

# “Counterfeit Faith”

Thriving in Babylon | Week Four | Newbreak Church

October 15th, 2023

Newbreak’s Sermon Study Guide is an in-house resource that serves sermon-based Life Groups and/or individuals who want to reflect further on how the message contributes to our spiritual formation.

We live in a defining hour of history. The Western world and our country’s moral landscape have changed and are changing faster than we can keep pace. What was once wrong is now right and what was once unacceptable is now celebrated. We are living in a type of “Babylon” and the question is how will we respond? How will we find hope when it seems all is lost?

## Icebreakers for Life Groups

- You can visit any fictional time or place. Which would you pick?
- What is one thing that you really wanted and saved up for as a child/adult? What about it really struck you as something desirable?

## Going Deeper Into the Message

**Read Daniel 3:1-12**

### **Point 1 – Expect my worship to be tested.**

After reading through this passage, what term was repeated six times in the first twelve verses? In fact, this word will be repeated five more times in the remainder of the chapter? The word is **“worship.”** The term “worship” literally means “worth-ship.” In other words, we worship things that we think are worthy of it. While we can love two things at once (I love God and I love my spouse), we can’t worship two things simultaneously. You cannot worship God AND, fill in the blank.

Humanity was created with the unique ability and drive to worship. You don’t see frogs creating an alter? Or foxes penning a beautiful symphony to God? Out of all of God’s creation, we are the only ones who worship, trust, and give adoration to God.

We all worship...even if it is not God that we worship. What we worship captivates us and governs our priorities. The things that we worship shape who we become and the decisions that

we make. The world around us entices us to worship money, beauty, success, comfort, and influence. It's no surprise then that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were challenged to worship something other than God in Babylon.

King Nebuchadnezzar set up a giant golden idol for the people of Babylon to fall down and worship. We don't know what the particular idol was but it was a challenge to every nation, language, and religious group to bow down to this particular god. Whoever chose not to follow the decree from the government would be immediately thrown into a fiery furnace to burn alive (Daniel 3:6). Imagine the pressure to conform? Think about how much you stood out if you didn't chose to follow the crowd and give your worship to this giant golden statue?

What do you think you would have done if you were in Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego's shoes? We know that these men didn't bow down and compromise their worship. They chose instead to give their worship to the Holy One of Israel (vs.12).

### Questions for Group Discussion or Personal Reflection

- As mentioned above, we can't worship two things at the same time. Has there ever been a time in your life when you tried to worship God and also give your worship to something in this world? How did that turn out?
- How do we live a life of uncompromised worship without completely separating ourselves from the world?
- Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego faced tremendous pressure to conform and worship the golden idol. Have you ever been in a situation where you were asked or influenced by someone to do something you knew was wrong? How did you handle that situation?

### Read Daniel 3:13-18

#### Point 2 – Walk with godly G.R.I.T.

Have you ever seen the old western “True Grit?” The movie told the story of an aging U.S. Marshall (played by John Wayne) that was hired to track and arrest an outlaw. John Wayne's character was hired because he was known as a man of “true grit.” Grit is defined as having courage and resolve; showing strength of character.



This word aptly defines the response of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the face of grave danger (vs.13-18). These faithful men stood their ground against the enraged King of Babylon by walking with godly G.R.I.T.

**God first (vs.14)-** Shadrach, Meschach, and Abednego did not serve or worship other gods.

**Resolve (vs.16)-** The three friends didn't need to defend themselves or their actions. They decided firmly on a course of action. They were resolved to worship God alone.

**Integrity (vs.17-18)-** Integrity is the state of being undivided, even if things don't go their way. The men showed integrity with their designs. Even if they weren't delivered from the fiery furnace, they would not serve or worship any other gods.

**Trust (vs.19-30)-** As you read on, you will see that Shadrach, Meschach, and Abednego went into the fire not knowing how or if God would save them but they continued to trust God and His plan for their lives.

### Questions for Group Discussion or Personal Reflection

- Shadrach, Meschach, and Abednego showed serious G.R.I.T. in remaining faithful to worship/serve God alone. How do you build godly G.R.I.T. in your life?
- When was the last time you felt the presence of God while going through a difficult trial? How did sensing God's presence make a difference in your life?
- What is your next step after discussing Daniel 3 with your Life Group tonight? Where do you need support and/or prayer?

### —FINAL CHALLENGE QUESTIONS—

How are you going to think or live differently in light of what you have read, heard, and discussed this week?

How does this week's message shape or nurture your relationship with God?

**BONUS:** For those of you with kids or around kids: What is one truth from this message that you can share with your kids in a way that they would relate to or understand?