

DISCUSSION NOTES

FEBRUARY 10, 2019

Start by praying and asking for God's help as you seek to grow as authentic followers of Jesus.

GETTING STARTED

1. What are some ways that you feel pressure to conform to cultural ideas or norms which go against our faith in God? What are some common areas where these pressures are experienced?

LISTENING TO GOD'S WORD

2. Read Daniel 3:1-7. If you were directing the filming of this scene in a movie, what would your set look like? How big would it be? How many actors? What would the music sound like? How would it feel?
3. Read Daniel 3:8-18. Make 5-7 quick observations. Who is present? What is the mood? What happens? What is the big idea? What words or phrases stand out?
4. Reread what King Nebuchadnezer says in Daniel 2:47 and Daniel 3:13-15. How would you compare and contrast the two statements? What has changed? What can we learn about his heart (and our hearts) from this?
5. In Daniel 3:16-18, what stands out to you about the statements made by Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego? In what ways are they respectful of the king? In what ways are they defiant of the king? Where is their confidence focused?
6. Read Daniel 3:19-30. What happens that surprises Nebuchadnezer? Who shows up in the fiery trial? What is the significance of this? What is the result (see verses 28-30)?

LIVING IT OUT

7. How do you know when to stand with conviction in the face of trial or opposition? When should we bend or flex with our world, and when should we take a stand? What should guide our thinking here?
8. How does faith in the God of grace give us — at the same time — *both* conviction to stand for truth *and* courageous love to be kind to others?
9. Which do you personally find more difficult? Why?
 - (1) to live by conviction without an attitude of condemnation and moral superiority
 - (2) to live by conviction without a fear of rejection, embarrassment, or suffering
10. What is the significance of the reality that God was *in the fire* with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego? What do you think about the fact that God didn't keep them from having to *enter the fire* but was present with them *through the fire*?
11. Read 1 Peter 4:12-14. How are these verses connected to what we've read in Daniel 3? How should these verses inform our expectations for life—of God and of ourselves?

How does it help us to connect our suffering with Jesus' suffering? How does Jesus' suffering demonstrate that God can and will deliver us from the trials of life?

12. What is most challenging, convicting, or encouraging for you in this study? Where do you desire to see personal growth this week?