

GUILTY: High School & College Lesson Pack

Table of Contents:

Lesson One: Decide Now to Stand Strong

Lesson Two: Do I Really Wanna Be Guilty?

Lesson Three: What Will It Take to Get My Attention?

Lesson Four: Obey God No Matter What

Lesson One: Decide Now to Stand Strong (High School & College)

Lesson Theme

In a culture that discourages devotion to God, I will determine and I will discipline myself to stand strong for God.

Theme Verse

“... Daniel was determined not to violate God’s law and defile himself . . .”
(Daniel 1:8 VOICE)

... Daniel resolved not to defile himself . . .” (Daniel 1:8 NIV)

Inductive Bible Discussion Guide

Brief Explanation

- This discussion guide is designed for just that... discussion. When I lead discussion group Bible studies, I do not have answers anywhere in the material, nor do I use a leader’s guide with all the answers written in.
- This is INTENTIONAL! I believe that the discipleship process should be an encounter with God, not just listening to someone else tell you what words to write down to fill in the blanks.
- Our goal is to help you facilitate discovery learning for your students. As the questions are asked, every participant (including the leader) is required to search God’s Word to discover the appropriate morsel of truth. When facilitators are 'armed' with all the answers, they are less likely to allow the time needed for individuals to process the question and formulate an answer.
- Don't be afraid of silence! That discovery process is the key to the success or failure of this process. It is in those moments of silence that we stop teaching and the Holy Spirit takes over!
- We cannot forget what Jesus said in John 16:13: *“when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth.”*

- For a deeper look at the issues presented herein, please look at the "Daniel – Teacher's Guide" or listen/watch the corresponding sermons at www.templerogers.org/obe/daniel_resources/)
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Ice Breaker Questions

Start the class time with the 'New Name' Activity. [See instructions below.]

How did it make you feel to be called by a new, different name? How did you feel when someone introduced themselves using your name?

Discussion Guide

Standing Strong: When Facing the Culture

Read Daniel 1:1-7. What kind of surprises did these country boys from Judah encounter in the metropolis of Babylon?

What made them a minority? Where might you be a minority?

What did the Babylonian government do to make sure that these boys would conform to their culture and political system?

Standing Strong: When the Time Comes

Read Daniel 1:8. Most English translations of the Bible use the word 'defile' in verse 8. What is another word for 'defile'? How would this situation contaminate or bring dishonor to Daniel?

[Distribute Activity Sheet 1.4 to any who want it.]

What risk was Daniel taking by making this decision?

Was this the first time that Daniel obeyed God? When do you think Daniel made his original decision to not 'defile' himself? Why is this important?

Most people have a 'price'—a point at which they will 'sell out' or compromise their principles. What is something that you would never compromise?

Standing Strong: While God Is Working

Read Daniel 1:9-10. What—or who—influenced the official, Ashpenaz, to be kind to Daniel? Does God also work in the hearts and lives of unbelievers to bring about His will and plan?

Read Proverbs 21:1. What does this verse teach you about God? How does this truth apply here in our own country?

Standing Strong: Never Give Up

Read Daniel 1:11-16. Why did Daniel keep trying to convince the authorities to let him do this? What would you call this character trait?

What about us? Do we give up on doing what we say we will do for God? What does this say about our character?

Standing Strong: God Will Reward You

Read Daniel 1:17-20. In addition to being the healthiest ones in the group, what else did God do to bless the young Hebrews?

How did Daniel's determination and discipline pay off?

Standing Strong: The Challenge Ahead

Part of discipline is learning to say 'No!' When do you say 'No' to yourself?

Another part of discipline is doing hard things. What are some of the hard things you have disciplined yourself to do?

Read Acts 5:29. How might this verse impact your life in the future? What do we need to do today to prepare ourselves for a future where Christianity is looked down upon, or even made illegal?

Activities & Games

A New Name Game [Opening Activity]

What You Need:

- Self-adhesive name-tags for students
- Markers to write their name on the name-tag.

What to Do:

- Have each student print his/her first name on a name-tag without removing the adhesive backing.
- Each student (including you) should then take his/her name tag and attach it to any other random class member (only one name tag per person).
- Once each person has placed his/her name-tag on someone else, introduce yourself by your “new” name . . . “Hello! My name is Rachael, and I don’t know where I’m from!” Invite others to follow suit.
- Call out others by their “new” name... such as “Welcome to camp, Judy!” or “Where are you from, Bob?” Have fun with this!
- After a few minutes of this confusion, ask them “So, how do you like your new names?” or “Do you like your new name better than your old name?”

Application:

- Explain to the students that today’s story is about a teen-aged boy who was kidnapped, taken to a foreign country and given a new name. But before you start on that story,

ask them to find their original name tag—the one with their REAL name on it—and then be seated.

- After the students have settled down, you can tell them “The guy who was kidnapped was named Daniel – the same “Daniel” that’s in the Bible. And yes, he was given a new name and it wasn’t at all who he was! Today’s Bible study will feature Daniel, his new name and his new life.”
- Refer to Activity Sheet 1.1 for more background information on the Book of Daniel.

SOAP Journals

- Make a copy of Activity Sheet 1.2 for each student. [Be sure to print these pages back-to-back so that they will function as a small booklet—or like a church bulletin.]
- At the end of the group discussion, introduce the concept of SOAP Journaling. Instructions on how to SOAP Journal are included on the cover page of this booklet.
- Challenge students to SOAP the first entry (Daniel 1) during TODAY’S quiet time after lunch and bring it back to class this afternoon. Be sure to follow up with them on this to see if they have any questions. “We cannot EXPECT something if we do not INSPECT it!” This sample journal is designed to be used each day of camp during ‘Quiet Time.’

Discipline Acrostic

- Make a copy of Activity Sheet 1.3 for each student.
- Explain the instructions at the top of the page. Each person’s acrostic will be unique and base upon their understanding of the concepts or components of Christian disciplines.
- After each individual completes their ‘DISCIPLINE’ acrostic, ask them the question at the bottom of the page: “What is the value of discipline?” Various answers will be given. If no one says it, tell them that the value of discipline is “15”—if we were playing scrabble!

Analysis of the Song "Guilty"

- Make a copy of Activity Sheet 1.5 for each student.
- Read the lyrics of "Guilty." The writer is proclaiming his determination to "do hard things," or to "stand strong like Daniel."
- Follow the instructions on Activity Sheet 1.5

Discipline Prayer Cards

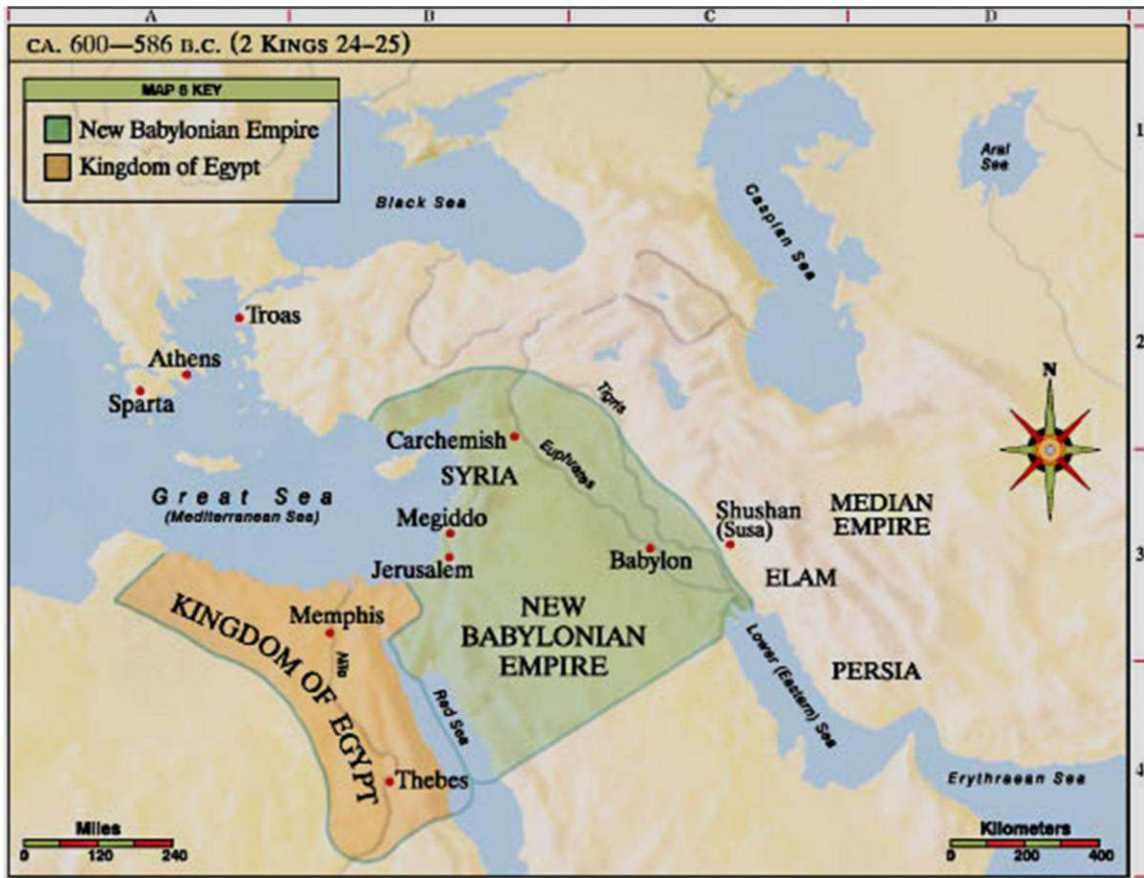
- For this activity, you will need index cards and one or two sets of "fine" or "extra-fine" markers
- In the tradition of "War Room," choose a prayer card and write your own prayer of intent to God. Title it "Discipline" and date it.
- Then write what is in your heart after today's lesson . . . a prayer for discipline and decision wherever it is needed.

Activity Sheets/Coloring Pages

- 1.1 – Cultural Background to the Book of Daniel
- 1.2 – "SOAP Journaling"
- 1.3 – "What is DISCIPLINE?"
- 1.4 – Daniel 1:8 Coloring Page
- 1.5 – "Guilty"

What was going on when Daniel was a kid?

- Egypt and Babylon were the two superpowers of the Middle East.
- Each country was competing for power, and it was only a matter of time until they would finally clash.
- The decisive battle that determined the fates of each empire finally came in the early summer of 605 B.C. in Carchemish, on the upper Euphrates River, in modern day Syria.



- After being defeated at Carchemish, the Egyptian armies retreated to their homeland which left Palestine undefended to ward off the Babylonian attackers.
- As a result, by August of 605 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar took control of the city of Jerusalem.
- A few weeks later, Nebuchadnezzar's father, King Nabopolassar, died in Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar rushed home to claim the throne.
- He was crowned King of Babylon on the day of his arrival the next month.
- On this trip home, Nebuchadnezzar carried captive with him some of the sacred vessels of the Temple of Jehovah in Jerusalem and the cream of the Jewish young men.
- Daniel and his companions were among those captives.
- Daniel was around 14-15 at the time of his captivity.

Title _____ Date _____
Text Daniel 6:1-28

S.O.A.P. Journaling

S

SOAP is a method of Bible reading and journaling: Scripture, Observation, Application, Prayer. It can be used with any daily Bible reading plan. You'll need a Bible, a journal and a pen.

S for Scripture

Open your Bible to today's reading. Take time reading and allow God to speak to you. When you are done, look for a verse that particularly spoke to you that day, and write it in your journal.

O

O for Observation

What struck you and caught your attention in what you read?
What do you think God is saying to you in this Scripture? Ask the Holy Spirit to teach you and reveal Jesus to you.

A

A for Application

Personalize what you have read, by asking yourself how it applies to your life right now. Perhaps it is instruction, encouragement, revelation of a new promise, or corrections for a particular area of your life. Write how this Scripture can apply to you today.

P

P for Prayer

This can be as simple as asking God to help you use this Scripture, or it may be a greater insight on what He may be revealing to you. Remember, prayer is a two way conversation, so be sure to listen to what God has to say! Now, write it out.

Title _____ Date _____
Text Daniel 1:1-21

S

O

A

P

Title _____ Date _____
Text Daniel 3:1-30

S

O

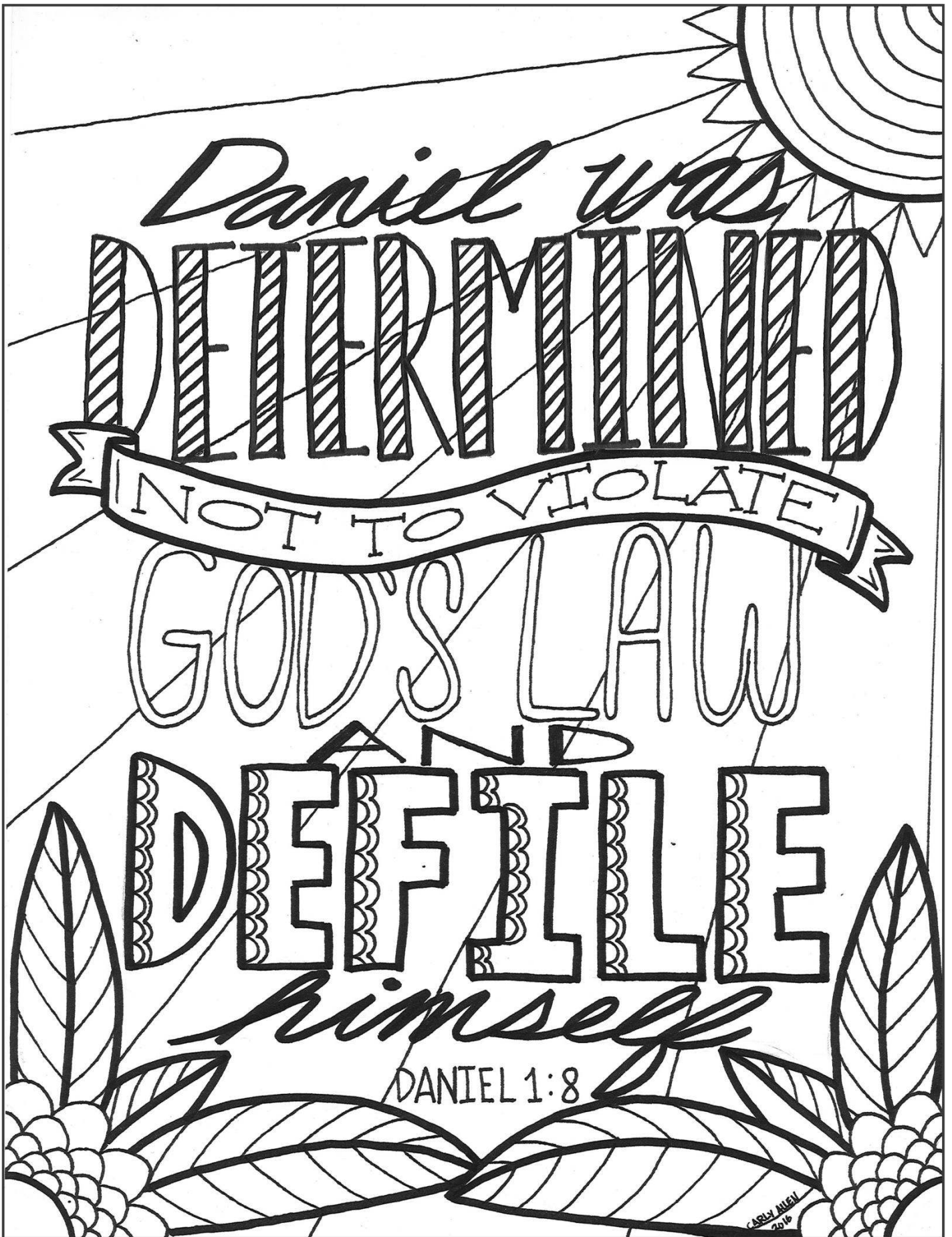
A

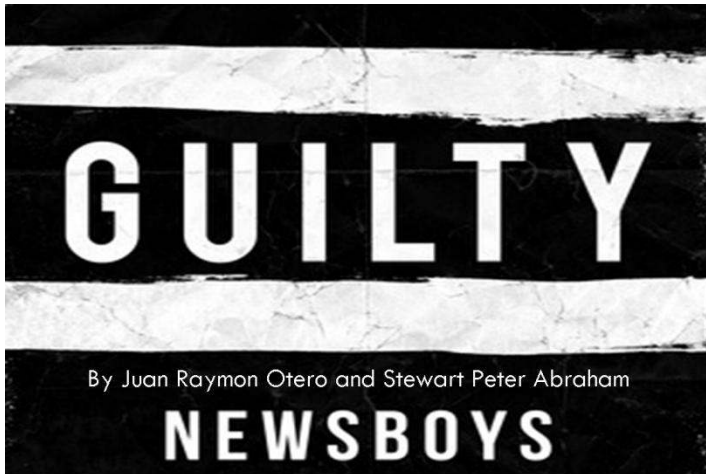
P

Instructions: Using the word 'discipline,' create an acrostic that reinforces the concepts of Christian disciplines or words that are Christian disciplines. Example: "D—Decide to Obey"

D ₂	_____
I ₁	_____
S ₁	_____
C ₃	_____
I ₁	_____
P ₃	_____
L ₁	_____
I ₁	_____
N ₁	_____
E ₁	_____

What is the value of discipline?





- Highlight all the lyrics that state intent to stay true to God
- Underline all the lyrics that describe opposition to God
- Draw a star next to lyrics that are challenging you
- Using any variety of symbols (asterisk, arrows, circles, emojis, drawings, etc.), illustrate the song
- Example, draw a broken ruler beside "breaking a rule" or a circle with a slash through it – be creative!

When did it become breaking a rule
To say Your name out loud in school
When Your name's the only one that sets us free
When did it become incorrect
To speak the truth about life and death
When Your life gave us all eternity
Even if it gets me convicted
I'll be on my knees with my hands lifted

**If serving You's against the law of man
If living out my faith in You is banned
Then I'll stand right before the jury
If saying I believe is out of line
If I'm judged cause I'm gonna give my life
To show the world the love that fills me
Then I wanna be guilty**

I'll rise up and honor You
I'll testify to the good You do
Cause Your Grace and Your Mercy have overtaken me
Even if it gets me convicted - I'll be on my knees with my hands lifted

Lesson Two: Do I Really 'Wanna' be Guilty? (High School & College)

Lesson Theme

God is able to save and rescue me, but even if he chooses not to rescue me, I will still be obedient to Him! We are called to be obedient regardless of the outcome.

Theme Verse

“... the God we serve is able to rescue us... and release us from your power... But even if He does not, O king, you can be sure that we still will not serve your gods...” (3:17-18, Voice)

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Ice Breaker Questions

What’s the hardest thing you’ve ever had to do? Why was it so difficult?

In your experience, how do people usually behave in stressful situations?

Have you ever had to stand up for your beliefs? What happened?

Discussion Guide

The Situation They Found Themselves In

Read Daniel 3:1-7. What was happening on the plains of Dura? How tall was the statue? (1 cubit=1.5 feet) What is that equivalent to today?

Who was gathered together in this place? Why were they gathered?

Once everyone was there, what did the king command them to do? What would happen to anyone who was unwilling to do this?

Did everyone obey this command? Who did not?

The Accusation They Were Guilty Of

Read Daniel 3:8-12. Who accused the three Hebrews? From what you know about these Hebrews (1:17-21 and 2:48-49), why would the other officials want to get them in trouble?

Have you ever had someone that hated you and tried to get you in trouble?
What was their reason why? How did you deal with it?

What were the charges brought against the Hebrews? (verse 12)

The Cross-Examination They Went Through

Read Daniel 3:13-18. What did the king do when he heard about this?

What options were the three Hebrews given by the king? How did they respond? What was the basis of their decision?

Have you ever been in a position that was “between a rock and a hard place”? How did you make your decision?

Read verse 18 again. Did Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego doubt God’s power to save them? Why did they say this?

The Conviction They Agreed To

Read Daniel 3:19-23. How did Nebuchadnezzar react to their stand?

When they were thrown into the fire, the Bible says there were four men in the fire. Who was the fourth man in the fire? What was the ultimate purpose for this miraculous deliverance?

What did Nebuchadnezzar do as a result of this experience? Did he experience a saving faith in God after this happened? Or did he just add Jehovah God to the list of his other gods? What is the difference between trusting God with all that you are and believing that He exists?

The Application We Need

Look through the first three chapters of Daniel. What specific actions and attitudes enabled the three Hebrews to stay close to God? (i.e. prayer, obedience, dedication, etc.)

How can we give up our control and put our life in God's hands just as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego did?

Who is writing the script for your life? Are you trying to control it or are you letting God take the reins?

How will you live out the truth of this passage?

- **Be faithful.** Ask God to meet you at camp this week. Ask Him to help you find an accountability partner that will help you continue to seek him throughout the school year.
- **Be involved.** Get involved in ministry and service. Encourage others in their walk with Jesus. Become a Prayer Warrior! See Activity Sheet 2.3.
- **Be bold.** Stand up for truth no matter what the outcome. Get involved in a mentoring relationship with someone! Become a mentor yourself. See Activity Sheet 2.4.

Activities & Games

Activity Sheets/Coloring Pages

- 2.1 – “Zentangle Fire”
- 2.2 – “The Fiery Furnace” Coloring Page
- 2.3 – “How to be a Prayer Warrior”
- 2.4 – “Standing Together”
- 2.5 – “Q & A”

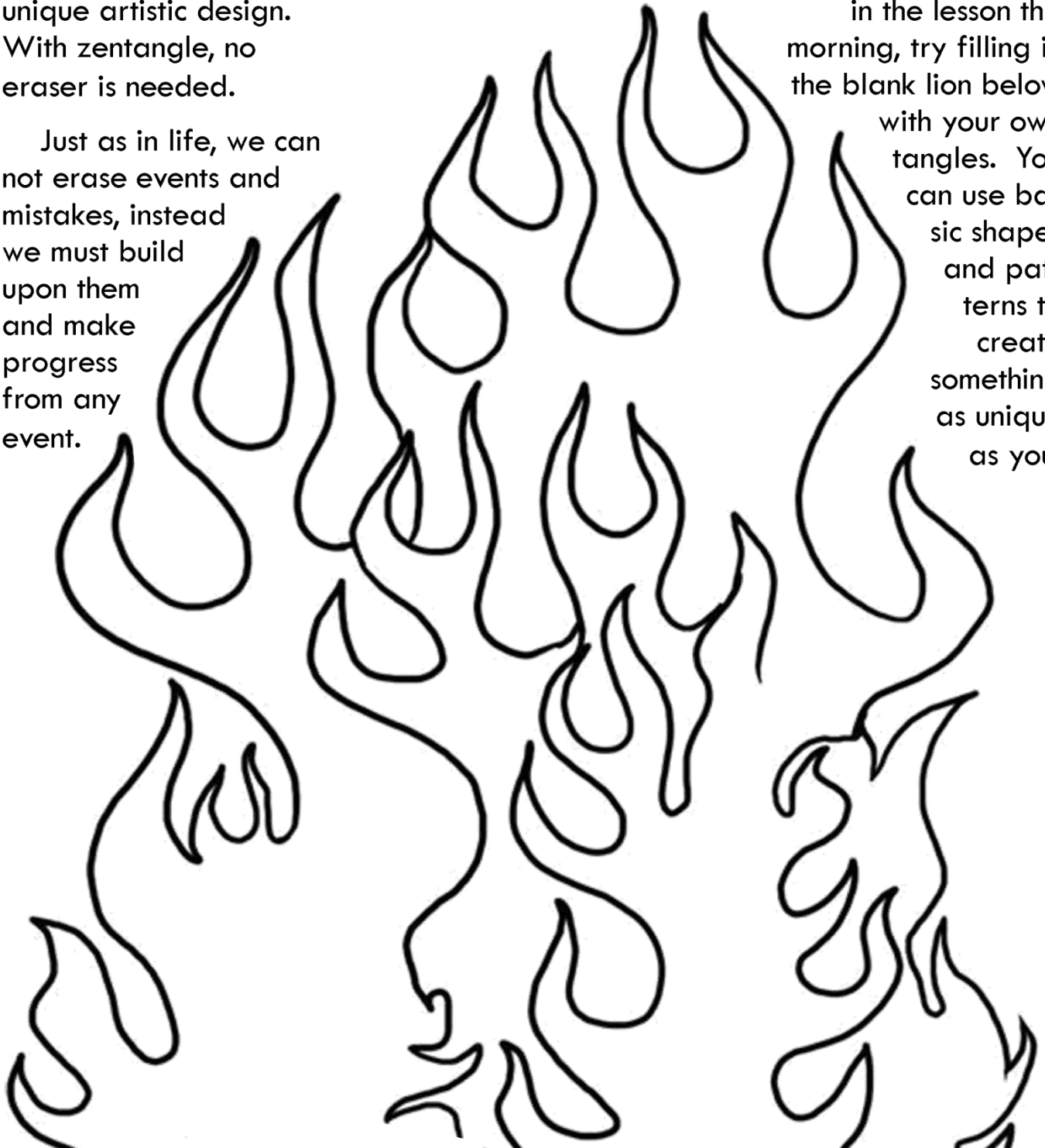
ZENTANGLE



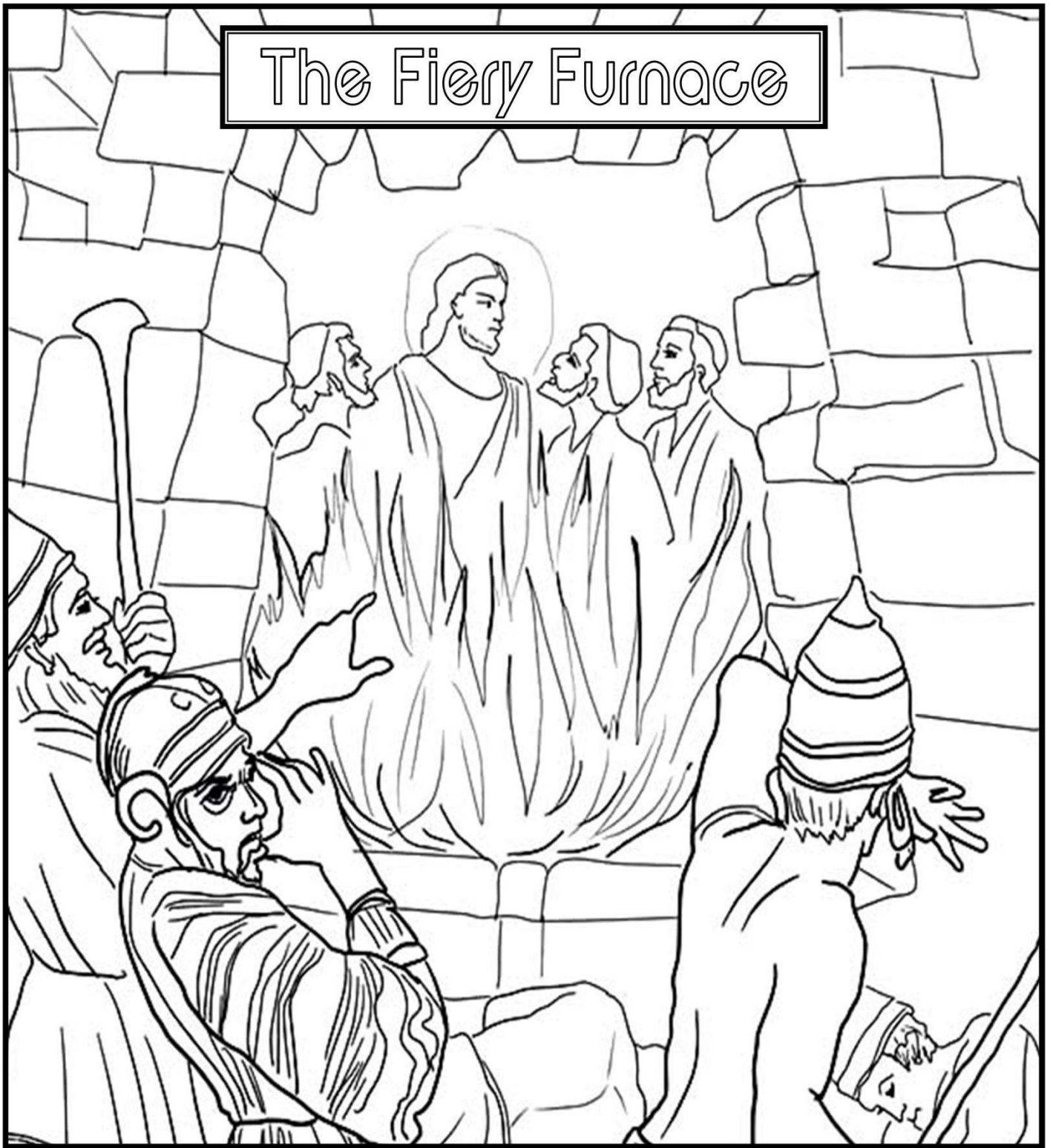
A zentangle is a unique artistic design. With zentangle, no eraser is needed.

Just as in life, we can not erase events and mistakes, instead we must build upon them and make progress from any event.

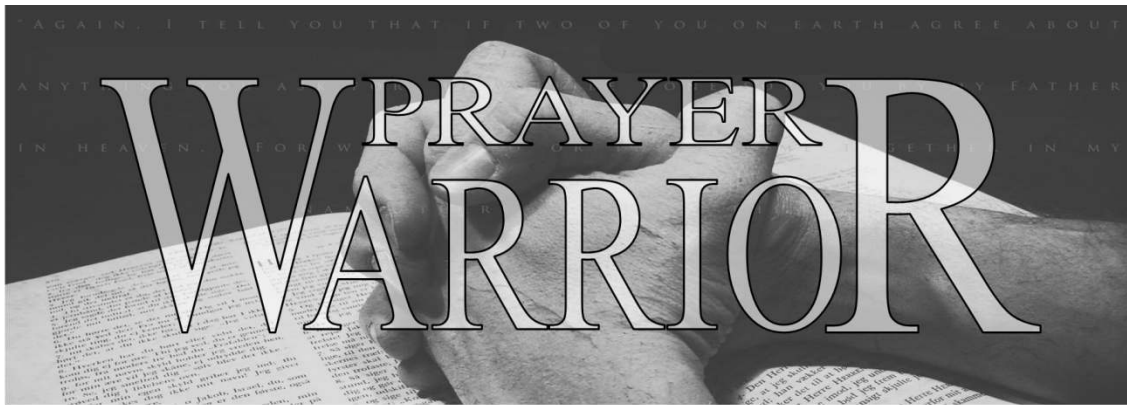
As you participate in the lesson this morning, try filling in the blank lion below with your own tangles. You can use basic shapes and patterns to create something as unique as you!



The Fiery Furnace



“O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God whom we serve is able to save us. He will rescue us from your power, Your Majesty. But even if he doesn’t, we want to make it clear to you, Your Majesty, that we will never serve your gods or worship the gold statue you have set up.”



How to become a Prayer Warrior:

1. **Make a commitment.** Tell a friend. Put it on your calendar. Set a timer. Make it real. Without it, all those other “have to do’s” will push prayer out.
2. **Pray before the world starts calling your name.** It’s easier to fight distractions (class, to-do list, phone, emails, etc.) before we are surrounded by them than after.
3. **Find a place/time that is solely for your prayers.** I use my husband’s office in the evening because it’s away from distractions, has enough room to walk around in, and I won’t be bothered when I start praying out loud. Even walking into the room helps to focus my brain on prayer instead of my to-do list.
4. **Walk and pray.** Try going outside and praying as you walk around. Look up to the heavens and feel a closeness to God that you can’t always feel under a roof.
5. **Pray out loud.** Out loud prayers seem to be the most honest and child-like instead of hiding behind pomp and those Christian buzzwords. Hearing your words out loud helps to keep you focused.
6. **Write it down.** When you find yourself distracted, try writing out your prayers like a letter to God.
7. **Find an accountability partner.** Look for a friend to join you and encourage each other to make daily time in prayer.

How to pray each day of the week:

Sunday: Adoration and Thanksgiving

(Spend a day just thanking God for who he is and what he’s done in your life. No requests, just thanks)

Monday: World/Our Nation and Leaders

(Choose a country and pray for their biggest need. Pray for the president, your state senators and congressmen and whatever current events are happening)

Tuesday: Your School

(Pray for the school Leaders, the students, the staff, and that God would move on campus)

Wednesday: Family/Friends

(Pray for those closest to you, place them in God’s hands and intercede for them)

Thursday: Your Loves

(Current or Future Spouse and children)

Friday: Your Hurts

(Pray forgiveness for those that have wronged you, and lay down whatever is hurting your soul at the feet of our King.)

Saturday: Your Church/ other Ministries

(Pray for the leaders in your church and campus ministries. Pray for the members of these groups that their hearts will be prepared for the service on Sunday)

STANDING together

Living courageously is hard, and we aren't meant to do it alone. Standing without fear is easier when we have someone to stand with us. One of the best ways to foster this type of community is to seek out a mentor.

Begin to think and pray about an older individual that you trust and respect who could serve as a mentor to you. Ask God to guide you in this process.

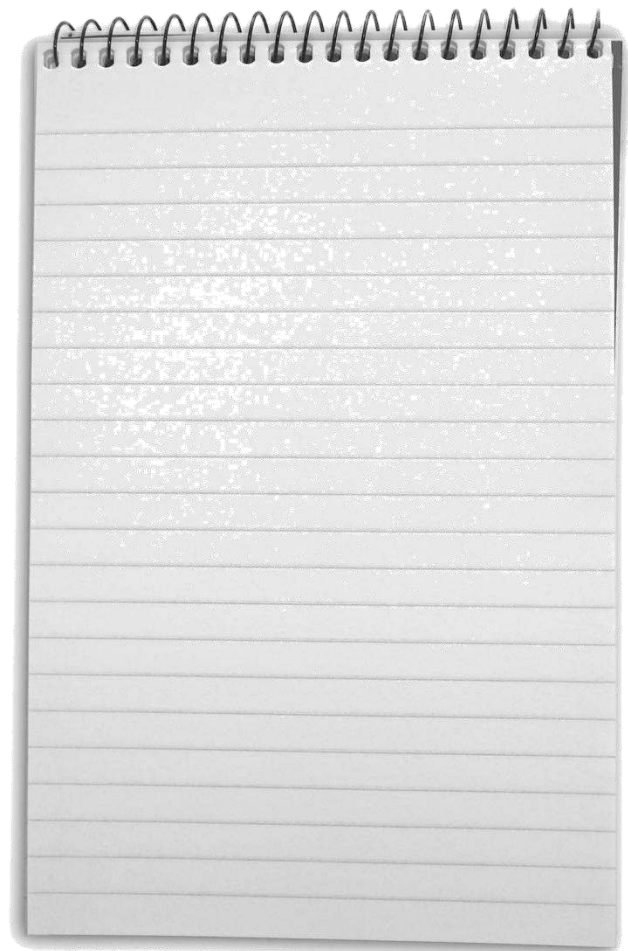
Outline how you think you could benefit from a relationship like this. Ask the individual to meet with you so you can explain why you would like them to mentor you and how you would like to grow in your walk with Christ.

This may not be an easy conversation to have. It will require courage and vulnerability on your part.

Ask the person if they would be willing to walk with you as you seek Christ and learn to stand courageously for what you believe. If the person agrees, set up a meeting plan and dive into what God has for you.

Who might be a good mentor for you?

In the space below, write out a prayer, asking God to guide you through this process. List any possible mentors at the bottom.





Despite how distant or disconnected you feel, God hasn't gone anywhere.

Q. I feel far from God right now. I pray and hear nothing. How do I know he's listening? Or even there? I'm afraid I'm missing his answers or that he's not hearing me.

Answer You're not alone. Almost every Christian feels this way sometimes. Read Psalm 22:1-2. King David, who certainly knew God, wrote: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? . . . I cry out by day, but you do not answer" (NIV). We often feel God is distant or

disconnected. Even Jesus felt this way—and quoted this Psalm—when he was on the cross.

But despite how you feel, God hasn't gone anywhere. He created you, and he loves you so much that he made arrangements for you to live with him forever (Romans 8:32). Since God is so deeply committed to you, he's not going to walk away from you. In fact, he's watching over you. Right here. Right now. You may not see him or hear him, but you're on his mind, and he loves you. Keep your eyes open, and watch for God's presence in your life. You may not see him all the time, but like the wind, you can see the effect he has. Maybe you see him in how he provides. Or comforts. Or the people he sends into your life.

God wants you to keep looking for him by praying, reading his Word and living out your faith. "Come and pray to me, and I will listen to you," God says. "You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart" (Jeremiah 29:12-13, NIV).

Written by Marshall Shelley

Lesson Three: What Will It Take to Get My Attention? (High School & College)

Lesson Theme

If we are disobeying God in our lives, He will put us into situations to get our attention. He can do this because He is in control of everything, but it is our decision if we will pay attention to His work in our lives!

Theme Verse

“...please accept my advice to you. Make a *clean* break with your sins and invest in what is right. Bring an end to your wicked deeds and show mercy to those you have beaten down.” (4:27 VOICE)

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Ice Breaker Questions

Options #1:

Have you ever gone through an extremely difficult experience? What effect did that experience have on your personal relationship with God?

I have often heard stories about people coming into a relationship with God only after they ‘hit rock bottom’ in their lives. Have you—or someone you know—experienced this? What happened?

In your opinion, how important is it to God that we depend upon Him? In what ways do difficult circumstances bring about dependence upon God?

Option #2:

Why do bad things happen in life? What is God’s purpose in allowing difficult circumstances to come up in our lives? (see Genesis 50:20)

When bad things happen, people often quote Romans 8:28. What does that verse say? It mentions the purposes of God at the end of that verse. What is God’s purpose for salvation? (Romans 8:29 explains that God’s purpose for salvation is for every believer to be conformed to the image of God’s Son. Ephesians 2:8-10 explains that we have been saved by grace through faith for a purpose—we are created in Christ to do good works. The purpose of salvation is to be like and act like Jesus.)

☒ *In our study today, we are going to look at the lives of two kings in Babylon to see how God brought about circumstances in their lives to show them that He is the one true God and sovereign over everything.*

Discussion Guide

(For more background information about Nebuchadnezzar and the events surrounding this story, please consult *The Book of Daniel Teacher Notes*, page [48-49](#) and [55-56](#).)

For a more concise understanding of the lesson theme, consider utilizing Activity Sheet 3.5 – “The Tale of Two Kings.”

How does the Bible describe Nebuchadnezzar’s quality of life? (Daniel 4:4)

How does a person’s quality of life affect his outlook on life?

Nebuchadnezzar’s Dream Became a Nightmare

In Daniel 2, Nebuchadnezzar had his first dream. The dream revealed that he—and the Babylonian Empire—would be the greatest empire in the world. In Daniel 4, Nebuchadnezzar had another dream.

Read Daniel 4:6-12. What did Daniel see in his dream? What did this portion of the dream mean (see 4:20-22)?

Read Daniel 4:13-17. What happened next in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream? What was the meaning of this part (see 4:23-25)?

Read Daniel 4:25-27. What was God’s purpose for allowing these things to happen to Nebuchadnezzar?

God gave Nebuchadnezzar this dream as a warning of what would happen to him if he did not recognize that the Most High God is in control of all the kingdoms of the world. When did this dream actually come true (Daniel 4:28-33)? Why did God choose that moment to implement this punishment upon Nebuchadnezzar?

Have you ever had an experience where you felt that God was trying to warn you to stop doing the sinful things you were doing? What happened? What did you do in response to this warning?

Belshazzar Saw the Handwriting on the Wall

(For more background information about Belshazzar and the events surrounding this story, please consult *The Book of Daniel Teacher Notes*, pages [60-61](#) and [67-69](#).)

In Daniel 5, we are introduced to King Belshazzar. Several years have passed since Nebuchadnezzar was king, and now one of his descendents has risen to rule over the empire. From reading Daniel 5:1-4, what is King Belshazzar doing?

There were many things that were happening at Belshazzar's party. What were some of those things? How does that compare to the parties that people you know have today?

These things that were happening were drawing him away from a life lived for God. What are some things that draw us away from God?

Anything that draws you away from God is idolatry. What are some idols in our lives?

- Physical things – (i.e. living to eat and drink, focus on satisfying bodily appetites, addictions to sex, Rx and illegal drugs, alcohol, nicotine, pornography, etc.)
- Material things – (i.e. clothes, electronic gadgets, cars, homes, boats, any kind of property etc.)
- Intangible things – (i.e. degrees, letters and titles, security that comes from wealth)
- Financial priorities – (i.e. buying cars, houses and other stuff, but not able to afford to 'tithe')
- Recreational things – (i.e. hunting, fishing, vacations, picnics, outings, sports of all kinds, etc.)
- Social standing – (i.e. power, prestige, influence, etc.)

What did Belshazzar do that offended God (5:4)? How did God respond to his offensive behavior (5:5)? What was Belshazzar's reaction (5:6-7)?

Read Daniel 5:22-28. What was the charge against King Belshazzar (5:22-23)? What was the meaning of the handwriting on the wall (5:25-28)?

God Speaks Truth into Our Lives

What truth did God reveal to Nebuchadnezzar about his life (4:32)?

What truth did God reveal to Belshazzar about his life (5:22-23a)?

What truth has God revealed to you about your life today?

Change or Stay the Same...The Choice Is Ours

What was the result of God's punishment upon Nebuchadnezzar (4:34-37)?

What was the result of God's punishment upon Belshazzar (5:31-32)?

As we consider the outcome of each man's life, what can we learn and apply to our own life? What will it take for God to get our attention?

Activities & Games

SOAP Journal Review

- In Lesson 1, the concept of SOAP Journaling was introduced. The goal in this activity is to encourage the students to continue 'SOAPing' and answer any questions that they might have concerning this process.
- Ask the following series of questions:
 - How many of you tried to do your SOAP Journal yesterday during your quiet time?
 - Is there anything that you didn't understand about it?
 - Why is reading your Bible, prayer and journaling important in your personal spiritual growth?

- Would anyone like to share something that God taught them through their SOAP Journal yesterday?
- You might consider repeating this activity in Lesson 4.

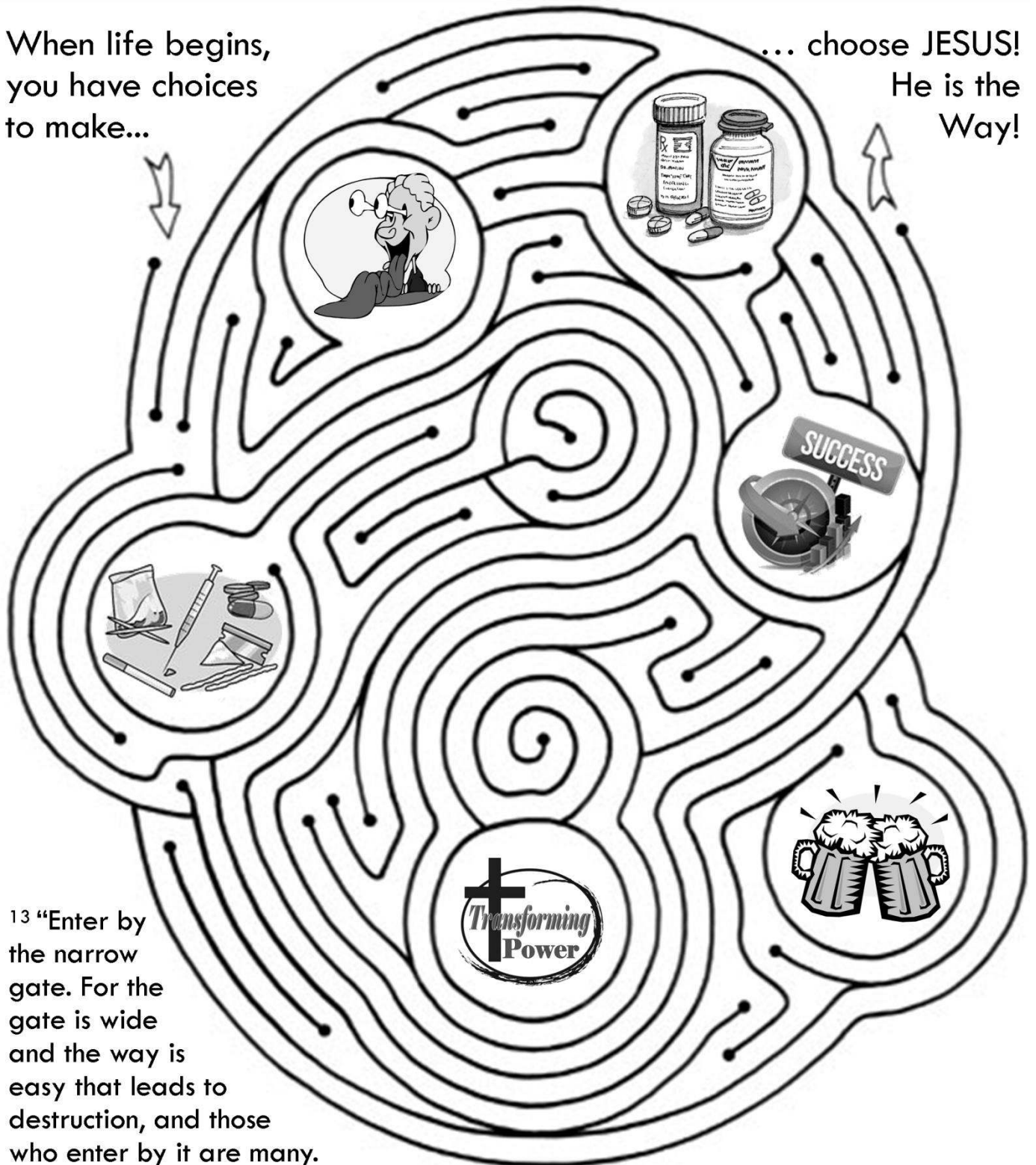
Activity Sheets/Coloring Pages

- 3.1 – “Choose Wisely” Maze
- 3.2 – “Repent” Maze
- 3.3 – “Change” Coloring Page
- 3.4 – “All Things” Coloring Page
- 3.5A – “The Tale of Two Kings” Outside Page
- 3.5B – “The Tale of Two Kings” Inside Page

CHOOSE WISELY

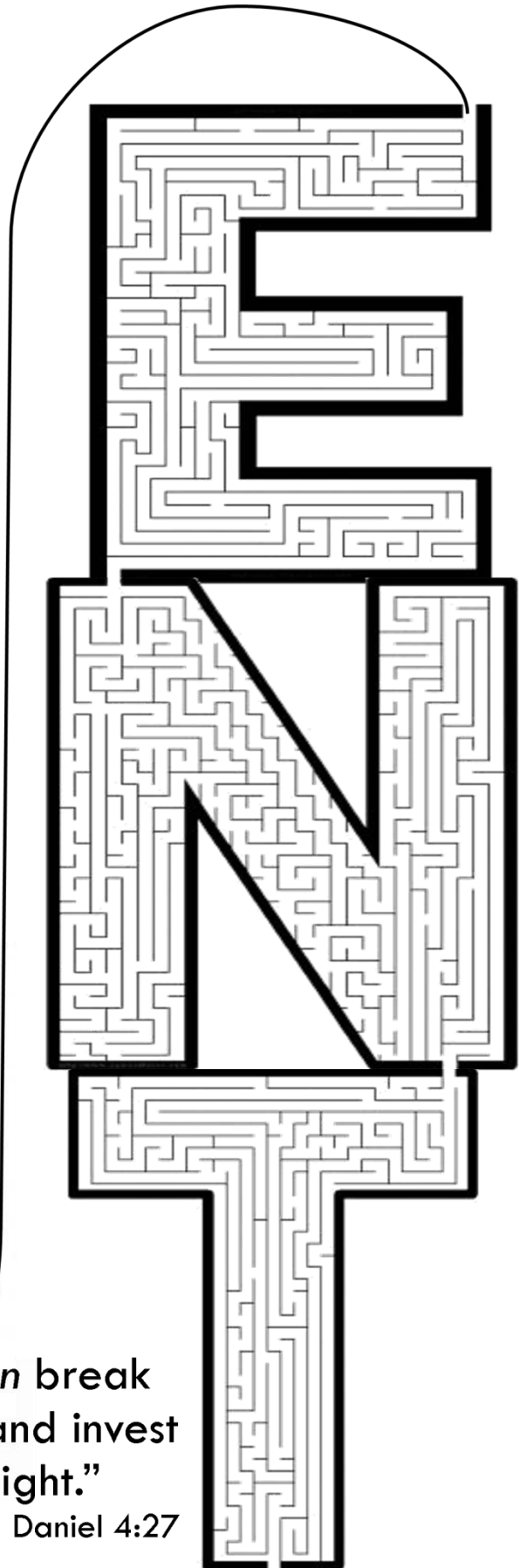
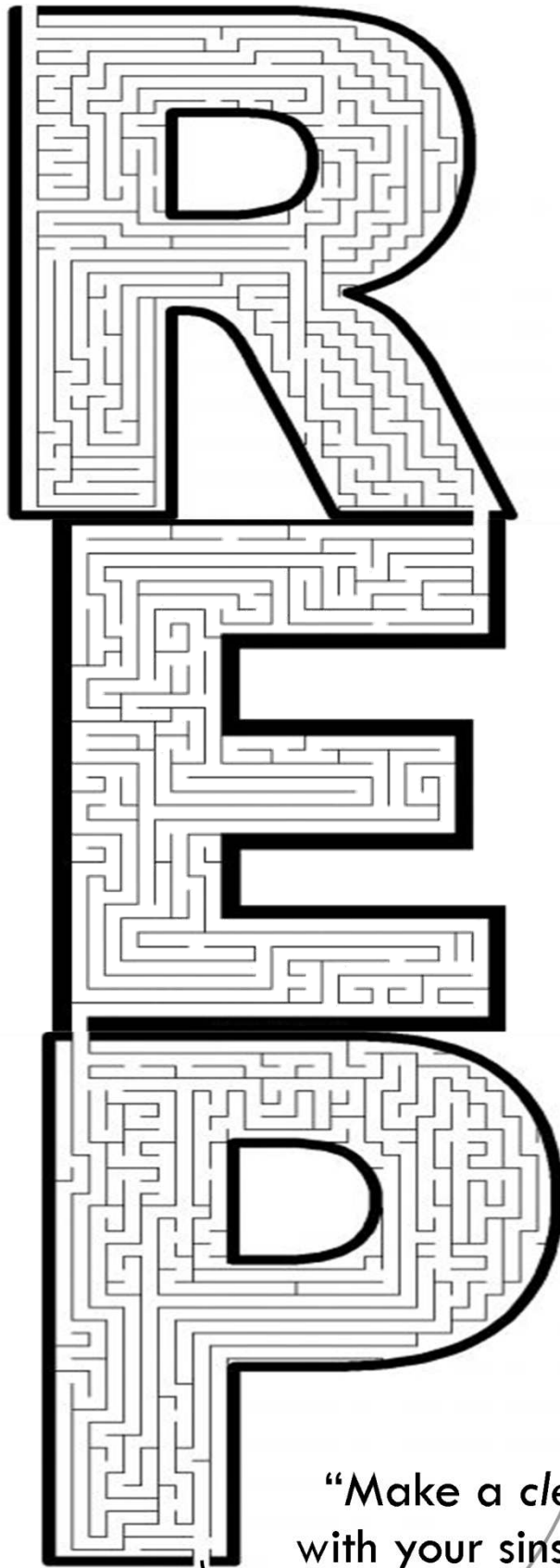
When life begins,
you have choices
to make...

... choose JESUS!
He is the
Way!



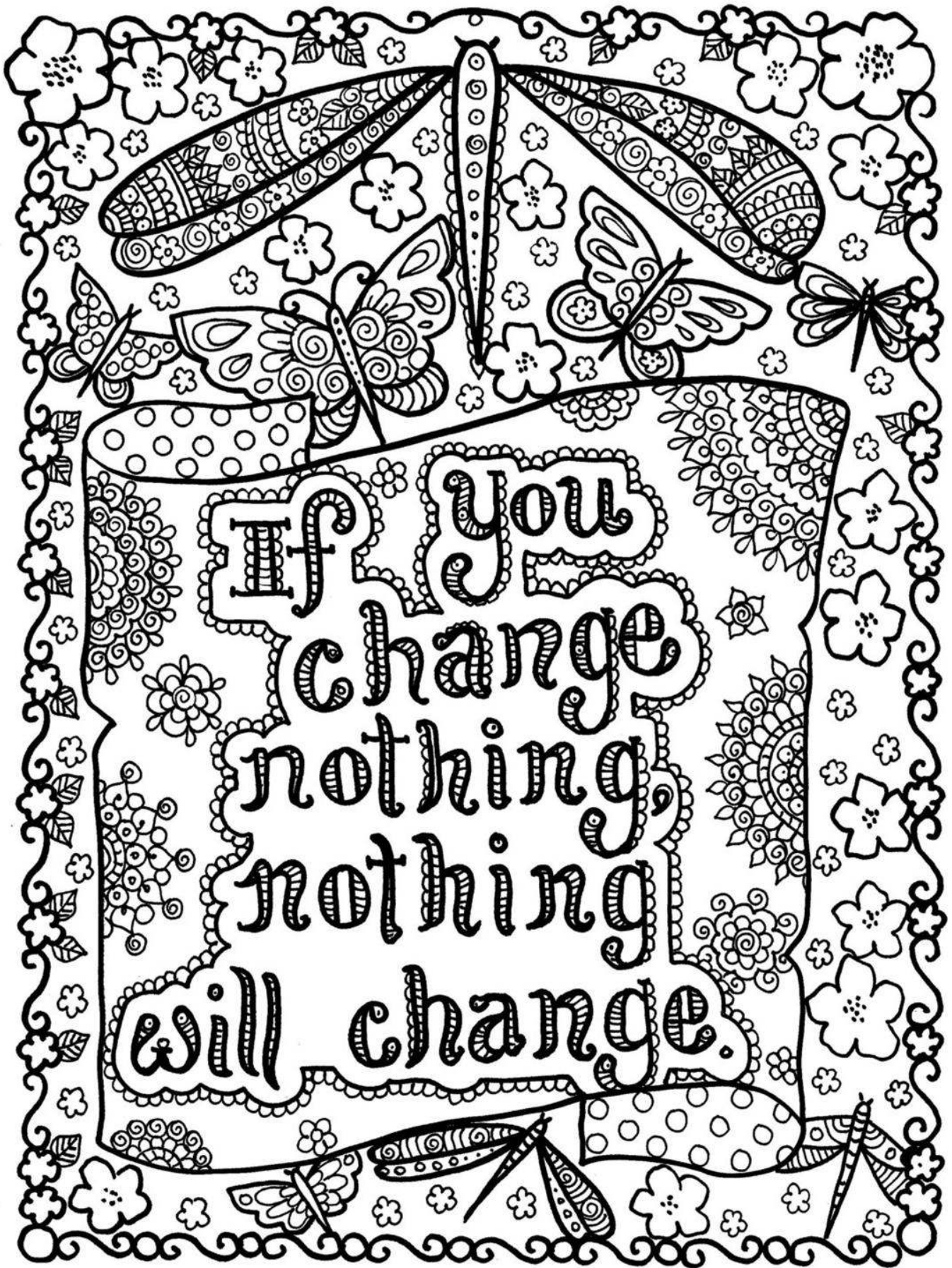
¹³ "Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many.

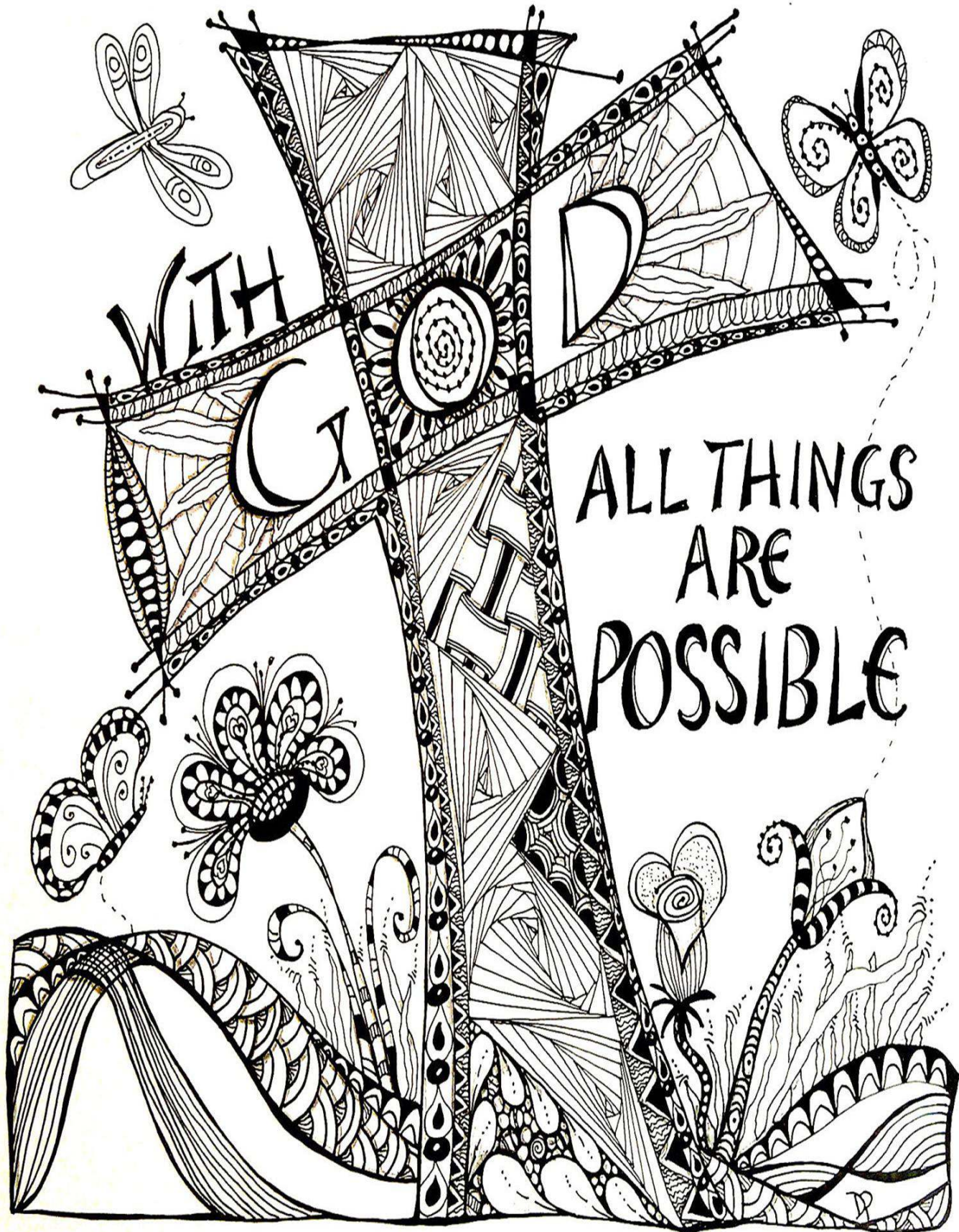
¹⁴ For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few." (Matthew 7:13-14)



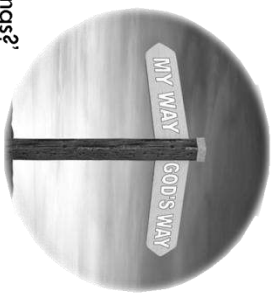
“Make a clean break
with your sins and invest
in what is right.”

Daniel 4:27





His rule is everlasting,
and his kingdom is eternal.
All the people of the earth
are nothing compared to him.
He does as he pleases
among the angels of heaven
and among the people of the earth.
No one can stop him or say to him,
"What do you mean by doing these things?"



"When my sanity returned to me, so did my honor and glory and kingdom. My advisers and nobles sought me out, and I was restored as head of my kingdom, with even greater honor than before.

"Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and glorify and honor the King of heaven. All his acts are just and true, and he is able to humble the proud." (Daniel 4:34b-37)

When Nebuchadnezzar recognized God as the supreme ruler of all things, God restored him as the King over the Babylonian Empire. But there was even more to it than that! You see, Nebuchadnezzar recognized that before his seven years living like a wild animal, he was a very prideful person. The king realized that God was the one who humbled him and brought him to a point of repentance.

The Bible says, "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble" (Proverbs 3:34, James 4:6 and 1 Peter 5:5). The Bible also tells us that God hates a prideful attitude (Proverbs 6:16-17), and He will do whatever it takes to humble us and bring us to repentance!

What is it going to take in your life for God to get your attention?

When faced with this decision, will you choose your way or God's way?



A TALE OF TWO KINGS

A long time ago in a land far, far away called Babylon, there lived a king. This king's name was Nebuchadnezzar. King Nebuchadnezzar was the greatest king of one of the greatest kingdoms that ever existed. All this 'greatness' kind of went to the king's head. He became very proud of all he had accomplished.

One day, while Nebuchadnezzar was sleeping, God sent him a vision. He had a vision of a giant tree that was tall and green, and it provided shade and fruit for everyone—birds, animals and even people. But in his vision, a holy messenger commanded that the tree be chopped down, leaving only the stump to remind the people of the greatness of the tree.

One of the king's wise men, Daniel, explained the dream to the king. He said, "Here is what the dream means: the kingdom of Babylon will fall and you, O King, will live outside and eat grass like an animal for seven years. God is doing this to you so you will learn that He is the one who rules over the kingdoms of the world." Then Daniel begged the king, "Please take my advice. Stop sinning and do what is right. Break from your wicked past and be merciful to the poor. Show God that you've really changed and then maybe he will change His mind and let you remain as king."

The king did not change. In fact, a whole year went by and nothing ever happened. Then one day, as King Nebuchadnezzar was looking out from the roof of his palace, he said, "Look at what an awesome city I have built. Babylon is my creation. I built this by my own power. I built this as my royal home so everyone can see how awesome I am."

As the king was saying those words, a holy messenger came down and proclaimed, "O King Nebuchadnezzar, you are no longer the king of this kingdom. You will no longer live like a real person; you will live in the fields with the wild animals and eat



grass to keep you alive. For seven years, you will live like that. Then we will see if you have changed your attitude and recognize that God is the One who is really in control!"

And so it happened, just as the holy messenger said...

But this is a tale of two kings—King Nebuchadnezzar and King Belshazzar. King Belshazzar was a descendant of King Nebuchadnezzar. He too was the king of Babylon, and he too had the wrong idea of the origin of his power and authority. Here's his story:

Belshazzar was an evil king who liked to have enormous parties where people behaved very badly. One night, the king was having a party for 1,000 of his upper class friends. Everyone was involved with lots of drinking and uncontrolled passion and pleasure. This was not the first time that Belshazzar had a party like this, but at this party he was thinking about doing something that he had never done before—using the sacred, golden cups from God's Temple.

Many years earlier, about the time that Nebuchadnezzar became King of Babylon, the golden cups that were used to worship Jehovah



God in the Temple in Jerusalem were brought to Babylon. This happened at the same time that Daniel and his friends were taken as captives to Babylon. These cups were set apart for a holy purpose, but King Belshazzar wanted to use them for an evil purpose.

In both of our stories today, each of these kings had a choice to make—choose to honor God by obeying His command or choose to dishonor Him with their actions and attitudes.

So what did they choose?

King Belshazzar chose to dishonor God. He used the golden cups in his wild party and praised their idols made of gold, silver, bronze, iron, wood and stone while he did it. As soon as he did, all the people at the

party saw the fingers of a human hand writing on the plaster wall of the king's palace. When the king saw this, his face turned pale with fear, his knees knocked together and his legs gave way beneath him.

So what was the hand writing on the wall? It wrote these words in Aramaic:

"**Mene, mene, tekel upharsin.**" King Belshazzar

did not know what the words meant. Fortunately, Daniel was able to explain the meaning of these words. He said:

"**Mene** means 'numbered'—God has numbered the days of your reign and has brought it to an end.

Tekel means 'weighed'—you have been weighed on the balances and have not measured up.

Parsin means 'divided'—your kingdom has been divided and given to the Medes and Persians." (Daniel 5:25-28)

With these four simple words, God declared that the Babylonian Empire would cease to exist. That very night, King Belshazzar was killed.

Belshazzar had a choice—honor God or dishonor God—and he chose poorly! The result of his choices not only brought about his death, but also brought about the end of one of the greatest empires in the history of the world. God tried to get his attention, but he chose to do what he wanted to do with no regard for God and His ways.

So what happened with King Nebuchadnezzar? I'm glad you asked!

You see, King Nebuchadnezzar was also given a choice to honor and recognize God as the ruler over everything. Do you remember what had happened to him earlier? Just after declaring how great he was and how awesome the city of Babylon was, God declared that he would lose his kingship and live like an animal for seven whole years.

At the end of that seven years of living like an animal, the Bible tells us that Nebuchadnezzar looked up to heaven—his sanity restored—and he 'praised and worshipped the Most High and honored the one who lives forever' (Daniel 4:34a). In fact, Nebuchadnezzar went on to say this about God:



Lesson Four: Obey God No Matter What (High School & College)

Lesson Theme

God loves me and always knows what I am going through. He wants me to obey Him no matter what the consequences might be. I will stand for God above and before everything else!

Theme Verse

“Even though Daniel was aware the king had signed the ordinance into law, he continued to do what he always did... and get down on his knees three times a day and pray to his God and praise Him.” (6:10 VOICE)

Inductive Bible Discussion Guide

Brief Explanation

- This discussion guide is designed for just that... discussion. When I lead discussion group Bible studies, I do not have answers anywhere in the material, nor do I use a leader's guide with all the answers written in.
- This is INTENTIONAL! I believe that the discipleship process should be an encounter with God, not just listening to someone else tell you what words to write down to fill in the blanks.
- Our goal is to help you facilitate discovery learning for your students. As the questions are asked, every participant (including the leader) is required to search God's Word to discover the appropriate morsel of truth. When facilitators are 'armed' with all the answers, they are less likely to allow the time needed for individuals to process the question and formulate an answer.
- Don't be afraid of silence! That discovery process is the key to the success or failure of this process. It is in those moments of silence that we stop teaching and the Holy Spirit takes over!

- We cannot forget what Jesus said in John 16:13: *“when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth.”*
- For a deeper look at the issues presented herein, please look at the "Daniel – Teacher's Guide" or listen/watch the corresponding sermons at www.templerogers.org/obe/daniel_resources/)
- For a deeper discussion of how to lead an inductive style, Bible discussion group, please download the “Leading Small Group Bible Studies” resource by clicking [HERE](#).

Ice Breaker Questions

How does it make you feel if your teacher treats one of your classmates better than you?

In your experience, how do people typically react when they think that someone else is receiving special treatment?

What are some things that people might do to the person who is the ‘teacher’s pet’? Have you ever wanted to do one of these? Did you?

Discussion Guide

At the end of Daniel 5, the Babylonian Empire was conquered by the Medo-Persian Empire. Daniel had served as a leader in Babylon for over 60 years, but now someone else is in charge—King Darius. According to Daniel 6:1-3, what happened to Daniel when King Darius took power?

Why do you think Daniel was able to make this transition so smoothly?

How does the Bible describe Daniel in verse 3? In today’s world, people like this are sometimes worshiped and sometimes despised—it all depends upon who it is that is describing them. How do you think this kind of person would be described today?

God placed Daniel right where He wanted him, and allowed Darius to recognize Daniel’s gifts so that he would place Daniel in a very strategic place of influence. Where has God placed you? What does God desire for you to do with the influence you have?

God Knows What You Are Going Through

Read Daniel 6:4-9. How did the other officials feel about Daniel's rise to power? What did they decide to do as a result?

When the other officials searched for 'skeletons in Daniel's closet,' what did they find?

What aspect of Daniel's life did they decide to attack? Have you ever been attacked because of your beliefs?

Do you think this was fair to attack Daniel for believing in God and living a good life? Have you ever experienced times of difficulty that seemed unfair?

Read Psalm 9:9-10. How do these verses make you feel?

God Wants Me to Obey Him No Matter What

What was it that King Darius signed into law in verses 7-9? What was his motivation to sign this document into law? What were the consequences of breaking this law?

Read Daniel 6:10. How did Daniel react when he found out about this new law? Was he aware of the consequences for disobeying the king's command?

In your life, how do you measure whether doing the right thing is worth the cost? What are some consequences of being faithful to God in today's culture?

God Doesn't Need Me to Defend Myself

Read Daniel 6:11-15. What happened to Daniel as a result of his obedience to God? What did Daniel say and do to try to convince the king to not punish him?

Why didn't Daniel try to defend himself and his actions? What can we learn from Daniel in the way he acted in this situation? What example did Jesus leave for us in this? (Isaiah 53:7)

How can God use our faithfulness and integrity to point others to Him?

Read Daniel 6:19-23. How did God defend Daniel when he was cast into the lions' den? What did Daniel say about why did God chose to protect him (22)?

If the right thing is always worth the cost, why do we sometimes hesitate (or even fail) to do it?

How will you live out the truth of this passage?

- **Be faithful.** Ask God to help you be faithful to Him at work, at school, in your interactions with others and in the challenges you face this week.
- **Be involved.** Get involved in ministry and service. Help others discover and walk with Jesus. Daniel did not let opposition keep him from his work or his walk with God.
- **Be bold.** If you go to school or live in an environment that is hostile to Christ, don't back down. Let your faith in God be on display, but do it in a way that is loving and honors him.

God wants us to obey Him in spite of the outcome!

Activities & Games

Activity Sheets/Coloring Pages

- 4.1 – “Zentangle Lion”
- 4.2 – Daniel 6:10

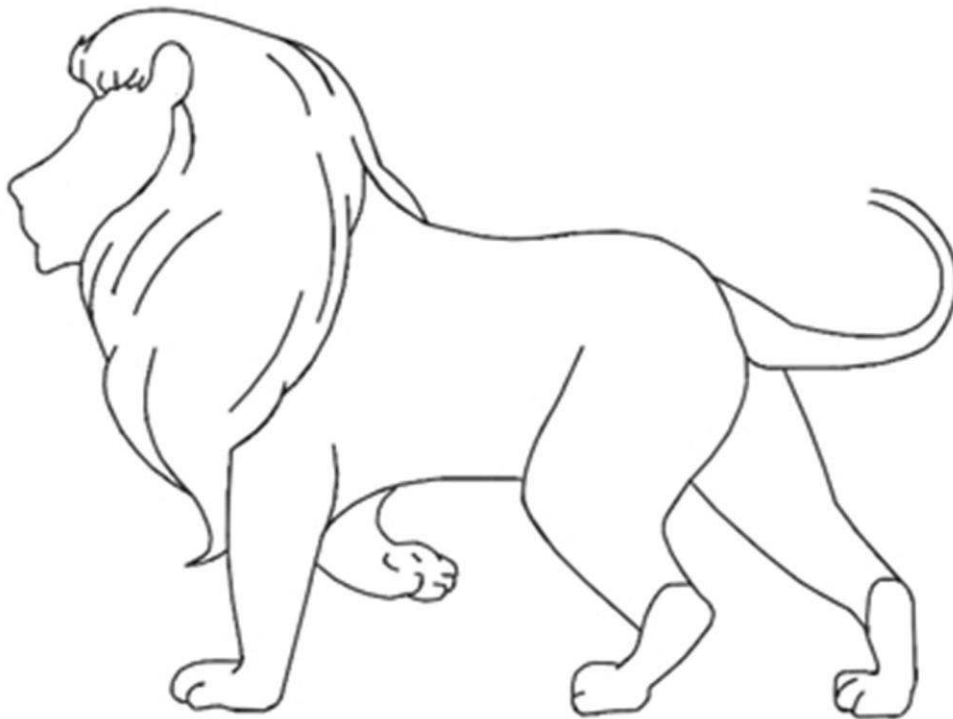
Live It Out!

- Distribute a copy of “When It’s Easy, It’s Hard” (Activity Sheet 4.3) to each student.
- Encourage them to read and work through these activities during their quiet time today.

A zentangle is a unique artistic design. With zentangle, no eraser is needed.

Just as in life, we can not erase events and mistakes, instead we must build upon them and make progress from any event.

As you participate in the lesson this morning, try filling in the blank lion below with your



own tangles. You can use basic shapes and patterns to create something as unique as you!

Remember, there is no right or wrong way to do tangles. We encourage you to include any ideas or concepts that are brought up during your discussion time. But most of all, enjoy!

Daniel in the Den of Lions



“Even though Daniel was aware the king had signed the ordinance *into law*, he continued to do what he always did... and get down on his knees three times a day and pray to his God and praise Him.” (Daniel 6:10 VOICE)

When it's EASY it's HARD!

by Lynn H. Pryor

Some people think it's easy to be a Christian in our culture. I don't. In fact, for the same reasons some people think being a Christian is "easy," I find it hard... I probably should explain.

In the typical American way of thinking, people would define me as:

- a husband
- a father
- an editor
- a woodworker
- a Christian

And all that is true.

But if I were living in a country hostile to Christianity, I would be labeled:

- a Christian

Period. Everything else would be colored by the fact I choose to follow Jesus. Perhaps I would lose my wife or my rights as a father. I might be an unemployed editor. All because of my allegiance to Jesus.

Do you see the difference? In our American culture, being a believer is seen as just another category in my life. A silo. And what makes the Christian life hard is the fact that it is easy to let my relationship to Jesus be just another silo in my life—a part of my life that doesn't necessarily affect the other silos in my life.



I have several friends on Facebook who often post Bible verses ... or praise Jesus for something in their lives ... or share some Christ-honoring meme or post that invites you to click AMEN if you agree. Unfortunately, their next post might be a hate-filled rant about Muslims, politics, gun control, or their opinion of Alabama football ... or some photo that is "too funny not to share" even though it is demeaning to women. For them, being a Christian is just one of the many silos by which they categorize their lives. Sad.

These silos are unheard of in so many other cultures and countries. An elderly Jewish man named Daniel (living in the Persian Empire of the 6th century B.C.) knew of no

such silos. One of the most familiar stories in the Hebrew Scriptures is Daniel in the lion's den. Everything in his life fell into one silo: a faithful follower of the one true God. Even when praying to that one true God became illegal, he remained faithful. Daniel only knew the one silo.

Most of us know how the story ends, but we lose sight of the fact Daniel didn't. He prayed—he remained faithful to God—even though it would cost him his life. He was quite willing to die. God has been faithful to Daniel throughout his 80+ years, and Daniel would do no less. What would life be worth if he gave up or just compromised the one thing that gave his life meaning?

**I want to remain faithful to
God when it's hard.**

**I want to remain faithful to
God when it's easy.**

I want only one silo in my life—that of a faithful follower of Jesus Christ—and everything else will be poured into that one silo.

What silos do you have in your life?

What changes will you make in your life?