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Facing the Fire

Key References: Daniel 3; *Prophets and Kings*, chap. 41, pp. 503-513; *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 6, pp. 16-19; 33-43; Our Beliefs nos. 10, 22, 21



powertext

"Then Nebuchadnezzar said, 'Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants! They trusted in him and defied the king's command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God'" (Daniel 3:28).

Sabbath

DO Do the activity on page 60.

power point

We praise God, trusting that He is with us in every situation.

Have you ever felt pressured into doing something that you did not want to do? Then you will understand how Daniel's three friends felt when the king and all the leaders bowed down to a golden image and they refused.

Daniel caught King Nebuchadnezzar's attention soon after he arrived in Babylon. Within a year the king had a dream about a strange image, and he desperately wanted someone to interpret it for him. Daniel asked God for help, and was able to explain to Nebuchadnezzar the image, the prophecy it represented, and the kingdoms that would follow Nebuchadnezzar's Babylonian Empire. Daniel was rewarded with a high position. He asked that his three friends, now known by their Babylonian names of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, be given important government jobs.

Nebuchadnezzar recognized the power of Daniel's God after the dream was interpreted. But as time went on he became unwilling to accept the prophecy that his kingdom would not last forever. All he could remember from Daniel's interpretation were the words "You are the head of gold." He decided to create an image like the one he had seen in his dream, but make it of solid gold to represent an eternal, indestructible kingdom.

The Babylonians were enthusiastic idol worshipers. They had created splendid statues of their various gods. But never had they seen an image like this one. As tall as a nine-story building and made of solid gold, the statue on the plain outside of the city was a sight to behold. The dedication ceremony for the image was meant to be an act of worship and a pledge of allegiance to Babylon. All the government officials were expected to attend.

No doubt Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego knew what was coming. The construction of the image must have taken quite some time. They were important government officials. They knew they would be expected to attend the dedication ceremony and worship the statue. They must have had plenty of time to think about the consequences of not obeying an order from the king.

They went to the ceremony as commanded, but when the order

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Sunday

READ Read Daniel 3:1-3 and this week's story, "Facing the Fire."

MAKE Write the power text on a paper flame.

REVIEW Review the power text, Daniel 3:28.

PRAY Ask God for courage to worship Him in every situation, regardless of the risks involved.

Monday

READ Read Daniel 3:4-7.

DISCOVER Discover how tall the statue was by comparing it to a tall building in your town or a nearby city.

SHARE Be a positive influence. Share some good advice, a positive thought, or simply your good example, allowing God's love to flow to those around you.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Pray for people in government to honor or grant religious freedom.

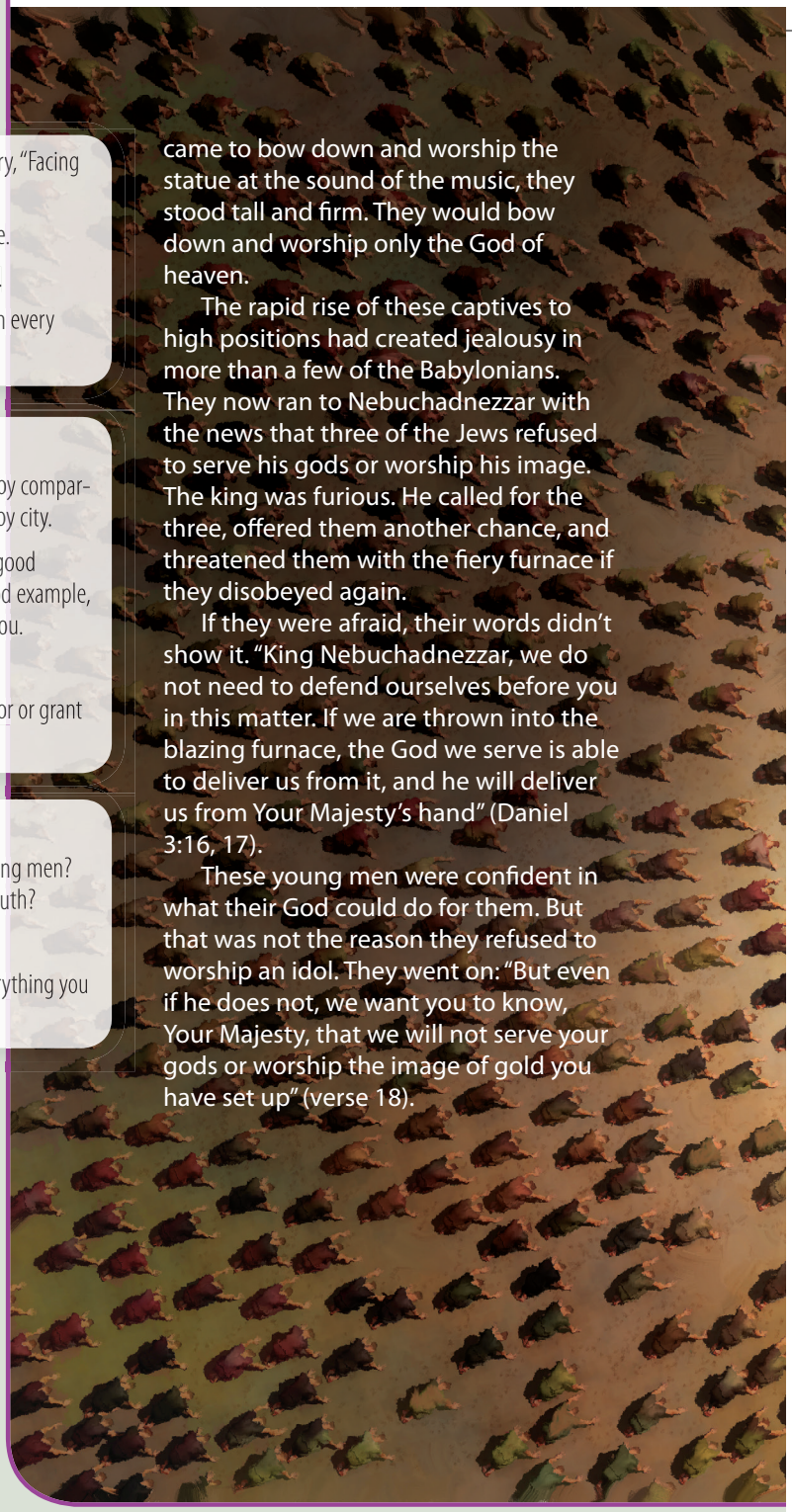
Tuesday

READ Read Daniel 3:8-12.

THINK Who plotted against the Hebrew young men? Why did those men seek to kill the faithful youth?

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Pray that you will worship God in everything you do today.



came to bow down and worship the statue at the sound of the music, they stood tall and firm. They would bow down and worship only the God of heaven.

The rapid rise of these captives to high positions had created jealousy in more than a few of the Babylonians. They now ran to Nebuchadnezzar with the news that three of the Jews refused to serve his gods or worship his image. The king was furious. He called for the three, offered them another chance, and threatened them with the fiery furnace if they disobeyed again.

If they were afraid, their words didn't show it. "King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty's hand" (Daniel 3:16, 17).

These young men were confident in what their God could do for them. But that was not the reason they refused to worship an idol. They went on: "But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up" (verse 18).



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Wednesday

READ Read Daniel 3:13-18.

MEET Meet with a friend and praise God together.

WRITE Write the three friends' response in your own words. Use a response like this when you are tempted.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Ask God to help you speak to others about Him today.

Thursday

READ Read Daniel 3:19-25.

WRITE In your Bible study journal, write an imaginary interview with the three young men after their experience in the fiery furnace.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Pray for people facing difficult situations.

Friday

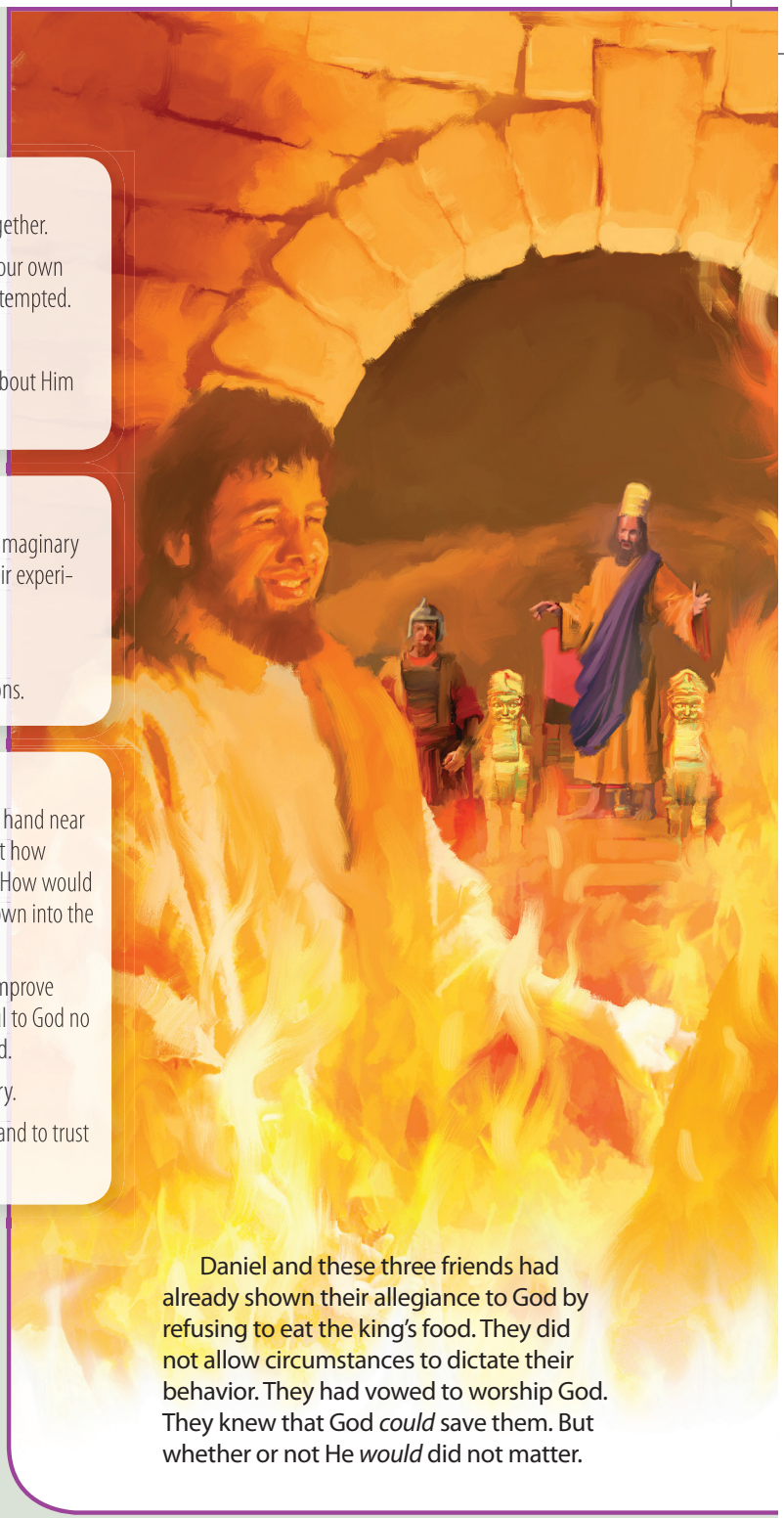
READ Read Daniel 3:26-30.

LIGHT Light a candle for worship. Hold your hand near the candle and feel the heat. Now think about how much greater was the heat from the furnace. How would you have felt if you were sentenced to be thrown into the fiery furnace?

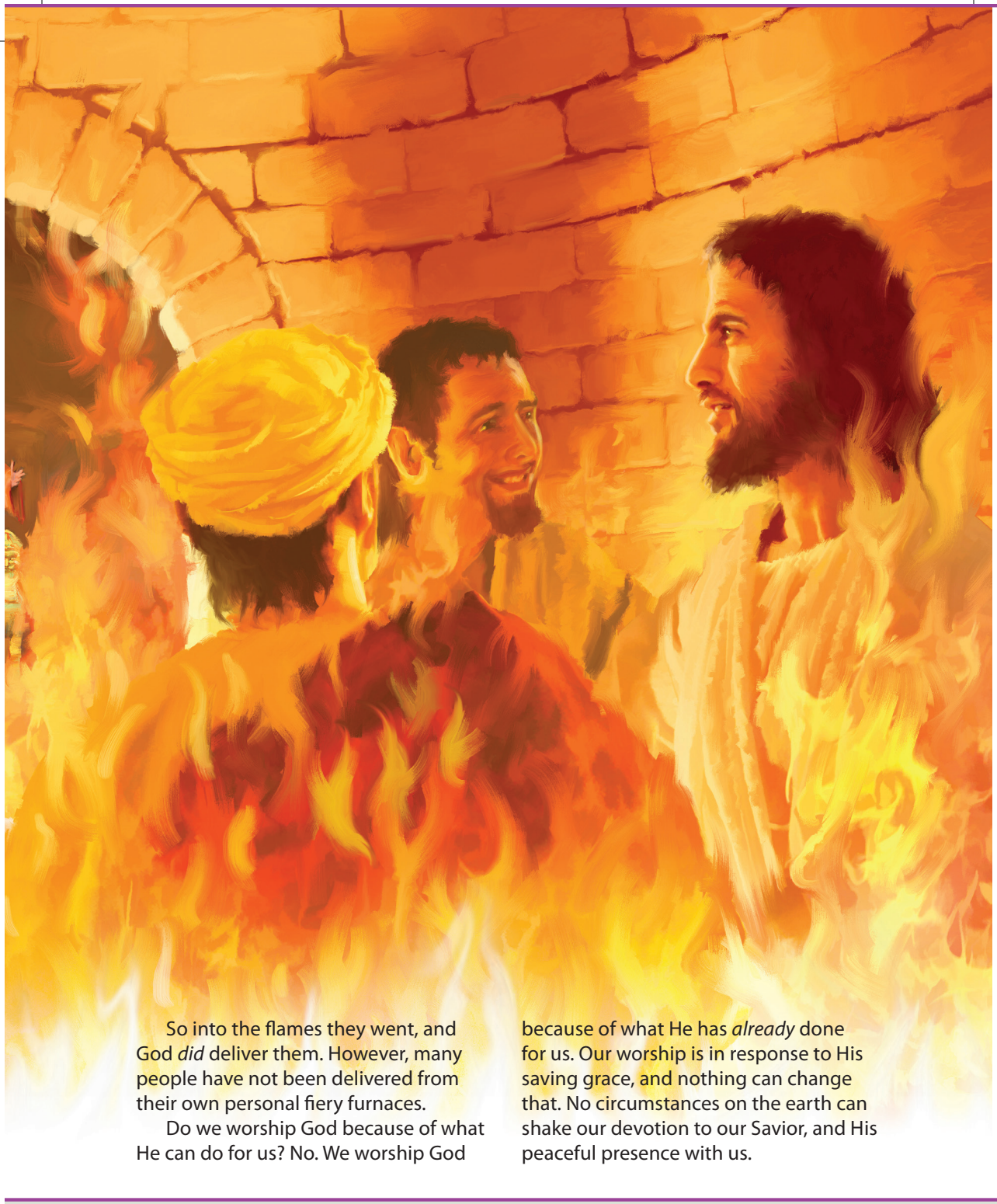
DISCUSS Discuss with your family ways to improve your family worship and commit to be faithful to God no matter the circumstances or the trials involved.

REPEAT Say the power text aloud by memory.

PRAY Ask God for your family to be faithful and to trust and worship Him.



Daniel and these three friends had already shown their allegiance to God by refusing to eat the king's food. They did not allow circumstances to dictate their behavior. They had vowed to worship God. They knew that God *could* save them. But whether or not He *would* did not matter.



So into the flames they went, and God *did* deliver them. However, many people have not been delivered from their own personal fiery furnaces.

Do we worship God because of what He can do for us? No. We worship God because of what He has *already* done for us. Our worship is in response to His saving grace, and nothing can change that. No circumstances on the earth can shake our devotion to our Savior, and His peaceful presence with us.

PUZZLE

7

REJOICE!

Instructions: The letters in each vertical column go into the squares directly below them, but not necessarily in the order they appear. A black square indicates the end of a word. When you have placed all the letters in their correct squares, you will be able to read the quotation across the diagram left to right.

