

DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

Daniel 3
Stand Strong Series
March 10/11, 2018

Main Idea:

God values “double-fisted” faith.

Discovery Questions

1. What’s the hottest place you’ve ever been?

This week, we continue our series through the book of Daniel. Today we come across one of the classic stories of Daniel and, indeed, of the entire Bible—the story of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the blazing furnace. From this story we learn about God’s ability to deliver us from all circumstances, and the importance of faith in the midst of difficult situations.

Because this passage is a bit long, we’ll begin in the middle of the story. Nebuchadnezzar has set up an image of gold that he wants all the people of Babylon to worship. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego—three of Daniel’s friends, exiles from Jerusalem—refuse to worship the image. We’ll pick up the story when Nebuchadnezzar receives the news of their refusal.

2. Read Daniel 3:12-30. How is the faith of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego on display in this passage? Where do you see the faithfulness of God in this passage?

The key of Daniel 3 is vv. 17-18: “If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty’s hand. But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.” In our Rooted groups, this is what we call a “double-fisted” faith:

Imagine these three brave men standing before the most powerful man on earth with bold defiance. With one clenched fist they say, "God can rescue us and we believe He will." In essence they are saying, "King, you think you control this situation? You think our lives are in your hands? You think you hold our ultimate fate? You couldn't be further off. We serve a God who created the earth, who holds the stars in His hands, who set you on your throne and who will rule long after you and your empire are gone. God has this situation well in hand and is more than able to save us from your furnace." Then the second fist comes up and they say with equal confidence, "Even if He doesn't save us, we will not serve your gods." Essentially they are saying, "So great, so awesome, so worthy is our God, that even if He chooses not to save us and our bodies burn in the flame, our God is still the One we will follow. We will trust Him in life and we will trust Him in death." That is double-fisted faith!

3. a. Those who don’t believe what we believe sometimes struggle with our willingness to trust God even when things get difficult. They may say to us something like, “Your life is filled with the same problems that mine is—what good is your faith doing you?” How would you respond to such a statement?

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- b. Is there someone you know who has displayed “double-fisted” faith in a tough circumstance? What was their situation and how did their example impact you?
4. a. When have you had to display “double-fisted” faith? When have you had to “clench your fists” and “cling tightly” to God’s promises, not knowing the outcome of the situation? How did that situation turn out and what did you learn from it?
- b. In general, how hard or easy is it for you to trust in the promises of God, especially when things get tough or overwhelming? Why do you answer the way that you do?
- c. What do you think you could do to develop the type of faith of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in this passage?
5. Are you or is someone you know going through a situation right now where they need “double-fisted” faith? Describe that situation to the group. Spend an extended time in prayer praying for these situations.

Leader Guide Starts on Next Page

DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

Leader Guide

1. What's the hottest place you've ever been?

This is a "lighter" question designed to get the conversation going. Spend about 5-7 minutes on this question.

This week, we continue our series through the book of Daniel. Today we come across one of the classic stories of Daniel and, indeed, of the entire Bible—the story of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the blazing furnace. From this story we learn about God's ability to deliver us from all circumstances, and the importance of faith in the midst of difficult situations.

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2. Read Daniel 3:12-30. How is the faith of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego on display in this passage? Where do you see the faithfulness of God in this passage?

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego displayed great faith and commitment to God by refusing to bow down to the idol, knowing that it meant certain death. Though they believed that God would rescue them, they were also committed to honor and serve God even if He didn't (Daniel 3:17-18). This shows tremendous faith, and will be discussed more in question #3.

God showed his faithfulness by honoring these men and rescuing them from the blazing furnace by means of a heavenly aid, and proved Himself to Nebuchadnezzar who began to show some degree of honor towards God, as well.

Spend 10-12 minutes on this question.

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3.
 - a. Those who don't believe what we believe sometimes struggle with our willingness to trust God even when things get difficult. They may say to us something like, "Your life is filled with the same problems that mine is—what good is your faith doing you?" How would you respond to such a statement?
 - b. Is there someone you know who has displayed "double-fisted" faith in a tough circumstance? What was their situation and how did their example impact you?

For part "a," some people think that people turn to faith as a way to get things from God. While we do believe in a good heavenly Father who blesses us, our primary motivation for turning to God is not so that we can get good things—it's because we believe that what the Bible teaches is truth, and we want to follow truth. Even if we don't ever "get" anything from God (and of course we do get a lot of things from God!) we follow God because we know that He is the only way to eternal life through His Son Jesus Christ. We also believe in a God who, though he doesn't always spare us from difficulties, promises to walk through them with us, giving us support when we need it most.

Spend 7-10 minutes on this question in its entirety.

4.
 - a. When have you had to display "double-fisted" faith? When have you had to "clench your fists" and "cling tightly" to God's promises, not knowing the outcome of the situation? How did that situation turn out and what did you learn from it?
 - b. In general, how hard or easy is it for you to trust in the promises of God, especially when things get tough or overwhelming? Why do you answer the way that you do?
 - c. What do you think you could do to develop the type of faith of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in this passage?

For part "c," one thing that many people do is keep a journal of all of the times and ways that God has proved Himself faithful. Looking back on past experiences of God's faithfulness helps us first remember, and then know that God will continue to come through for us in the future. Surrounding ourselves with other Christians also helps us in this regard, as we can feed off of their faith when we are struggling.

Spend about 10-12 minutes on this question in its entirety.

5. Are you or is someone you know going through a situation right now where they need "double-fisted" faith? Describe that situation to the group. Spend an extended time in prayer praying for these situations.

Spend 7-10 minutes on this question.