



## The Furnace – Week 3

### DISCUSSION GUIDE

#### Overview

In this third message of the **Brave** series, we're looking into the lives of Daniel's three courageous friends who were thrown into a fiery furnace after refusing to worship King Nebuchadnezzar's golden idol.

#### Discussion Questions

##### A Golden Idol

Daniel chapter three opens with a golden idol. **"Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was sixty cubits and its width six cubits. He set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon. And King Nebuchadnezzar sent word to gather together the satraps, the administrators, the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up."** (Daniel 3:1-2)

- An idol is defined as anything we put above our love, devotion, and relationship with the one true God. What does God have to say about idolatry in the Ten Commandments? (Exodus 20:2-17) What may be some idols in life that we prioritize over our relationship with God?

Not only does Nebuchadnezzar build a 90-foot tall pagan shrine to himself, but he then commands all of his leaders to bow to this cultural blasphemy of a god. Anyone who does not bow down and worship would be cast immediately into the fiery furnace. (Daniel 3:4-6)

##### What is worship?

Worship is the act of demonstrating love, respect, honor, reverence, and adoration toward a god. Daniel's friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, were in the assembly of leaders. They heard Nebuchadnezzar's command, but they refused to fall down and worship the golden idol.

- What have you recently experienced or witnessed in our culture that is influencing you to worship an idol?

## 21st Century Idols

Similar to Daniel's friends, we face our own cultural idols. Take a moment to reflect on how the idols below may have influenced your life.

1. **Possessions**

Money is a wonderful tool but a lousy God. Do I spend more of my time and energy on the acquisition of possessions than on God and building a relationship with Him?

2. **Pleasure**

Pleasure in and of itself is not bad. But when one pursues pleasure at all costs, it becomes an idol. Our culture worships the god of entertainment, recreation and adventure. Does the attainment of pleasure consume my time and thoughts?

3. **Prominence**

Some people live to be applauded, esteemed, and recognized at the cost of everything else. Is God's approval and recognition enough for me?

## The Fiery Furnace

Daniel's three friends did not bow to or worship the golden idol. They trusted in the God they knew would protect them--no matter the circumstance. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego were thrown into the burning fiery furnace. King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished when he saw not three, but four men walking in the fire.

**"Look!" he answered, "I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God."** (Daniel 3:25)

Daniel's friends were not only delivered, they had an encounter with God! God delivered Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego in the furnace, not from it. Sometimes God delivers people *from* the fire, and sometimes God delivers people *in* the fire.

- Maybe today, you are being pushed to bow to a cultural idol. How do we keep our eyes and hearts fixed on Jesus so that we do not bow to culture or peer pressure?

## Life Challenge

Isaiah 43:2 says, **"When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, nor shall the flame scorch you."** Being fully devoted to God can lead us through situations that look scary, dangerous, and even painful. It also leads us to be where Jesus is, the safest place of all.

- What truths from this message will you apply to your personal fiery furnace?

## Prayer

*Father, we worship You and You alone. Thank You for this account in Daniel that teaches us the safest place to be is in Your will--even if it's in a fiery furnace. Search our hearts and help us recognize if any idol needs to be dethroned. Please strengthen our faith amid this culture shift. Pray for the specific needs of the group.*