



# COUNTERCULTURE:

## Lessons from the Book of Daniel

### Devotional Guide

January 30, 2011 — *No Other Gods*

#### Read—Daniel 3

Consider how this story is a reflection of your story. Consider the following questions and the ones in the box by Lesson #2 on the Sermon Notes page. Write down your thoughts; talk with others.

How do you suppose these three men came to a place where they could trust God and submit to him so completely? Were they concerned with whether or not they were making the right choice? Where are you most challenged to keep your Christian convictions? How have you experienced freedom by fully trusting God?

#### Small Groups:

Read Daniel 3

Discussion—Use the questions throughout this guide. Also, talk about how you are using the suggestions to practice daily submitting to God and how it is going. Pray for one another.

#### Reflect—Discernment and Submission

(Review the Discipline of Discernment from Week 1—January 9th)

Submitting your life to God means being completely concerned about being faithful to God's will rather than being motivated by self-protection.

**How do you discern whether your attitudes and actions are motivated by self-protection or an integrity centered in God?**

Consider the following:

In his book, *Beginning to Pray*, Anthony Bloom talks about lessons he learned from his father that informed his sense of life: *There are two things he said which impressed me and have stayed with me all my life. I remember he said to me after a holiday, 'I worried about you' and I said, 'Did you think I'd had an accident?' He said, 'That would have meant nothing, even if you had been killed. I thought you had lost your integrity.' Then on another occasion he said to me, 'Always remember that whether you are alive or dead matters nothing. What matters is what you live for and what you are prepared to die for.'*

#### Practice—Daily Submitting to God

**What helps you make a daily commitment to submit to God?**

Here are some suggestions to try this week:

#### Pray through Song—It is Well with My Soul

Go to your favorite music website and download a copy of *It is Well with My Soul*. Listen to it frequently so it becomes the soundtrack for your life this week.

(See YouTube link below)

*It is Well with My Soul (First Verse)*  
When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,  
When sorrows like sea billows roll;  
Whatever my lot, You have taught me to say,  
It is well, it is well, with my soul.

#### Statement of Belief—1st Q & A of Heidelberg Catechism

(See Sermon Notes page.) Read this each day. Or memorize it.

#### Connect with stories/people who inspire you to submit to God—

no matter the circumstances; messages of the culture; how others react

Suggestions:

1. [www.missionalmom.com](http://www.missionalmom.com)
2. Read Acts 16
3. Listen to the story (told by Bill Gaither) of Horatio Spafford who wrote the hymn *It is Well with My Soul* at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KYP--c2LTfg>
4. Look for movies, books, scriptures, blogs, etc.—share ideas with friends

#### Scripture Readings—to reinforce the conviction that God delivers

Psalm 146, Psalm 46:1-3, Psalm 103:1-6, Philippians 4:4-7, John 14:27



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### Sermon Notes

#### Intro

#### Lesson #1: Practice the spiritual gift of discernment

Where is the flash in your life? Where is the sensory overload coming from? When you can eliminate it from your life, will you? What are the images and the sounds that serve as a siren call to sin for you, and how do you refocus on the living God?

#### Lesson #2:

**Don't let sensory-overload keep you from standing firm for God**

#### Lesson #3: Be faithful to God—independent of the reaction of any human being that tests that faithfulness

#### Heidelberg Catechism

##### Q. 1. What is your only comfort, in life and in death?

A. *That I belong—body and soul, in life and in death—not to myself but to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ, who at the cost of his own blood has fully paid for all my sins and has completely freed me from the dominion of the devil; that he protects me so well that without the will of my Father in heaven not a hair can fall from my head; indeed, that everything must fit his purpose for my salvation. Therefore, by his Holy Spirit, he also assures me of eternal life, and makes me wholeheartedly willing and ready from now on to live for him.*

#### Lesson #4:

**Believe that God delivers**

#### Spiritual Discipline to focus on this Week:

### Submitting to God

Trust and stand firmly with God, whether or not prayers are answered or lives are spared. With integrity & faithfulness, choose God over self-protection.

Submission is the ability to lay down the terrible burden of always needing to get our own way. It frees us from our obsession with things that don't really matter. It frees us to receive the gift of grace. - Foster, Celebration of Discipline, ch. 8

*He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it.*

Mark 8:34-35