

Island Group Discussion Guide

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Week of August 10, 2025



THRIVING IN BABYLON • WEEK 2

IT HAS NEVER BEEN EASY • DANIEL 3:1-6

OPENING PRAYER TIME

Begin your meeting with 10-15 minutes of prayer using these prompts:

- Thank God for His presence with us today and His desire to work in our hearts
- Ask the Holy Spirit to guide our discussion and open our minds to His truth
- Pray for courage to stand firm in our faith when culture pressures us to compromise
- Invite Jesus to help us extend both grace and truth in our relationships
- Ask for wisdom to recognize what might be competing with God for our attention
- Pray for strength to make decisions beforehand that honor God

DISCUSSION

- **Ice breaker:** Have you ever had to make a difficult decision in advance, knowing you might face pressure later? What helped you stick to your decision?
- **Ice breaker:** Pastor Paul mentioned longing for "the good old days" of the 80s and 90s. What time period do you sometimes miss, and why?
- **Read Daniel 3:1-6.** What strikes you most about King Nebuchadnezzar's demand that everyone worship his golden statue?
- Pastor Paul told the story of Wells Coulter, the 9/11 hero with the red bandana who saved people by going back into the burning tower three times. What do you think made the difference between someone who runs toward danger to help others versus someone who just watches?
- Pastor Paul said: "*You can't be courageous without first being selfless.*" How do courage and selflessness work together? Can you think of examples from your own life or others?
- The key message was that Daniel and his friends made decisions beforehand about how they would respond when pressured. Pastor Paul said: "*At some point in someone's life, they made a decision that led them to where they are now.*" What kinds of decisions can we make in advance to help us stand firm when we face pressure?
- **Read Ecclesiastes 7:10.** Why does Scripture warn us not to long for "the good old days"? How can focusing on the past prevent us from living faithfully today?
- Pastor Paul shared statistics showing that 173 out of 193 countries are seeing gospel growth that outpaces population growth, but America is one



of 20 countries where this isn't happening. How does this make you feel about our mission as Christians in America?

- Pastor Paul said: "*Daniel had the ability to be able to extend grace and truth.*" because he knew God was in control. How does knowing God is in control help us show both grace and truth to others, even those who oppose us?
- **Application question:** Pastor Paul asked: "*How do we live a godly life when culture changes? How do we stand firm in what we believe and at the same time love well?*" How would you answer this question based on your own experience?
- Pastor Paul identified three things that made Babylon wicked: a godless king, a godless educational system, and a spiritually hostile environment. What parallels do you see between Daniel's Babylon and our current culture?
- King Nebuchadnezzar used fear to get people to worship his statue - bow down or be thrown into the fiery furnace. Pastor Paul said: "*Fear overtakes us when we don't know that God is in control.*" What fears in our culture try to make us compromise our faith?
- Daniel and his friends were forced into a three-year indoctrination program designed to change them "*from the inside out.*" How does our culture try to reshape our thinking away from biblical values?
- **Application question:** Pastor Paul explained that God sometimes allows discipline as "*roadblocks in your life to stop you from driving over the edge to destruction.*" Have you ever experienced what seemed like a setback that God used to redirect your path?
- Pastor Paul said: "*God's discipline always begins with those he calls his own.*" Why does God discipline His people before judging others? How should this affect how we view difficulties in our lives?
- **Read Matthew 22:37.** Pastor Paul explained that loving God with all our "mind" means giving Him our attention. He said: "*The thing that I think about the most reflects what matters most to me.*" What gets most of your mental attention throughout the day?
- Pastor Paul challenged: "*What would it look like if we laid down all of our lives down for God?*" What would need to change in your daily routine to truly give God the best of your time, energy, and abilities?
- **Application question:** Pastor Paul prayed: "*Help someone this morning, Lord God, to have the strength to hit the brakes in their life and turn around toward you.*" Is there an area of your life where you sense God asking you to "hit the brakes" and turn around? What specific step will you take this week?

CLOSING PRAYER TIME

Share prayer requests and concerns with the group. Be sure to write these down and send them to all group members so everyone can pray throughout the week, including those who were absent today.