- today in Singapore I see in churches – having so much knowledge but little passion.
- What is happening in our churches today?

## (ii) God's Blessing in Our Careers

- The 12 years that Ethel and I spent in Kuantan, our career took a back seat.
  - I spent a lot of my time looking after the church (eg when Hugh Smith went back to US)

### Ethel

- Ethel left Coppers & Lybrands in Singapore to join a small Malaysian accountancy firm with a small pay.
- But God has been good to Ethel in her career
  - God found her a job in London with a MNC (Matchbox Toys) within a short time as a European Auditor.
  - Interestingly she even got the job: her name (Chinese name) was already on rejected list. Her boss (Chinese) came from Hong Kong, asked to see the rejected list & found this name "Ethel Tan". She was called up for interview and offered the job on the spot.
  - When she came back from London, God gave her a job in DBSLAND (because of her European experience), later Temasek Holdings & then SIA
  - she was never unemployed all these years.

### Myself

- As for me, because I studied International Financial Law, when I came to Singapore, I was offered the job as in-house legal counsel in DBS Bank (within a few months, Head of Legal Department).
- From there I specialized in areas of laws such as banking, derivatives, compliance laws (e.g. anti-money laundering) etc.
- To put in a nutshell – we both never lost out in our careers despite the 12 years we spent in Kuantan.
- as far as we are concerned, God has fulfilled his promise to us in Joel 2:25

"The lord says, "I will make up to you for the years that the swarming locust has eaten." (Joel 2:25)

### (iii) God's Protection: Our Health & Safety

#### (a) God's Protection Over Our Health

- 5 years ago, I had a double by-pass operation for my heart, Ethel was diagnosed with breast cancer

#### Myself

- God was merciful to me
  - my angiogram revealed that my left arteries were severely blocked & I could have suffered a "massive heart attack" (ie can die).
  - but I never had a heart attack nor even any symptom of heart problem.
- My cardiologist gave this amazing explanation:
  - he said: "Your heart performed a miracle. It performed a natural 'by-pass on its own'".
  - Your left arteries were blocked, a small artery grew from the right-side to supply enough blood to the heart. (so no symptoms or heart attack)
  - but this is a small right artery may not last long.
- Immediately I realized that God had intervened to preserve my life.
- Perhaps God is telling me it's not time for me to go. Still got work to do.

#### Ethel

- Ethel's cancer was discovered early (after an earlier mis - diagnosis by her previous hospital)
- Because it was Stage 1, she did not have to go through chemotherapy. Today she's perfectly fine.

**(b) God's Protection Over My Life**

- Years ago when I was practicing in Kuantan, Baptist Pastor sought my help over a Malay girl who had become a Christian & attending his church.
- To prevent the church and this girl from getting into trouble with the religious authorities
  - I helped her to legally change her name and her religion in her I/C with the I/C Department.
- Since I was the only Christian lawyer in town, another pastor also asked to help some of his church members who were converted to Muslims.
- Unknown to me, the authorities were keeping a close eye on me.
- When the time came to commence my Masters programme, I flew to London.
- 1 month after I landed in London to study, the Malaysian government under Dr. Mahathir launched "Operation Lallang" to arrest his political opponents
  - Christian pastors and people like me were also conveniently targeted (although what I did was perfectly legal).
  - I understand they were looking for me but they could not arrest me because I was in London
- I can see God's hand in my life all these years
  - how he prompted me to leave Malaysia (through a series of dreams)
  - how he brought me back.

## **Concluding Remarks**

- From my experience, I know when we honour God in what we do in our lives, God will honour us.
- It does not mean, you'll not face challenges.
- Ethel & I still have a huge problem with our younger son, Adrian (I covet your prayers).
- I hope I've not given you any impression that we're such successful people
  - our lives have never been about success
  - thanks to God, our lives have been fruitful