

Daniel Discussion Questions 3.12.17

Leader Prep Section

Take time before your small group meeting to prepare by reading through the questions and scripture passage so that you can select 4-5 questions that are best suited to your group.

Try to work through at least one question from each of the sections - Hook, Book, Look, Took in order to move from observation to application.

When possible spend time in prayer for each member of your group.

Questions

Hook - Ice breaker type questions to help make the transition into the study time.

1. Think back to a time when God was pursuing you, what was that experience like for you?
2. Share a story of a time when have been pursued and what happened when you were caught.

Background

Following the fiery furnace experience of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego King Nebuchadnezzar promotes the three Jews to new roles of leadership in Babylon. The section that follows next recounts a series of events that took place at least a year following the occurrences in chapter 3. King Nebuchadnezzar sends out a decree about what he has seen the Most High God do for him. Nebuchadnezzar told of visions he had while laying in bed. Despite his response to what God had done to save Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego King Nebuchadnezzar first called for his magicians, enchanters and astrologers. When the visions could not be interpreted by them Nebuchadnezzar called for Daniel, who he describes as having the spirit of the holy gods in him, not the only holy God.

Daniel was reluctant to tell the King what the dream meant for it referred to him and his greatness, but also his impending calamity. Daniel tells King Nebuchadnezzar that it is the King who is depicted as the tree in the vision and that he will be removed from his role as King for a period referred to as "7 times" and during that time the King will live among the wild animals. All of this will last until King Nebuchadnezzar is ready to acknowledge the one true God of Israel. Daniel's advice to the King is to renounce his sins by doing right and his wickedness by being kind to the oppressed. Daniel did tell the King that his kingdom would be restored to him after the "7 times" has past.

As God did with Israel before the Exile God is giving King Nebuchadnezzar a peek at what is in store for him if he does not repent and acknowledge who really is in charge of all creation. In the section for this week we see that despite being warned King Nebuchadnezzar did not acknowledge the Most High God and suffered the consequences.

Here we see God in pursuit of a pagan king in much the same way he pursued Israel. There should be no question that the offer of salvation is open to all who are ready to confess who the one true God is and to follow him.

Read Daniel 4:28-37

Book - These questions are designed to get you into the text itself.

1. When did the fulfillment of the vision take place?
2. What did the voice from heaven say to King Nebuchadnezzar?
3. What was the first thing King Nebuchadnezzar did when his sanity was restored?

4. Nebuchadnezzar becomes even greater when he is restored to his kingdom, what reasons does he give for his worship of the King of heaven?

Look - These questions will take you on a deeper look at what the passage means for us today.

1. When you get news that something unpleasant is coming but nothing happens right away. How do you respond?
2. Why is it important that God is pursuing a pagan king?
3. When do you see God most clearly?
4. What was different about this experience that caused King Nebuchadnezzar to change his behavior and his allegiance?

Took - These questions are focused on applying the big idea from the text to our lives.

1. We live in the “already... not yet” moment in history; Jesus has come and will come back, but now we wait. What actions can we take to keep from losing the urgency to show Jesus’ love to everyone we meet?
2. When Daniel was telling the King about his vision he explained it in the most positive way possible, without sugar coating the reality of what was to happen if Nebuchadnezzar did not repent. How can we follow that same example as we tell people the truth of what will happen if they choose not to accept Jesus?
3. How can we use worship of the Most High God as an entry point for those who do not currently know Him?
4. How can we demonstrate that God pursues all of us and how should that shape how we treat people?

Closing

Take a few moments as you finish your time together to share your favorite ways to worship and why they speak to your heart, soul and mind. As always take time to pray together for practical ways to reveal the Most High God to those in our lives that they may come to know him too.

Reminder: Our allegiance is first to the Kingdom of Heaven, but held in tension with the fact that we are called to love this world and those who live in it. Total disconnection is not the answer, we must find a way to be in the world, not of the world.