

## Part 5: “Encountering God’s Promotion”

### *Daniel 3:1-30*

#### Introduction

In Daniel 3: 1-30 we see the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, three Hebrew companions of Daniel appointed as assistants to him as he ruled over the province of Babylon. King Nebuchadnezzar created a statue ninety feet tall and nine feet wide and set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon. Then Nebuchadnezzar made a decree -- people of all races, nations, and languages must bow to the statue at the sound of any harp, lyre, horn, flute, pipes, and any other musical instruments or face being thrown in a blazing furnace.

This request was obviously problematic for Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego; they were being asked to conform to the values of the culture. Much like today’s believers, these three young men lived in a secular culture that sought to conform them to a humanistic worldview. As believers, we are pressured to conform to the values of the day which is ultimately idolatry. The culture wants Christ followers to “dumb-down” God and elevate man so that the two are indistinguishable. This presents an opportunity for righteous suffering when God’s people refuse to follow the crowd. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego would not conform to the culture and as a result they had to suffer. However, their suffering was not due to their work but to their worship. Notice that the Hebrew boys had official positions under King Nebuchadnezzar (Dan 3:12). Alongside Daniel, they were granted their work through God’s favor and they completed their tasks with diligence and respect for the King (Dan 2:46-49). However, they would not compromise a clear biblical value for the sake of their careers, positions, or recognition.

Believers must resolve to trust God’s sovereignty over man’s power. Many believers face the pressures of compromise today in their corporate environments or in their personal relationships. Instead of bowing to this pressure, believers must resolve to stay committed even in the midst of righteous suffering. Faith in God did not keep them from the fire, but God joined them in the fire. Sometimes God keeps us from the difficulty but other times we must look for God’s presence in the middle of the trial or hard moments. We must be willing to suffer for righteous reasons so that God can get the glory.

Nebuchadnezzar recognized God’s glory and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego got promoted because they were willing to take a stand. Many believers don’t get promoted because they are not willing to take a stand for God, instead they acquiesce to the culture and that is not what God has called them to do. Only God promotes! Since God promotes, you should be more committed to Him than those who only appear to hold this power.

#### Getting Started

1. Many of us often find ourselves in compromising positions because we seek to serve God but still live in the world. Tell your group about a time when you felt pressured to conform to a standard that was contrary to your biblical value system.
2. Why do you think Daniel named Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego as his companions to help him rule over Babylon? What character traits would you use to describe these three?

#### Let’s Get Personal

1. What suffering have you endured because of your spiritual commitment?
2. What promotions has God brought about in your life because of unwavering faith?
3. As you listened to this week’s sermon, did you experience the conviction of the Holy Spirit? In what areas of your life do you need to stop compromising?

#### Take the Next Step

1. What do you admire about the faith of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego? What can you do this week to grow and mature your faith?
2. Want to go deeper? Take a look at the following passages: Daniel 1:1-21; Daniel 6:1-28; 1 Peter 2:20; 1 Peter 3:14, 17; 1 Peter 4:16, 19; 1 Peter 5:10; Psalm 75:6-7.

#### Renew Your Mind

*“But it is no shame to suffer for being a Christian...” 1 Peter 4:16*