

Values Matter Discovery Starters

We Are Visionary

6. CHAMPION YOUNG PEOPLE

YWAM is called to champion youth. We believe God has gifted and called young people to spearhead vision and ministry. We are committed to value, trust, train, support, make space and release them. They are not only the Church of the future; they are the Church of today. We commit to follow where they lead, in the will of God.

[1Sa 17:32-50](#); [Ecc 4:13-14](#); [Ecc 12:1-7](#); [Jer 1:5-10](#); [Dan 1:17-20](#);
[Joe 2:28](#); [Joh 6:9](#); [Act 16:1-5](#); [1Ti 4:12-16](#); [1Jo 2:12-14](#)

Value #6 – Champion Young People: Four Impressive Young Leaders

Biblical Foundation:

God gave these four young men an unusual aptitude for understanding every aspect of literature and wisdom. And God gave Daniel the special ability to interpret the meanings of visions and dreams. When the training period ordered by the king was completed, the chief of staff brought all the young men to King Nebuchadnezzar. The king talked with them, and no one impressed him as much as Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. So they entered the royal service. Whenever the king consulted them in any matter requiring wisdom and balanced judgment, he found them ten times more capable than any of the magicians and enchanters in his entire kingdom. (Dan 1:17-20)

Discovery Starter:

Three times the Babylonian armies would overrun Jerusalem: in 605 (2Ki 24:1-2), 597 (2Ki 24:8-17), and finally 586 BC (2Ki 25:1-21). In 605, Nebuchadnezzar took a select number of prominent citizens, including Daniel and his three friends, captive to Babylon. Taking well-connected prisoners was a typical way to compel political submission from those left behind. Any act of treason in Jerusalem would be met with the execution of the hostages being held in Babylon.

Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were teenagers caught up in the midst of the tumultuous military-political events of the day. All of their youthful dreams were shattered. Upon arrival in Babylon they would have been castrated in order to serve as eunuchs in the pagan king's court. This wiped out any hope of getting married, having a family and living a normal life. Nebuchadnezzar destroyed their future. How would these young men respond? Remarkably, with no sign of self-pity, bitterness, or

rebellion. Instead, they learned, served and entered into leadership roles because of their impressive abilities and their impeccable character.

The story goes on. In chapter 3, Nebuchadnezzar built a gold statue and ordered all government leaders to worship it on pain of death. Daniel's three friends repeatedly refused to do so. Facing capital punishment they declared, "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" (Dan 3:16-18). In this inspiring proclamation they displayed total trust in and total commitment to their God. So what happened? When they were thrown into the intense, super-charged fire, Jesus rushed to their side. He was the fourth man in the furnace. Why? Because he was so deeply moved by their willingness to lay down their lives. He longed to be by their side. Jesus affirmed and championed the remarkable lives of Daniel's young friends. Shouldn't we?

Keep Going:

God ran to identify himself with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fiery furnace. Nebuchadnezzar was so moved by what he observed, that he declared, "Praise to the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego! ... There is no other god who can rescue like this!" (Dan 3:28-29). In the whole Bible there are only fifteen individuals whose names are used to fill in the blank in the phrase, "the God of _____." They include the names of biblical greats like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and David. What an honor to have God commend you by aligning his name with yours! These three young leaders are among the few so honored by God. With this in mind, read through Daniel chapter 3 and consider the impressive way these young leaders followed their God. What do you learn about God? What do you learn from the lives of these three young leaders? What do you believe is the take-away for your own life?

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