

# Res · o · lute

*(adj.) Admirably purposeful, determined, and unwavering*

**DEVELOPING "EVEN IF" FAITH**

## Lesson 2: Group Session

Throughout the remainder of Hebrews 11, the writer ends his list with this:

And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson and Jephthah, about David and Samuel and the prophets (Hebrews 11:32, NIV)

\_\_\_\_\_ was an Old Testament prophet who is mentioned in the New Testament more than any other Old Testament prophet.

The book of Daniel, another prophet, tells not only the story of Daniel, but also the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, the men who spoke this famous statement of faith:

But **even if** he [God] does not [deliver them from the fiery furnace], we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up." (Daniel 3:18, NIV)

### Background

In both stories,

They lived during a time of \_\_\_\_\_ and uncertainty.

Elijah:

Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego:

They were forced to adapt to a \_\_\_\_\_.

Elijah:

Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego:

Their lives were being \_\_\_\_\_ for their faith.

Elijah:

Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego:

## Comparing Responses

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego:

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to him, “King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. 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.” (Daniel 3:16-18, NIV)

Elijah:

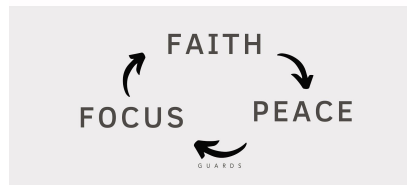
Now Ahab told Jezebel everything Elijah had done and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. So Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah to say, “May the gods deal with me, be it ever so severely, if by this time tomorrow I do not make your life like that of one of them.”

Elijah was afraid and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, while he himself went a day’s journey into the wilderness. He came to a broom bush, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. “I have had enough, Lord,” he said. “Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors.” (1 Kings 19:1-4, NIV)

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego focused on their \_\_\_\_\_, but, in that moment, Elijah focused on his \_\_\_\_\_.

## Comparing Focus

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego:



**FOCUS (on God) → FAITH → PEACE**

They were confident in and sure of what they knew to be true about their God.

They were resolute in what they \_\_\_\_\_ do.

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.” (Daniel 3:18, NIV)

**Sometimes resolute faith is about what we will \_\_\_\_\_ do.**

Elijah:

FOCUSED (on fear)------(broke the rest of the cycle)

## Fear

In the Bible, more than we are told *NOT* to fear, we are told *TO* fear - God!

*Fear* is one word with two meanings: \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_.

Fear is our human response to situations which are beyond our control and understanding. It's what we do with that response that matters.

**The only thing that can overcome \_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_.**

1 Praise the Lord,  
Blessed are those who **fear the Lord**...

7 They will have **no fear** of bad news;  
their hearts are steadfast, trusting in the Lord.  
8 Their hearts are secure, they will have **no fear**;  
in the end they will look in triumph on their foes. (Psalm 112:1a,7-8, NIV)

We have two choices when we face situations bigger than ourselves:

We focus on the fear of our situation, and we become \_\_\_\_\_.

We focus on the awe of our God, and fear fades to \_\_\_\_\_.

When our focus is on God, and our eyes are fixed on Jesus, our faith turns our "what if" into an "even if."

**Fear is not the \_\_\_\_\_ of faith, fear is the \_\_\_\_\_ for faith!**

## The Expected vs. The Unexpected

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego:

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego had time to \_\_\_\_\_ in preparation for the moment when their life was threatened.

Elijah:

This wasn't the first time his life had been threatened. When Elijah encountered Obadiah, the king's administrator, Obadiah told him this:

As surely as the Lord your God lives, there is not a nation or kingdom where my master [Ahab] has not sent someone to look for you. And whenever a nation or kingdom claimed you were not there, he made them swear they could not find you. (1 Kings 18:10, NIV)

This time Elijah was \_\_\_\_\_ in this threat against his life.

**Unmet expectations or unexpected calamities often instinctually cause us to react in fear and feel defeated.**

## Community vs. Isolation

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego:

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego had \_\_\_\_\_.

This passage is found just before the faith chapter in Hebrews 11. They are included in a section of Scripture titled *A Call to Persevere in Faith* (in the NIV):

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching. (Hebrews 10:24-25, NIV)

Solomon describes it like this in Proverbs:

As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another. (Proverbs 27:17, NIV)

**Staying in community with other Christians strengthens our ability to have resolute faith**

**by keeping us \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.**

Elijah:

Elijah had been doing life \_\_\_\_\_.

**If doing life in community keeps us encouraged and sharpened, then doing life in isolation has the potential to make us \_\_\_\_\_courage and \_\_\_\_\_sharpened.**

## Believing Lies

1. Elijah believed a lie against his \_\_\_\_\_ and against \_\_\_\_\_.

Elijah said this to King Ahab on Mt. Carmel:

Then Elijah said to them, **“I am the only one of the Lord’s prophets left, but Baal has four hundred and fifty prophets.”** (1 Kings 18:22, NIV)

And Elijah said this to God TWICE after he runs for his life:

The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. **I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too.”** (1 Kings 19:10b & 14b, NIV)

In Elijah’s encounter with Obadiah, Obadiah had also told him this:

Haven’t you heard, my lord, what I did while Jezebel was killing the prophets of the Lord? I hid a hundred of the Lord’s prophets in two caves, fifty in each, and supplied them with food and water. (1 Kings 18:13, NIV)

The \_\_\_\_\_ he had believed was so loud that he couldn't even hear the \_\_\_\_\_ when it was told directly to him.

2. Elijah believed a lie against \_\_\_\_\_.

He came to a broom bush, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. "I have had enough, Lord," he said. **"Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors."** (1 Kings 19:4b, NIV)

The accuser (Satan) comes to steal, kill, and destroy, but Jesus **came** to give \_\_\_\_\_! (John 10:10)

## God Shows Up

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego:

God sent an angel to be \_\_\_\_\_ in the fire! Even if God allows us to go through the fire, he will be with us.

Elijah:

God never left Elijah (1 Kings 19). He...

- Met Elijah \_\_\_\_\_ - twice
- Sent an angel to \_\_\_\_\_ him
- Let him speak and pour out his \_\_\_\_\_
- Reminded Elijah of his [God's] \_\_\_\_\_ (wind, earthquake, fire)
- Spoke to him the way he needed in that moment - \_\_\_\_\_
- Let him go back to where he left off and gave him an assignment of \_\_\_\_\_
- Told him he was \_\_\_\_\_

God never left Elijah. God went to him when he ran. God was still \_\_\_\_\_, even when Elijah's faith faltered.

He's the God who meets us where we're at, provides the nourishment we need, lets us pour out our complaint before him, reminds us of his power, speaks to us in gentleness and compassion when we struggle, gives us second chances, brings us back to our purpose, and never leaves us alone!

*Oh God, we are so grateful for who you are! Keep us in relationship first and foremost with you, and also with one another. Thank you that we don't have to neglect gathering together with others, and thank you that you are building relationships even in the midst of isolation.*