



## **FAITHFUL TO PUT GOD FIRST**

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They refuse to serve your gods and do not worship the gold statue you have set up. – Daniel 3:12b

## **THE FIERY FURNACE**

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READ DANIEL 3

It's been said that a stranger could tell what's important to us by looking at two things: our bank statements and our calendars. It's true that wherever we focus most of our money and time tends to reflect our true priorities and, in a sense, become what we worship. We may not face the same temptations to worship statues and false gods as Daniel did, but we certainly have idols of our own: those things that compete for the number-one spot in our lives.

Daniel's friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, found themselves facing a difficult choice. The king had ordered that anyone who did not bow down to the gold statue would be punished by death in a fiery furnace. These men knew that they could not bow down to or worship anyone or anything other than the one true God. Despite the pressures of the culture around them, they chose to remain faithful to God and to put him first, above everything and everyone else. They did not worship the statue and, as a result, were thrown into the furnace. But God was faithful to rescue them – they didn't even smell like smoke after spending the night in flames!

Daniel's friends knew that God might not rescue them, at least in the physical sense. There were no guarantees. They knew that God's ways were higher than theirs (Isaiah 55:8) and that there was a chance they would perish in the furnace. They told the king that even if God didn't rescue them, they would not serve any other god or bow down to any statue (Daniel 3:18).

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego had made a conscious choice to put God first, above all else. That matter was settled in their hearts before they ever faced the threat of the fiery furnace. We have that same choice set before us every day. Will we put God first today? Will we worship him above all else? Are we willing to follow him whether or not he sees fit to rescue us as he did Daniel's friends? It's worth thinking about today.

## **QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT**

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1. What are some things you are tempted to put before God?
2. Did you ever have to make a choice to put God first that put you in a difficult situation? How did it feel? Were there any repercussions?
3. Daniel's friends had each other to lean on for support. Who can you look to for support in your effort to put God first? How can you help others put God first?