

Session 3: Faithful in the Fire

SESSION GOALS

Every session has a point—what each participant should walk away from the discussion knowing, feeling, and doing.

Main Idea: Our obedience is not just about us—when we obey, others can see God’s power displayed.

Head Change: To learn that obedience is worth the cost.

Heart Change: To feel close to God even in the middle of hard circumstances.

Life Change: To choose obedience even when we know the risk.

OPEN

When have you been pressured to do something you did not want to do? Describe the situation and its outcome.

Standing firm under pressure can be hard—especially when we feel pressured by authority figures. There will be times when a boss, coach, or teacher may have expectations on us that go against our convictions. So how do we find the balance between listening to our earthly authority figures and obeying God as our ultimate authority?

In session three, Sadie will walk through the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and explain how their obedience to God became a demonstration of God’s power.

VIEW

Before viewing the session, here are a few important things to look for in Sadie's teaching. As you watch, pay attention to how she answers the following questions.

After erecting a huge golden image, what did King Nebuchadnezzar require of everyone?

How does this story showcase God's sovereign control, despite what we see?

Watch Session 3: *Faithful in the Fire* (7 minutes).

REVIEW

Sadie started the session by saying, “Faithful obedience means risking our position of influence in order to demonstrate that God is worthy of following.” **In what ways did Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego demonstrate their belief that God was worthy even with the possibility of death?**

Our obedience to God might require risking things like our jobs, our grades, or our popularity. **When have you seen someone risk their position of influence (on a sports team, at a job, in a circle of friends, etc.) to obey God and stand firm in their convictions?**

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to compromise their faith under pressure and came out victorious in the end. **In what ways have you been challenged to compromise your beliefs? What was the outcome?**

What do we reveal about ourselves when we compromise our convictions? How can compromise hinder our relationship with God?

For some of us, compromising our faith to keep popularity or position can be tempting under pressure. **In what ways have you ever felt tempted to hide your faith? What were the circumstances and how did you deal with the situation?**

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego decided that they would trust and obey God, even when their lives were at stake. For some people, hiding or even denying their faith becomes a seemingly good option when faced with possible harassment or trouble. **How have you seen comfort prioritized over conviction in our culture?**

Like we saw with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, our commitment to God will often require us to choose him over our relationships, reputation, or popularity. **In what ways have you had to choose God over a relationship, your reputation, or your popularity? How did it make you feel afterward?**

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego knew they were facing harsh treatment for standing firm in their faith for God. In the same way, we can find ourselves being

ridiculed and made fun of by the world for being faithful to God. **In what ways have you dealt with harsh treatment specifically due to your Christianity? How did you deal with the situation, and what was the outcome?**

Sadie shared a story about her family's dinnertime scenes on the show *Duck Dynasty*. Her family would end their prayers with the name of Jesus, but the producers of her family's show pressured them to stop for the sake of being sensitive to the culture. **In what ways did Sadie's family press through the harsh treatment of the television producers?**

What can Sadie and her family's actions teach us about standing firm in our convictions?

Sadie pointed out that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego exclaimed that God could save them, but even if he didn't, he was worthy of their devotion anyways. **In what ways have you found it easy or difficult to trust God knowing that he can provide a way, but might not?**

Sadie ended the session by asking, “What are you willing to give up in order to remain faithful to God? How do you remain committed to God over worldly favor?” **How would you answer these questions? What could it look like for you to act on your answers this week?**

BIBLE EXPLORATION

The pressure to compromise our beliefs can become overwhelming when facing extreme persecution. In Daniel 3, we see how Daniel's friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, reacted under pressure from the king to fall down and worship his golden image.

Read Daniel 3:1–18.

After holding the dedication for the golden image, King Nebuchadnezzar decreed that citizens would be thrown into the fiery furnace if they did not worship it.

Considering the consequences, how might have you initially responded to his request? In what ways, if any, have you been pressured to worship another “god” by friends or family?

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were devout followers of God yet working as administrators in a secular environment. **What can we learn from Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego's story about confidently living for God in secular spaces?**

In verse 15, the king questioned how the three friends could defy his decree considering he knew of no other god who could save them. **How did Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego respond to the king questioning their loyalty to him? What does their confidence say about their relationship with God?**

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego stood firm in their faith under extreme suffering and pressure from the standards of the king. **What was their reason for such courage? What did they believe God could do for them?**

Like the three friends, we've all felt the sting of pressure from some sort of authority figure—our teachers, our coaches, our boss, or even our parents. **What could we learn from Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego's confidence under pressure? How do you think you might have responded under the same pressure?**

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego knew that there was a possibility they wouldn't be rescued by God yet still remained loyal to him. **What does their loyalty to God show us about the uncertainty of being delivered from**

difficult circumstances? When have you trusted God in an uncertain situation?

Read verses 19–30.

Filled with rage, King Nebuchadnezzar tied up the three friends and threw them into the fiery furnace that was heated seven times hotter than normal. But after throwing them in, the king noticed a fourth person in the fire who looked like “a son of the gods.” **In what way does this part of the story show us God will be present with us in the midst of trials, even if he doesn’t always deliver us from them? When have you felt God’s presence during a difficult circumstance?**

Compare King Nebuchadnezzar’s reaction in verses 26–28 to his initial statements in verse 15c. **What changed? How did his new view of God impact the rest of the kingdom?**

How did Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego’s faith in God, and God’s display of protection, ultimately influence King Nebuchadnezzar? In what ways has God’s provision in your life also blessed other people?

How can the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego help you in the future when facing a compromising choice? What could it look like for you to be uncompromising this week?

LAST WORD

As we saw in this session, when God’s power is displayed in our lives it can completely change the beliefs of those surrounding us. Whenever we find ourselves in a difficult situation, we can act in a way that brings others into the knowledge of God.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego not only showed us what it means to be confident and firm in our convictions, but also how our actions can impact more people than we could ever imagine.

This week take some time to meditate on what it means to be faithful in the fire. Pray that God helps you to stand firm on his Word when it seems too difficult, or even scary.

DEEPER WALK

Read: Read Daniel 3 in its entirety. Write down three ways Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego inspired you to be courageous under pressure.

Pray: Pray and thank God for all of the times he's comforted you during a fiery trial. Ask him to help you continue living with a grateful heart despite your circumstances.

Memorize: Memorize Sadie's statement: "We must be willing to put everything on the line—our reputation, our influence, or even our life in order to remain faithfully obedient to God."

Remind: Write out Daniel 3:17–18 on a notecard and place it somewhere you'll see it often, like your bathroom mirror or car dashboard. Use it as a reminder to trust God, even if he hasn't answered your prayers.