

BRAVE!

THE FIGHT AGAINST TOUGH STAINS IS OVER

LESSON ONE

FACING THE FURNACE

"Oh, the joys of those who TRUST in the LORD, who have no confidence in the proud, or in those who worship idols."
Psalm 40:4 (NLT)

"I WILL BE WITH YOU when you pass through the waters, . . . they will not overwhelm you. You will not be scorched when you walk through the fire, and the flame will not burn you." Isaiah 43:2-3 (HSCB)

STAIN: PEER PRESSURE

DEFINITION CORNER

* Social pressure by members of one's peer group to take a certain action, adopt certain values, or otherwise conform in order to be accepted (Dictionary.com)

Today we will meet three very BRAVE men in the Bible. You may have heard about them before: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Their example of BRAVERY could be the best movie of the year! Picture this—as the fire gets hotter, so does King Nebuchadnezzar's temper. Yet, three men **stand firm in their faith** and stare into the face of death itself. Will they fall into peer pressure and submit to this mighty king's command to worship an **IDOL**? Or, will they hold on to the roots of their faith in God Almighty and risk their very lives? Grab some popcorn and take a look at Daniel 3:16-28. (Your leader will read Daniel 3:1-15 to set the stage.)

1. If you could choose a title for a movie about this story, what would it be?
2. Did Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego BOW DOWN to the peer pressure of worshipping the gold statue or STAND FIRM and TRUST in God? What do you think made their faith so confident? (vs. 17, 18)

"Do not make idols of any kind You must never worship or bow down to them, for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God." Exodus 20:4-5

"You must not follow the crowd in doing wrong." Exodus 23:2 (NLT)

3. Read the verses above. What are some things you feel peer pressure to "bow" down to in our culture? Why does God not want us to follow the crowd in doing wrong?
4. Did God rescue them from having to go through this difficult circumstance? Why not?
5. Are you dealing with a peer pressure situation right now? Reading the definition for TRUST, how does God want you to trust in Him?

STAIN REMOVAL TIPS

• BRAVERY begins with **the choice to TRUST**. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego chose to TRUST in God and BELIEVE He would save them—even if it meant walking into a FIERY FURNACE.

• Here are **THREE things** we can LEARN from their BRAVERY.

1. **BE READY FOR BATTLE**. We need to have STRONG convictions about our faith BEFORE we "face the furnace" of difficult circumstances. Shad, Mendy, and Bendy did not bow down to this idol but stood firm and TRUSTED that God would save them.
2. **HAVE STRONG FRIENDS** who will walk with you in life and share the same TRUST you have in God. True friends will not pressure you to do something wrong.
3. Sometimes God allows us to go through the "fire" of hard situations. But, **GOD IS TRUSTWORTHY!** He promises us that He is always with us (Isaiah 43:2-3), we will be joyful (Psalm 40:4), and our faith will only become **stronger** and more **confident** in who He is.

"Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance." James 1:2-4

ANTISEPTIC: CLEANING AGENT

TRUST

* FIRM belief in the reliability, TRUTH, ability or strength of someone or something, to feel safe, put confidence in
/NOTE: Relationships have to be built on TRUST

DID YOU KNOW?...

RINSE CYCLE

"TRUST in the Lord with ALL your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight."
Proverbs 3:5-6

DID you know that GOLD has to be put into the fire numerous times to get rid of all the stains? They even wash gold with DETERGENT to get it clean! God allows us to go through the "FIRE" to not only test our faith, but also get rid of our impurities. Instead of falling into peer pressure or bowing down to the things of this world, we need to TRUST God with all our heart (Proverbs 3:5-6). God washes away our STAINS and CLEANSSES us into the people He created us to be!

Lord, please teach me to be READY when life gets HOT. Surround me with **GOOD friends** who care about me and desire to know You. I pray You would place an eagerness in me to KNOW Your Word and be PREPARED when the next challenge arises. Convict me when I place something in my life before You. I pray not to "bow down" to peer pressure but to STAND UP, be BRAVE, and TRUST in You! Amen.

PRAY BRAVE!