

# Res · o · lute

(adj.) Admirably purposeful, determined, and unwavering

**DEVELOPING "EVEN IF" FAITH**

## Lesson 2: Self Study Pages

There are four days in this week's self study pages. We will be studying the stories which led up to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego's "even if" moment; so, here we go!

### Day 1

Read Daniel 1:8-21.

The young men asked not to eat the king's food because they knew it would have been consecrated to pagan idols. So, I want to point out that:

**They did not let their situation redefine them, and they remained defined by God in their situation.**

Sometimes that's so hard to do. But they had a conviction about it. Daniel didn't act out of a *command* from God in that moment; rather, he acted out of a *conviction* from God.

It's so easy to brush off or suppress our convictions. I wonder how many things we are doing, engaging in, listening to, watching, etc. that the Holy Spirit is trying to convict us about if we would give him the opportunity to do so? In fact, I just had a conviction moment last night, and I had to repent because I realized I had probably been brushing it off for a while.

\*Is there anything that came to your heart or mind as we're discussing this topic which God might be convicting you about?

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Sometimes it can feel like a risk when we do something (or don't do something) out of our convictions. But, when we go out on a limb for God, God will never let us be put to shame.

Do not be afraid; you will not be put to shame. Do not fear disgrace; you will not be humiliated. (Isaiah 54:4a, NIV)

Those who trust in me will never be put to shame. (Isaiah 49:23b, NLT)

As a result of their faith, God supernaturally blessed them.

**God will *bless* you where he *has* you when you walk with him.**

He blessed them physically by making them look *healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who ate the royal food* (verse 15). He blessed them mentally, and he poured out favor upon them - so much so that there were none equal to them in the entire kingdom!

God will ALWAYS equip you for what He calls you to do. It'll be a little bit of you and a whole lot of God. It will take your obedience and God's supernatural blessing. And when we step out in obedience and faithfulness to God, what we experience will ALWAYS be worth so much more than whatever we had to give up.

**The blessings that come with obedience will be far greater than anything  
we had to give up to get there!**

\*Let's agree together to ask God to open our hearts to his conviction this week. Let's repent what we've ignored and see what he will do in our lives as a result!

## Day 2

Read Daniel 2.

King Nebuchadnezzar is an interesting character to say the least. Notice how Daniel responded to the king's official in verse 14: *Daniel spoke to him with wisdom and tact.*

Now, this is something we didn't discuss in our Group Session, but when the Bible says these were young men, they were *young* men. They were most likely in their early teens when they were taken captive and still in their teens at this point. So how did a teenage young man act in such a controlled manner when someone was literally sent to his door to carry out a death sentence against him?

**Wisdom doesn't come from a human source. Wisdom comes from God.**

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. (Proverbs 9:10a, NIV)

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding. (Psalm 111:10a, ESV)

You probably noticed the phrase in those verses that corresponds with this week's Group Session: *fear of the Lord*. It's no wonder the fear of God overcomes the fear for self, because the fear of God breeds wisdom! And wisdom leads us to act (and think) out of that *wisdom* rather than to *react* out of *fear*.

Daniel responded with wisdom and tact, and God gave him favor with the king when he asked for more time. Then, what was the very next thing Daniel did?

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Just as we talked about in our Group Session, there is strength in doing life with others. These young men had such a gift in one another. Not only does it encourage us and sharpen us when we do life with other Christians, but there is also power when we come together in prayer:

Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.  
(Matthew 18:19-20, NIV)

This is a truth exemplified all throughout the Bible.

As we see in the rest of the story, God gave Daniel the dream and its interpretation, and the first thing Daniel did was give praise to God. Even when Daniel began speaking to the king, the first thing he did was to give glory to God (verses 27-28).

\*Is this our first reaction when God answers a prayer? This is definitely something to think about. What are a few things that come to your mind right now you can give God praise for?

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And then, once again, God poured out his favor and used the situation for the good of the king, as well as the good of Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Remember, God works all things together for the good of those who love him, and what works together for our good will always affect the lives of those around us!

How did God work the situation for the good of King Nebuchadnezzar?

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When God allows a moment of crisis in our lives, he uses it to draw us to himself, to draw us together, to reveal who he is to us and to others, and to use the situation to further us in our callings!

### **Day 3**

Read Daniel 3.

This is the last time we read about Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. We learned about most of this story in our Group Session, but I want to pull out just a couple more things the Lord showed me about this story that we didn't have time to address in the lesson.

What did you notice when reading this story compared to the stories in Daniel 1 & 2?

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Daniel was missing. Did you notice in the first two chapters that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego seemed to act out of Daniel's leadership? In this story, however, Daniel is nowhere to be seen. Scholars have various guesses as to why, but it is likely that his role in the kingdom had somehow removed him from this situation. We don't know for certain what made Daniel take the leadership role in the other two stories. We do know, though, that by the time these three young men were tested by the fiery furnace, their faith had been built, and they were ready.

**God will prepare us for what he calls us, and he often  
uses other people in that process.**

The second thing I want to point out is found in verse 16 when they said,

“King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter.”

They had been accused (verse 8), but they took it as an accusation against God. They rested in knowing that God could defend them by defending himself. I think this is why they were so sure God would rescue them from the flames. Jesus said,

“When you are brought before synagogues, rulers and authorities, do not worry about how you will defend yourselves or what you will say, for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say.” (Luke 12:11-12, NIV)

It's not your battle, and it wasn't their battle. Remember from the Self Study pages last week, our enemy is not flesh and blood, and his name means “accuser.” We're not going to go into great depth regarding the topic of defending ourselves here (That would take a whole study in itself!), but we do need to understand the value of allowing God to be the one to come to our defense, especially when the accusations against us have risen out of our obedience to His will.

**When we have acted according to God's will, then we can rest in knowing that God will  
be our Defender.**

The last thing I want to point out about this story is found in verses 20, 21, 23, and 25. It stood out to me that the Bible tells us THREE times these young men were tied up and bound when they were thrown into the furnace. Then, verse 25 says they were walking around in the fire “unbound and unharmed”.

And then it hit me.

The ONLY thing the fire burned was the thing that bound them!

**When God allows us to walk through fire,  
he uses it to “burn up” the things that have us bound!**

We have already seen how God has used these three situations to bring good to the young men, as well as to others who were influenced by the situations. He revealed himself to King Nebuchadnezzar and the other royal officials through each story.

But here's what's so cool about our God: he's a multi-purpose God! God uses our fires to work *through* us, but he also uses them to work *within* us - internal *and* external purposes! He never wastes a single trial, a single fire. God never wastes what he allows.

*Thank you, Lord.*

#### **Day 4**

Let's end with this. Give yourself some time this week to think on each of these three stories and how the Five Foundational Truths of Faith played out in each one. Then, take what you can see looking back at *their* stories, and ask the Lord how these truths apply to *your* story.

1. God is in control.

Story 1:

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Story 2:

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Story 3:

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How does this apply to my life?

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2. God is good and loving.

Story 1:

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Story 2:

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Story 3:

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How does this apply to my life?

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3. God desires all people to know him.

Story 1:

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Story 2:

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Story 3:

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How does this apply to my life?

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4. God will work all things together for good for those who love him.

Story 1:

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Story 2:

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Story 3:

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How does this apply to my life?

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5. God is always with us.

Story 1:

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Story 2:

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Story 3:

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How does this apply to my life?

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