



## LION HEART | Fool's Gold | Week 3 | October 26-27

Daniel 3; Exodus 20:3-6; Matthew 16:26; Hebrews 12:2 & 13:5; Matthew 28:20; Revelation 21:4

*These study guides are designed for individual or group study but highly encouraged to be experienced in community with a small group or other friends on the journey with Jesus.*

**The Nebuchadnezzar approach:** Read Daniel 3. Now read again Daniel 2:47 and 3:28. Daniel's conclusion of the king's dream could be summarized as, "Nothing made by human effort lasts forever." The implication was cited in prophecy in Dan. 2:44. But the king could not accept that as reality and he set about creating his golden statue to show his absolute power to rule and reign!

- What lessons do you draw from this overview?
- Journal or share the emotions and motivations you see in the king.
- What does Daniel 3:6 add to the question above?
- Where do we do the same things? Set up our idols to show our power?

**In the Face of Reprisal:** Reread Daniel 3, placing yourself on the scene. What do you feel? Hear? Smell? What's running through your mind and heart as you hear the decree, "Whoever does not fall down and worship will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace"? (Dan 3:6)

Now place yourself in the sandals of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego:

- Suppose this country wasn't your true home. Pretend for a moment that you had sworn your loyalty to a greater King than Nebuchadnezzar.
- Imagine that your culture told you that true prosperity had more to do with the purity of your heart than the glittering gold.
- Suppose that the victory that really mattered in life had more to do with conquering the inner temptation to lie, to lust, or to hate, than with gaining the upper hand.
- So how do we face similar temptations every day in our culture to bow down to the "golden idol"? What is your response?
- Journal or share what is going through your mind and heart from these "hypotheticals".
- What situations, what conversations, what emotions or reactions are coming to mind?

**The reasoned Rationalization:** Below are 8 potential ways we might rationalize not "standing up."

1. Seen doing it but I didn't *mean* it - God knows my heart.
2. Only once - I don't do this very often, God forgives.
3. I've got to, the king is in charge - it's how I keep my job.
4. I owe it to my boss - I can't be ungrateful, she's done so much for me.
5. Think of who this is - would they even understand if I objected.



6. But it's not as bad as that - lots of people do worse.
7. Who's it going to hurt - I'm not hurting anybody else.
8. Not today, another day - I see the issue but I don't have (time, energy, courage, etc.) right now

- What is the motivation or fear behind each example?
- Which rationalization hits closest to home? Why? Journal or share a story about that.

**Faith to Stand:** Read Daniel 3:17-18. Continuing the metaphor of the story of "standing up" we learn that results are not guaranteed. It has been said that, "God does not promise us salvation from suffering, but salvation through it and beyond it."

- Journal or share what particularly strikes or challenges you from how Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego handle this situation.

**Faith-Filled Integrity:** Consider these motivations to stand strong.

- Didn't want to let their Father down. • "Please don't value created things over your Creator."
  - Wanted to preserve the most sacred thing about themselves. • "What shall it profit you to gain [all the fools' gold in] the world but lose [the most precious gift you have] - your own soul?" (Matthew 16:26)
  - Hoped to strengthen the power of their witness. • Don't lose your witness to gain the comfort of conformity.
  - Had their eyes on the joy set before them. • Don't lose your joy by avoiding the cross that is set before you. (Hebrews 12:2)
- How does each one of these motivations look in your everyday life? Be specific. Think through family, work, friends and interactions with strangers.
  - To answer the question above it might help to rewrite the motivation in your own words?

**Practice of the Week: *Pray through your motivations.***

Read through the list of motivations to stand strong above. For each one craft a breath prayer that you can pray for each one when that motivation is being challenged. A breath prayer is a spiritual practice where you (1) breathe in, calling on a biblical name or image of God, and (2) breathe out a simple God-given desire.

### **We'd love to hear from you!**

If you have thoughts, questions, comments, ideas on how to make these study guides more meaningful for you or your small group, please let us know.

We also enjoy hearing how God is using these study guides in your lives.

Roger Peer (Co-author) contact through Eric Haskins: ehaskins@christchurch.us