



## HEROES

### Daniel

How would you classify your faith? Is it conditional? Have you warned God that you're done if he does or doesn't do something? Or, are you able to say, "God, I trust you and will follow you, EVEN when things don't go my way ... EVEN when the going gets tough."? Daniel and his friends had Unconditional faith that, when put to the test, stood firm. Would yours?

#### Scripture:

Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, his chief of staff, to bring to the palace some of the young men of Judah's royal family and other noble families, who had been brought to Babylon as captives. "Select only strong, healthy, and good-looking young men," he said. "Make sure they are well versed in every branch of learning, are gifted with knowledge and good judgment, and are suited to serve in the royal palace. Train these young men in the language and literature of Babylon." The king assigned them a daily ration of food and wine from his own kitchens. They were to be trained for three years, and then they would enter the royal service. Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were four of the young men chosen, all from the tribe of Judah. The chief of staff renamed them with these Babylonian names: Daniel was called Belteshazzar; Hananiah was called Shadrach; Mishael was called Meshach; Azariah was called Abednego.

Daniel 1:3-7

They said to King Nebuchadnezzar, "Long live the king! You issued a decree requiring all the people to bow down and worship the gold statue... That decree also states that those who refuse to obey must be thrown into a blazing furnace. But there are some Jews—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego—whom you have put in charge of the province of Babylon. They pay no attention to you, Your Majesty. They refuse to serve your gods and do not worship the gold statue you have set up."

Daniel 3:9

"O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God whom we serve is able to save us. He will rescue us from your power, Your Majesty. But even if he doesn't, we want to make it clear to you, Your Majesty, that we will never serve your gods or worship the gold statue you have set up."

Daniel 3:16

**Ice Breaker and Intro Question:**

1. Who is one of your heroes? Have you ever met them?
2. What resonated with you from Sunday's service? (Sermon, scripture, song, etc.)

**Discussion Questions**

3. Before Sunday's message, what did you know about the stories from Daniel, Shadrach, Meshack, and Abednego?
4. Have someone read Daniel 1:3-7 out loud to the group. Imagine what Daniel, Shadrach, Meshack, and Abednego must have felt – being removed from their home and forced to be in a new culture. What do you notice happening in this story?
5. Now, have someone read Daniel 3:9. Have another person read Daniel 3:16. What do you observe about the character of Shadrach, Meshack, and Abednego? What does this communicate about their understanding of God?
6. Eddie shared, "Daniel decided that none of God's commands are small commands." Our small choices matter. How might this look for us today? Brainstorm some ways that you and your group can be faithful in small, everyday ways.
7. Is your faith conditional or unconditional? Take a moment and ask yourself, is there something that might happen to me that would cause me to lose faith? How does this challenge you?
8. Close your group time in prayer. Try a new prayer format for your group – have everyone pray silently, or have everyone pray out loud together at the same time, or another option you choose.

**Notes:**