

INTRO

- What is one thing you love about living in Toronto?
- When you think of idol worship, what immediately comes to mind?

Exiled from their homeland and stripped of their identity, Daniel and his 3 friends struggle to remain faithful to their God in a foreign land pressuring them to compromise their allegiance to their God. The book of Daniel explores the challenge of being “in Babylon but not of Babylon.” It offers valuable lessons to us today, especially for those trying to follow Jesus in Toronto.

READ

Daniel 3:1-30

REFLECT & RESPOND

Living in exile is like a furnace - we will be tested. In this story, we see 3 areas of testing: fire of **compromise**, **conviction** and **consequence**.

FIRE OF COMPROMISE (v1-7)

The biggest test in exile comes in the form of worship - will they/we be seduced by the surrounding idols or remain faithful to God? In a pluralistic culture like Babylon (and Toronto), there are competing idols for our allegiance.

Qu: what kind of idols do you think are powerful in a city like Toronto?

Here is a snapshot of 4 root idols that drive our behaviour:

Power: a longing for influence or recognition

Control: a longing to have everything go according to my plan

Comfort: a longing for pleasure

Approval: a longing to be accepted or desired

Qu: which root idol do you struggle with the most?

As image-bearers, there is only one image we are designed to bow down and worship. Failing to do that, we become enslaved to other idols.

FIRE OF CONVICTION (v8-18)

Focus on the response of the 3 friends in v16-18.

Qu: describe the nature of their resistance to the King. What can we learn from this?

The 3 friends' conviction is seen in their heart that is uncompromising in its allegiance to God, yet they have not withdrawn from Babylon.

Qu: Is compromise always wrong? When could a Christian's "uncompromising stand" hinder the gospel?

Holding Biblical convictions is good especially around core truths (like in this case), but sometimes we elevate personal convictions on non-core issues to the place of biblical convictions and that is not good.

FIRE OF CONSEQUENCE (v19-30)

Because life is like a furnace, we must remember fires are **inevitable** (so don't be surprised), and fires are **redemptive** (don't lose hope). As with the 3 friends, Jesus joins us in our furnace. *God's presence* in life's trials is more normative than *God's miraculous power* from trials.

Qu: How does Jesus join us in our trials?

RESPOND & PRAY

- What was most encouraging/challenging from today's discussion?
- How will you apply what you learnt to your life?
- Pray Isaiah 43:10 as a group together.
- Pray for each one to be a light in our own city, strengthened in conviction and uncompromising in allegiance to Jesus.