



- 1 **Reflect on your life as a believer.** What kinds of “fiery trials” have you faced that tested your faithfulness to God? Have you encountered situations where you started to waver in your convictions?

 *What are some of the common temptations that come as the intensity of a circumstance increases?*

 *Consider Jesus' temptation in Matthew 4:8-10, where he modeled faithfulness. How does Christ's perfect, permanent faithfulness encourage you to repent where needed, and motivate you to remain faithful today?[1]*

- 2 **The fiery furnace in Daniel 3 killed some (v22), but freed others (v25).** The same flame brought judgment to some and refinement to others.

 *How are you tempted to see difficult circumstances incorrectly? Perhaps as God's vindictive judgment or in doubting His goodness?*


 *What would change if you viewed difficulty as God's means of refinement to prove the genuineness of your faith?*

 *What lessons can you learn for times of trial from 1 Peter 4:12-14?*

- 3 **Daniel's three friends were committed to fidelity even if God didn't deliver them (Dan 3:17-18).** For us today that might look like a person with cancer saying “God is able to deliver me, but if he doesn't, I'm going to continue trusting him.” Or, someone trying to get pregnant saying, “God is able to give us a baby, but if he doesn't, I'm not going to get bitter at him.” Someone in a tough job situation saying, “God can give me a new supervisor, or change this hostile work environment, but even if he doesn't, I'm going to continue working to please him.”


 *Use that sentence framework to think through what surrender to God's providence looks like in your life. “God is able to _____, but even if he doesn't, I'm going to _____.” Write two statements of your own below.*

- 4 **Idolatry is subtle and seductive.** It is subtle in the sense that it can be connected to a good thing. It's seductive in that it becomes bad when this potentially good thing is out of place, wrongly prioritized, or inappropriately used. You could say it like this, “When a good thing becomes an ultimate thing, it turns into an idolatrous thing.”


 *What kind of good things have you seen become idolatrous things for people?*


 What are some idols of our day that Christians struggle with? (1 Jn 5:21, Is 42:8, Col. 3:5-6)

5 Conviction doesn't automatically result in confidence in front of the world and commitment to the Lord.

 What can happen if we wait to develop our convictions in the heat of the moment when a pressured situation arises? [3]

 How can you define your convictions now, and prepare for the costs associated with obeying and honoring God?


 How can Christians help prepare those they are discipling to face the criticism, rejection, marginalization, ostracism, hatred, or suffering associated with Christ in the days and years ahead? (think of new believers, parents to children, peer discipleship)


 Think also of the effect that someone's right conviction and faithful obedience has on others. If you had been one of the many Jews who had worshipped the idol, how do you think the experience of Daniel's three friends would have affected you?

 How has the faithful stand of a fellow believer impacted you personally?

6 There's a certain missionary spirit in the three Hebrew men as they declare the existence and power of the true and living God.

Deliverance and rescue were not the issues. Confession and obedience were, even if it cost them their lives.

 Discuss this thought from Nate Saint (1923-1956). He was martyred as a missionary to the Auca Indians in Ecuador. "The way I see it, we ought to be willing to die. In the military, we are taught that to obtain our objectives we had to be willing to be expendable. Missionaries must face that same expendability."

 What is at stake as you take the gospel into your neighborhood, workplace, or family?

 What would it look like for you to put something on the line to extend Christ's name in our city?

7 When God doesn't deliver us from dangers, trials, disease, or even death, does that mean that he has abandoned us? Why or why not? Use the following passages to inform your answer and strengthen your heart

Romans 8:37-39; Hebrews 13:5; 1 Peter 4:12-14.

PRAYER REQUESTS

[1] David Helm, Daniel For You (n.p. The Good Book Company, 2017), 52.
[2] These questions were adapted from Warren W. Wiersbe, Daniel: Be Resolute (Colorado Springs: David Cook, 2000), 52; Alistair Begg, "The Blazing Fiery Furnace," <https://www.monergism.com>; Erwin W. Lutzer, The Church In Babylon: Heeding the Call to Be a Light in the Darkness (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2018), 114.
[3] Daniel L. Akin, Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary: Exalting Jesus in Daniel (Nashville: B&H, 2017), 41.
[4] Wright, Hearing the Message of Daniel, 66.
[5] Akin, Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary: Exalting Jesus in Daniel, 37.