



Godfidence

RECAP

This week's focus: Stay faithful and don't compromise: God will use your influence for eternal change!

Have you ever felt cornered or called out by someone who looked down on your faith? They put you in a situation where your choice is to renounce in some large or small way some aspect of your faith, or risk losing power, position, and opportunity? What do you do when you "need this job" but are forced to choose between what is right and what you need? Which voice speaks loudest: your faith or your fears?

Fortunately, the Bible contains many stories about how to stand for your faith in a hostile culture. The book of Daniel has several relevant stories for us to consider. There is probably none more famous than the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego being thrown into the fiery furnace.

This epic story starts with a big statue of Nebuchadnezzar being constructed. Evidently, the king was worried about the unity and loyalty of his subjects, so he decided to unite them in their worship, admiration, and devotion to him. The king orchestrated a worship service in honor of himself. He commanded everyone to bow down in unison before the statue to demonstrate their allegiance. He wanted everyone to realize that ultimate power and authority was in him.

The three Jewish youth however, refused to bow and worship the statue. When forced to pick between God and man, they chose God. The king confronts them and makes both the requirement and the punishment clear, "Bow or burn!" He gives them a second chance to obey. Still, they remain faithful, refuse to bow, and continue to stand. The king, drunk on his own power, demands that everyone acknowledge his supreme authority.

Daniel 3 tells us that the three youth answer the king with an incredible statement of faith and courage. They gave one of the most amazing responses in scripture showing they had complete confidence in God. It was their "God-fidence" that set them apart. We believe our God can deliver us...we expect He will...and we trust Him if He doesn't.

The king's rage, which had been building up to this point, boils over. He rages and his face is contorted. He's madder than a mosquito in a mannequin factory. So, he turns up the heat seven times hotter than normal. It is so hot that those who are commanded to throw them in are consumed by the fire but not the young men. To the king's amazement, there is a fourth individual seen walking inside the furnace with them. Nebuchadnezzar summons them to come out and they just stroll out of the furnace with their clothes and hair untouched by the fire. They did not even have the smell of fire on them: Proof that God may not have saved them from the furnace, but He was with them in fire.

Their story of undaunting courage to stand under the pressure to conform can give us a window into our own circumstances. It shows how we can stand for our faith and how we can trust God in the fire. He can deliver. He is faithful. And when He doesn't do what we expect, we can trust Him.



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SHARE (5-10 min)

1. Icebreaker Question: Share about a time when you were pressured to “follow the crowd” and do something that went against your faith.

STUDY (about 30 min) Read Daniel 3

2. What stood out to you about the message on Sunday and this passage?
3. The devil tempts us to destroy our faith...God tests us to develop our faith. What do you think the differences are between the two?
4. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego had two choices, anger the king or disobey God. Imagine you are in their position; how would you choose between the immediate problem of avoiding the fire and the long-term problem of disobeying God?
5. Disobeying the king had deadly consequences. What is the danger in making our decisions based upon what other people think?
6. Read Proverbs 29:25. What does this verse say is always our safest choice?
7. Do you agree or disagree that WHAT WE DO, all depends on WHAT WE BELIEVE? When have you had to make a hard decision that had to be made based on your convictions?
8. What happened to the faith of the king because Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego chose to disobey the king instead of disobey God?
9. If Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego had followed the king’s command and worshipped the idol of gold, how might the results have been different?
10. When have you experienced someone changing their mind or position on something based on your strong convictions? How do your strong convictions impact your physical life? How about your spiritual life? When, if ever, is it appropriate to allow compromise into your life?

SUPPORT (15 min)

Gather in groups of 2 or 3. Share your burdens, needs, and requests. Pray that God would give each of you the confidence to stand tall in the midst of adversity and when the trial comes to remind you of His presence with you in the fire.