

Counter-Cultural Worship

Daniel 3

What is worship?

The assignment or ascribing of VALUE to a person, place, object, idea or philosophy; and the corresponding ordering of our lives and priorities around how we have chosen to value that person or thing.

In order to worship counter-culturally we must...

1. Recognize the Conditions

Daniel 3:1-7

Homework assignment #1: Read the book of Daniel

Verses 1-7

1 Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height [was] sixty cubits [and] its width six cubits. He set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon.

2 And King Nebuchadnezzar sent [word] to gather together the satraps, the administrators, the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces, to come to the dedication of **the image which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.**

3 So the satraps, the administrators, the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces gathered together for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

4 Then a herald cried aloud: "To you it is commanded, O **peoples, nations, and languages,**

5 "[that] at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, [and] psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, you shall fall down and worship the gold image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up;

6 "and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast **immediately** into the midst of a burning fiery furnace."

7 So at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the horn, flute, harp, [and] lyre, in symphony with all kinds of music, all the people, nations, and languages fell down [and] worshiped the gold image which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

Beware when anyone attempts to blend spiritual allegiance and national allegiance.

In order to worship counter-culturally we must...

2. Refuse to Compromise

Daniel 3:8-18

Verses 8-15

8 Therefore at that time certain Chaldeans came forward and accused the Jews.

9 They spoke and said to King Nebuchadnezzar, "O king, live forever!

10 "You, O king, have made a decree that everyone who hears the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, [and] psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, shall fall down and worship the gold image;

11 "and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.

12 "There are certain Jews **whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon:** Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego; these men, O king, **have not paid due regard to you.** They do not serve **your** gods or worship the gold image **which you have set up.**"

13 Then Nebuchadnezzar, in rage and fury, gave the command to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. So they brought these men before the king.

14 Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying to them, "[Is it] true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, [that] you do not serve my gods or worship the gold image which I have set up?

15 "Now if you are ready at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, [and] psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, and you fall down and worship the image which I have made, [good]! But if you do not worship, you shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. **And who [is] the god who will deliver you from my hands?"**

Compromise only takes one time.

Verse 16

16 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, **we have no need to answer you in this matter.**

Don't feel compelled to explain to the culture why you will not compromise your values.

When you know you're guilty, there's no need to mount a defense.

Verses 17-18

17 "If that [is the case], our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver [us] from your hand, O king.

18 "But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that **we do not** serve your gods, **nor will we** worship the gold image which you have set up."

1. He is Able
2. He Will
3. If not... see #1

God's choosing not to deliver does not negate His ability to deliver.

Therefore...

1. WE DO NOT, and
2. WE WILL NOT

Homework assignment #2

1. Set a standard on which you will not compromise
2. State the standard clearly — **OUT LOUD! Speak it!**
3. Be convinced

Check your associations — surround yourself with people who will not allow you to easily compromise your values.

In order to worship counter-culturally we must...

3. Reap the Consequences (Willingly)

Daniel 3:19-27

Verses 19-25

19 Then Nebuchadnezzar was **full of fury**, and the expression on his face changed toward Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. He spoke and commanded that they heat the furnace seven times more than it was usually heated.

20 And he commanded certain mighty men of valor who [were] in his army to **bind** Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, [and] cast [them] into the burning fiery furnace.

21 Then these men were bound in their coats, their trousers, their turbans, and their [other] garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

22 Therefore, because the king's command was **urgent**, and the furnace exceedingly hot, the flame of the fire killed those men who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego.

23 And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, fell down **bound** into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

24 Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished; and he rose in haste [and] spoke, saying to his counselors, "Did we not cast **three men bound** into the midst of the fire?" They answered and said to the king, "True, O king."

25 "Look!" he answered, "I see **four men loose**, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the **Son of God**."

Verse 26

26 Then Nebuchadnezzar went near the mouth of the burning fiery furnace [and] spoke, saying, "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, servants of the Most High God, **come out, and come [here]**." **Then** Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego came from the midst of the fire.

Verse 27

27 And the satraps, administrators, governors, and the king's counselors gathered together, and they **saw** these men on whose bodies the fire had no power; the hair of their head was not singed nor were their garments affected, and the smell of fire was not on them.

We get the privilege of being examples of how you can survive in the fire — even thrive in the fire — while others would have perished at the door!