

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

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)

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

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?

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 do we learn about King Belshazzar and his character?

There were many things in Belshazzar's life that were drawing him away from a life lived for God. What are some things that draw us away from God? Are these idols in our lives?

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.

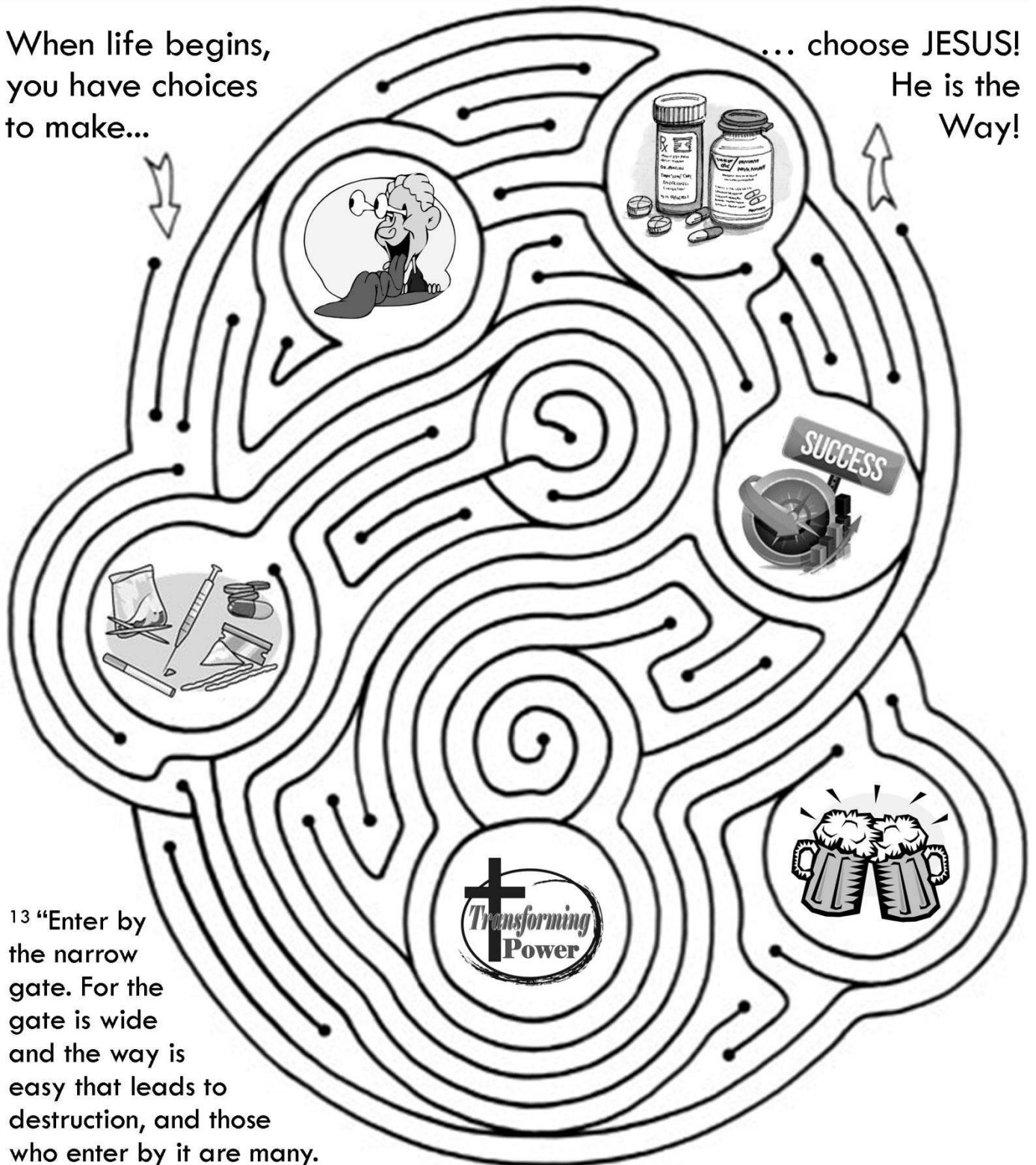
Activity Sheets/Coloring Pages

- 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

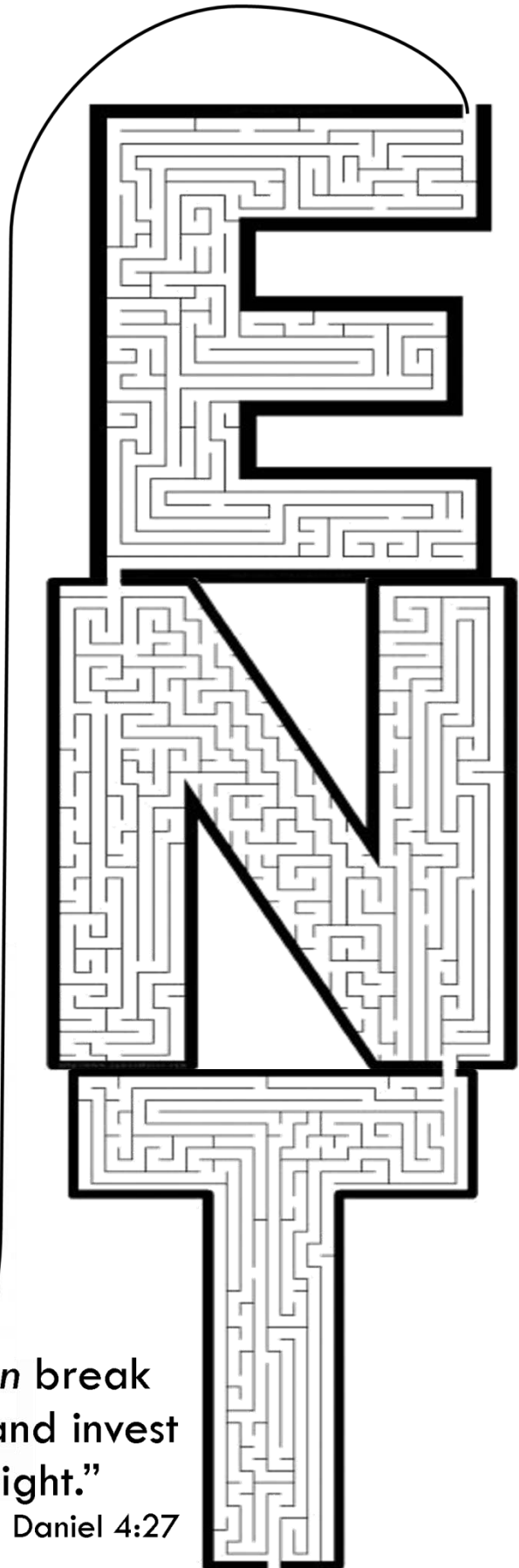
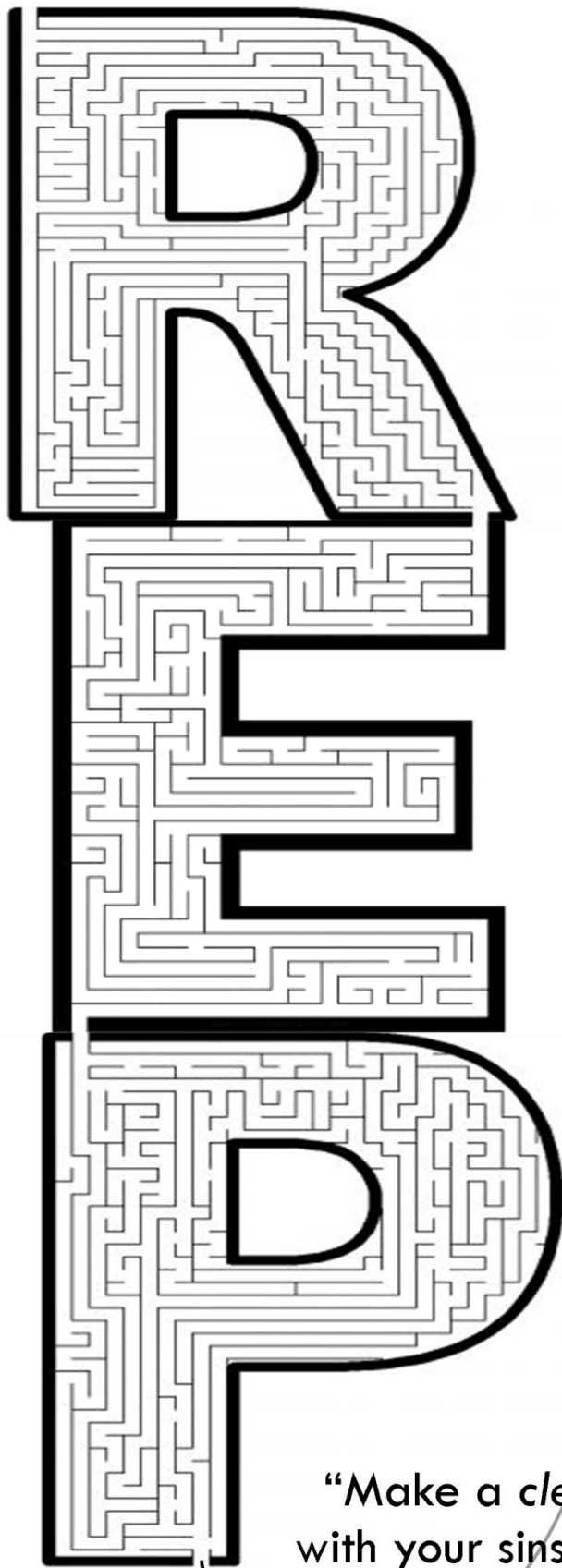
When life begins,
you have choices
to make...

... choose JESUS!
He is the
Way!



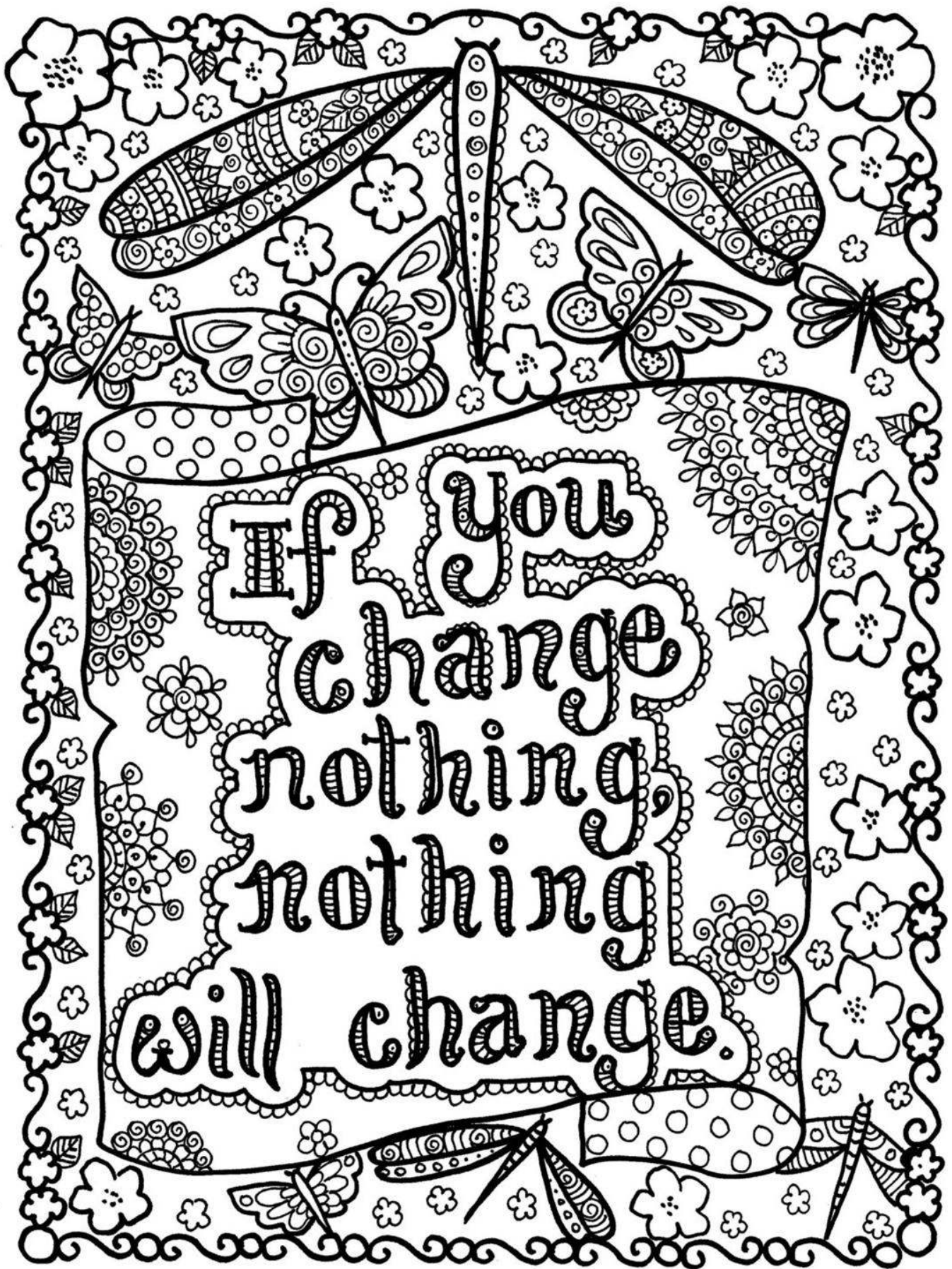
¹³ "Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many.

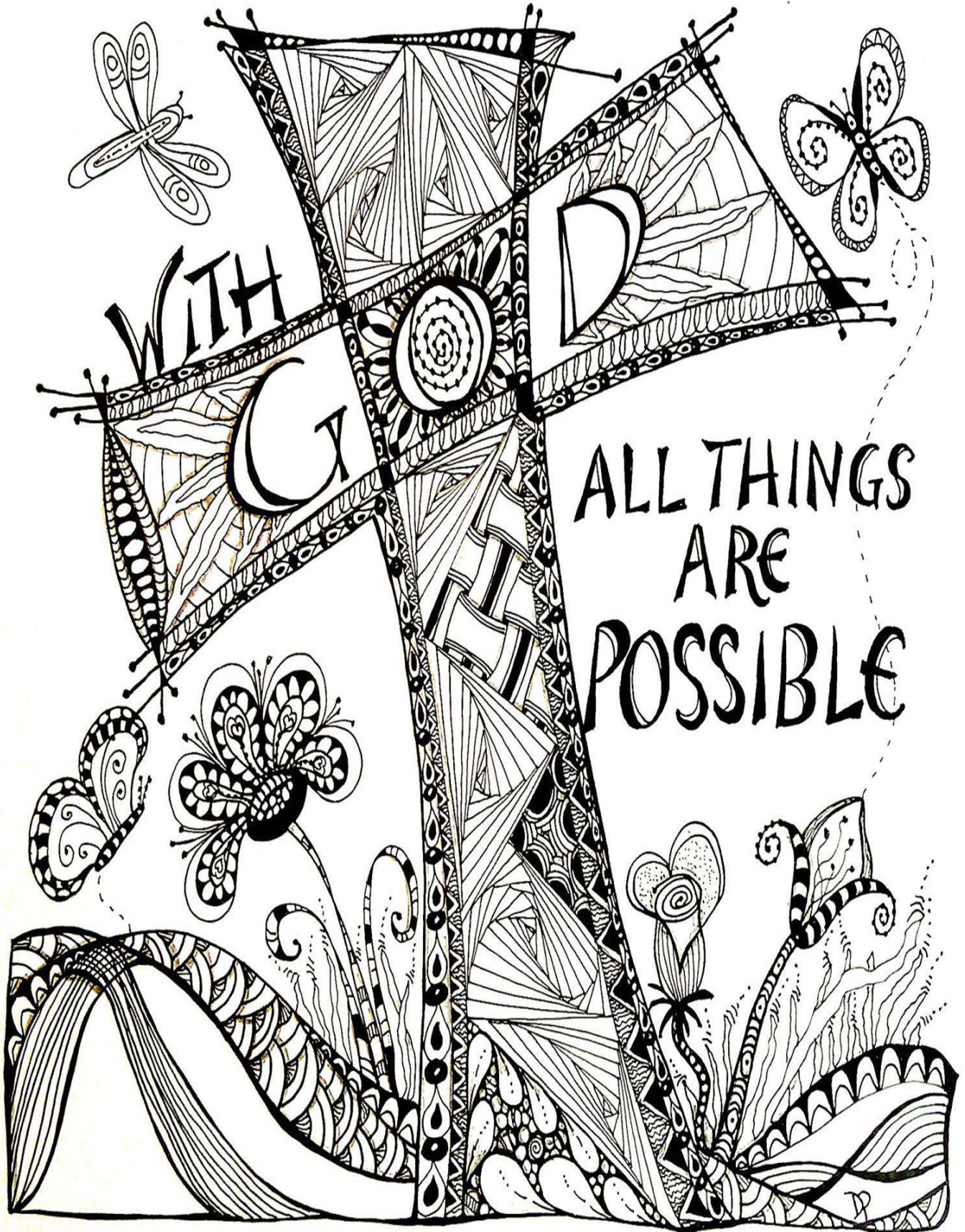
¹⁴ For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few." (Matthew 7:13-14)



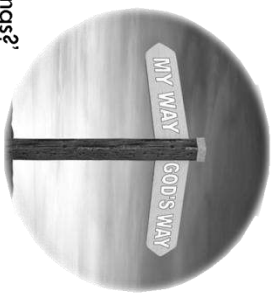
*"Make a clean break
with your sins and invest
in what is right."*

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 an 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:

