

Bible Character Study

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego | Daniel 3

Trials Establish Who is in Control

Have you ever found yourself very comfortable with the way your life is going? You feel like you are managing everything well... then BOOM – things get turned upside down by difficult circumstances. Many times God needs to do something (big or small) to get our attention. When we think we're in control, we need to stop and surrender and realize only God is the ONE who is really in control. The pressures and problems of this world are too big for us to control. We need to lay our burdens down at His feet, yield to His plan, and learn from Him.

Matthew 11:28-30 (NLT) *“Then Jesus said, ‘Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light.”*

Isaiah 29:15-16 (NLT) *“What sorrow awaits those who try to hide their plans from the Lord, who do their evil deeds in the dark! ‘The Lord can’t see us,’ they say. ‘He doesn’t know what’s going on!’ ¹⁶ How foolish can you be? He is the Potter, and he is certainly greater than you, the clay! Should the created thing say of the one who made it, ‘He didn’t make me’? Does a jar ever say, ‘The potter who made me is stupid’?”*

Isaiah 45:5-7 (NLT) *“I am the Lord; there is no other God. I have equipped you for battle, though you don’t even know me, ⁶ so all the world from east to west will know there is no other God. I am the Lord, and there is no other. ⁷ I create the light and make the darkness. I send good times and bad times. I, the Lord, am the one who does these things.”*

Romans 6:12 (NLT) *“Do not let sin control the way you live; do not give in to sinful desires.”*

Romans 8:28-29a (NLT) *“And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them. ²⁹ For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son...”*

Is God at the control center of your life, or are you living like you are? Will you let trials remind you of who is really in control? Rest in the fact that He wants to shape us to become more like Jesus.

Trials Remind Us to Examine Our Hearts

Trials have a distinct way of exposing our selfish thoughts, bitterness, anger, and other wrong behaviors. We need to take inventory of our hearts, confess any sin, and make sure that we are clean vessels that God can use. Do I have any sin in my life that needs to be confessed (bitterness, pride, discontentment, grumbling, anger, impurity, slander, etc.)?

Ephesians 4:31-32 (NLT) *“Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. ³² Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.”*

2 Corinthians 13:5 (NLT) *“Examine yourselves to see if your faith is genuine. Test yourselves. Surely you know that Jesus Christ is among you; if not, you have failed the test of genuine faith.”*

Proverbs 28:13 (NLT) *“People who conceal their sins will not prosper, but if they confess and turn from them, they will receive mercy.”*

Psalms 139:23-24 (NLT) *“Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. ²⁴ Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life.”*

Proverbs 16:2 (NLT) *“People may be pure in their own eyes, but the Lord examines their motives.”*

Proverbs 21:2 (NLT) *“People may be right in their own eyes, but the Lord examines their heart.”*

Trials Purify Us – Showing How Genuine Our Faith Is

As we read in this week's character study of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, the quality of their faith was proven pure and true as they endured through fiery trials. There is nothing more powerful than watching trials establish this genuine faith in someone. Going through trials is likened to gold going through the fire. The heating up process causes the impurities to rise to the surface and burn up so that all that is left is genuine pure gold!

What is your life saying to others as they see you going through trials? Is your faith genuine, pure, and strong? Are you bringing God praise by how you're responding to your trials?

1 Peter 1:6-7 (NLT) *"So be truly glad. There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you must endure many trials for a little while. ⁷ These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. So when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world."*

Daniel 12:10 (NLT) *"Many will be purified, cleansed, and refined by these trials. But the wicked will continue in their wickedness, and none of them will understand. Only those who are wise will know what it means."*

Proverbs 17:3 (NLT) *"Fire tests the purity of silver and gold, but the Lord tests the heart."*

Psalms 66:10 (NLT) *"You have tested us, O God; you have purified us like silver."*

Hebrews 12:5-8 (NLT) *"And have you forgotten the encouraging words God spoke to you as his children? He said, 'My child, don't make light of the Lord's discipline, and don't give up when he corrects you. ⁶ For the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes each one he accepts as his child.' ⁷ As you endure this divine discipline, remember that God is treating you as his own children. Who ever heard of a child who is never disciplined by its father?"*

Notes:

Reflection and Response from This Week’s Lesson:

What’s my take-away and how will I practice trusting God more through my custom-designed trials?

