

Personal weekly Bible readings to go deeper into Scripture.

Memory Verse: Ezra 3:12

Day 1 – Chapter 19 of “The Story”

Day 2 – Ezra 1-3

Day 3 – Ezra 4-6

Day 4 – Haggai 1-2

Day 5 – Zechariah 1 & 8

Questions to consider while reading the Bible:

Is there an example to follow?

Is there a sin to avoid?

Is there a promise to rely on?

Is there a command to obey?

Is there a challenge in which to respond?



The Story: Daniel in Exile

January 26-27, 2013

“The Story” Chapter 18; Daniel 3:13-14; 16-26; 28

Please use this space to take notes during the message today.



Adult and teen small group discussion points

Please use these discussion questions in your small group or with your teens.

1. What's one of the strangest dreams you can recall?
2. When Daniel and his three friends became prisoners of war, they were pressured to change many things as part of their "training" process (Daniel 1; "The Story," pp. 249-250). What concessions were they willing to make and where did they draw the line and say no?
3. What is an example of an area where you have said, "I draw the line here and I will not cross it?" What has happened as you made this stand and maintained your integrity?
4. When Daniel heard of King Nebuchadnezzar's seemingly impossible request (Daniel 2:1-18: "The Story," pp. 250-252), he asked his three friends to pray and seek the face of God with him. Why is prayer the right response in this critical moment of Daniel's story? What is one situation you are facing right now that needs prayer and how can your group members support you in this way?
5. As Daniel explained the king's dream and its interpretation, he was careful to not take credit but give all the glory to God (Daniel 2:27-30; "The Story," pp. 252-253). In what ways can we be tempted to take credit for what God does? How can we give him the glory instead?
6. When Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refused to bow down to the golden idol, they did not know whether God would save them or not. Where does this kind of strength and integrity come from? Tell about a situation where you faced (or are facing) real pressure to compromise biblical truth.
7. When Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego ended up in the furnace, they discovered they were not alone (Daniel 3:25; "The Story," pp. 256). Describe a furnace time in your life when God showed up in a very personal and powerful way.
8. It is in the dark that light shines most brightly. What are some ways we can be part of our culture and still not compromise? Why is it valuable and even essential for Christians to understand and function within our culture

(without crossing the line of compromise) if we are going to bring Jesus to people for the first time and for a lifetime? Where is one place in your life that God wants his light to shine through you?



Close in prayer.

Family's with kids discussion points

Please use these discussion questions with your children.

Memory Verse: [Daniel] went to his room three times a day to pray. He got down on his knees and gave thanks to his God.—Daniel 6:10

1. Daniel followed God's rules, instead of the king's, and got in trouble. Have you ever gotten in trouble for doing the right thing? If so, what happened?
2. Daniel prayed even though he knew it could cost him his life. What are some things you pray about?
3. Daniel's punishment for praying to God was to be thrown into the lions' den. Everybody take turns doing their best lion's roar (even parents). Who protected Daniel from the lions?
4. King Darius knew Daniel served God. The king even said, "You always serve your God faithfully. So may he save you" (Daniel 6:16). Daniel showed King Darius true faith in God with his actions (by praying and trusting him for protection) without saying a word. What are some actions you can take to show others you serve the one true God?
5. Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were taken from Judah and brought to Babylon. But they refused to give up God's rules and follow new customs. Have you ever been in a situation where you felt you had to abandon God's standards to fit in?
6. Following God's ways can be very difficult sometimes. How was Daniel able to always follow God? What can you do that will help you always follow God?

Martin Luther wrote two prayers for all members of the family to use that ask God to send his angels to protect us. Find times this week to pray these prayers, perhaps they can become part of your daily routine.

Luther's Morning Prayer: I thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

Luther's Evening Prayer: I thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Your hands, I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

