



onechurch

bigIdea



All of us have friends. Some of us have some friends that rely on us. Others, we have friends we rely on. Have you ever been in a tough spot where you needed one of the friends you look up to, and when you needed them most, they weren't there? Today, we're going to see why many times, the people we rely on the most sometimes aren't there. It's not just that they're fickle. Many times, God removes the strong people in our lives that we rely upon to see if we will step it up. To see what we will do. Today, we're going to see what happens with three guys when their leader is nowhere to be found. Will they fold? Or will they step up?

BIG IDEA: God is setting you up to step up and to stand out.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In school, what ways did you try to not stand out but to fit into the crowd?
2. No one likes being seen as strange or an outsider. Talk about a time when you made someone feel this way. Discuss about a time where you felt this way.
3. *Read Daniel 2:1-49 & 3:1-7.* What do you think prompted Nebuchadnezzar to build the image of gold?
4. In Daniel 2, the dream was given to remind Nebuchadnezzar that his kingdom was temporary and God's kingdom is eternal. What areas are you tempted to focus on your temporary and not on God's eternal?
5. The three young Hebrew boys we read about in Daniel 3 were men of integrity; their convictions were rooted in a belief that God is more powerful than the King of Babylon. What do the following verses have to say about integrity?
 - 1 Kings 9:1-9
 - Psalm 25:20-21
 - Psalm 41:11-12
 - Proverbs 11:3
6. *Read Daniel 3:8-12.* What motivated the astrologers to report the disobedience of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego?
7. What are some of the dangers of Christians standing up and standing out from the rest of the crowd?
8. Think of a person you have met who lives a life of integrity and stands out. What did he/she do that made them stand out?
9. *Read Daniel 3:13-15.* What temptations did Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego face when they were brought before the king?
10. Sometimes it takes great courage to hold to your convictions. Recall a time when you had to be courageous in your faith. What happened? What was the result?
11. Does a certain fear have a grip on you? What is it?
12. *Read Daniel 3:13-15.* Imagine your fear as a fiery furnace. What's it look like to look into it and feel its heat? Describe the power this fear has over you.
13. Fear is one of the main forces that can keep us from obeying Jesus fully. What one thing would you like to do for the Lord that your fear prevents you from doing?
14. *Read Daniel 3:16-18.* What were these boys certain of in their response to Nebuchadnezzar's challenge, and what were they uncertain of?
15. Some Christians claim that pain or sickness or difficulty are always the result of sin or a lack of faith. How would you respond to that claim in light of *Daniel 3:16-18*?
16. What was Shadrach's, Meshach's, and Abednego's attitude toward God? How can their example help you to overcome your fear?
17. If you had been one of the many Jews who had worshipped the image, how do you think the experience of these boys would have affected you?



18. In Daniel 3:13-18, there were three possible scenarios:
- Delivered from the fire.** *The fire could have went out. They could not have been thrown in.* Benefit? Our faith is built.
Read John 11:4. Why does God perform miracles in our lives?
 - Delivered through the fire.** *The go into the fire and do not suffer harm.* Benefit? Our faith is purified.
Read 1 Peter 1:6-7. Why does God allow us to go through difficulties and problems? If comfort isn't His ultimate goal, what is?
 - Delivered by the fire into His arms.** *The fire burns them up and they are killed.* Benefit? Our faith is perfected.
Read Hebrews 12:2. Look at what Jesus had to experience. If Jesus had to go through what He did, what do you think you and I can count on experiencing?
19. Which of the three scenarios did Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego experience?
20. All of us want God to come through miraculously for us like He did for Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Does God give us any guarantees which scenarios He will give us?
21. *Read Daniel 3:19-23.* The boys are hearing the roar of the furnace and are staring to sweat because their getting close to the flames. experiencing the heat of the flames. Now their hands are bound so they can't protect and shield themselves from the flames. What do you think they're feeling at this time?
22. List all of the prayers of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego up to this point that God hasn't answered favorably. If you were them, how strong would your faith in God be at this moment?
23. *Read Daniel 3:24-25.* Who do Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego meet in the fiery furnace?
24. *Read Isaiah 43:1-3.* The word is *when*, not *if* in verse 2. What is the significance of that word choice? How do these three verses apply to Daniel 3? List the promises that God gives in Isaiah 43:1-3.

DIGGING DEEPER

One author defined what it means to pursue modern day idols when he wrote, "Whatever a person seeks, honors, or exalts more than God, this is the god of his idolatry." God's warning to Israel about worshiping idols made of wood, gold, or silver also applies to our pursuit of the modern day idols Chris talked about this weekend. After reading (Psalm 115:3-8 & Habakkuk 2:18-19), answer the questions below.

- Based on these passages and this week's teaching, why do you think God speaks so strongly against the pursuit of idols?
- An idol doesn't have to be a bad thing; it can be a thing that is good, but takes our focus off God. Can you think of one or two good things that could become an idol to you if you're not careful?
- God not only warns us about pursuing idols but also strongly encourages us to pursue Him. In Psalm 145:13-21, what are some benefits from pursuing God that only He can provide?
- Are there any of these benefits that you try to gain from any modern day idols?

MOVING FORWARD

Chris talked about stepping up and taking a stand for God this weekend. Can you think of any Christians you've known who were especially good at taking a stand? How did people respond to them? How can you take more of a stand for God this week and stand out and be willing to be noticed for God?

CHANGING YOUR MIND

"Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. "Do not be afraid, for I have ransomed you. I have called you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the LORD, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. Isaiah 43:1-3

