

So, You Want to Grow Up?
Never Believe the Lies of Satan
Daniel 3

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Text Introduction: Our theme verse as a church for this year is Luke 2:52. “And Jesus grew in wisdom, in stature, and in favor with God and men.” I trust that you are striving to do that. I want to help us to take that growth to a new level. I began thinking about some Biblical examples of this kind of growth. Last week we considered the example of Daniel and these three other Hebrew youth in the Book of Daniel and discovered that if we want to grow up, we must “Never Compromise our Convictions.” I want to continue our look today specifically at the next major story in Daniel—the story of chapter 3—“The Fiery Furnace.”

To save just a bit of time, instead of reading all of chapter 3, let me just remind you of the details of the story. King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold. He sent word that all of the important peoples of the land should come to the dedication of the image. Upon their assembly, the King issued a decree that at the sound of music everyone should bow down and worship the gold image. The decree further indicated that failure to worship the idol would result in being thrown into a burning, fiery furnace.

Let’s allow the text to tell us what happens next.

Text: Daniel 3:12-18

¹² There are certain Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego; these men, O king, have not paid due regard to you. They do not serve your gods or worship the gold image which you have set up.”

¹³ Then Nebuchadnezzar, in rage and fury, gave the command to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. So they brought these men before the king. ¹⁴ Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying to them, “*Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the gold image which I have set up?* ¹⁵ Now if you are ready at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, *and* psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, and you fall down and worship the image which I have made, *good!* But if you do not worship, you shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. And who *is* the god who will deliver you from my hands?”

¹⁶ Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. ¹⁷ If that *is the case*, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver *us* from your hand, O king. ¹⁸ But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up.”

Introduction: Last week, again, we said that if we want to grow up we must “Never Compromise our Convictions.” To that principle, now we add, “If we want to grow up we must **Never Believe the Lies of Satan**. We cannot possibly outline every lie that Satan uses. The Bible tells us that Satan is a liar without any truth being in him (John 8:44). John further described Satan as one who seeks to “deceive the whole world” (Revelation 12:9). While we cannot outline every lie of Satan, we can expose Him as a liar. The story of the three Hebrew children exposes some of Satan’s ultimate lies.

Lie #1: Sin can be rationalized.

One of the most common lies of Satan is that “Sin can be rationalized.” The 3 Hebrew children could have used this lie.

Sometimes we rationalize sin by saying . . .

(1) Everyone is doing it.

Consider these Scriptures.

- Daniel 3:7 “all the peoples” (Sometimes it appears that everyone is doing “it.”)
- Daniel 3:12 “there are certain Jews . . . they do not” (But, in reality, there are always some who are not doing “it.”)
- John 12:42-43 (Here is why we want to do what everyone else is doing.)
⁴² Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess *Him*, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; ⁴³ for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.
- Ezekiel 22:30 (Even if we are the only one standing for God, we cannot rationalize sin.)
³⁰ So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one.

This lie is not a good rationalization for sin, even if you have to be the only one standing in the gap.

(2) The end justifies the means.

Sometimes we rationalize sin by making ourselves believe that “the end justifies the means.” The three Hebrew young men could have come up with any number of excuses as to how they could bow down just this once. For example, they could have said, “God, we are not going to be much good to you if we die.” They could have said, “God, you know we really love you, so we will bow down, but not really mean it.” But, just as we said last week....

We must come to a place in our lives where we believe that some things are right and some things are wrong.

Rob Mouw played high school soccer. In the final seconds of a big game Rob was dribbling the ball toward the goal with his team behind by one goal. Just before he kicked the ball for the score, he saw the scoreboard flash all zeroes indicating the game was over. Rob went through with the kick. The referee declared the kick a score and the game ended in a tie. Rob had a choice. He knew what he saw. He asked the referee if the official time was the scoreboard and the referee said, “Yes.” Rob explained what happened to his coach. His coach agreed that they should concede the game to their opponents. Rob explained the situation this way. “Every time in your life you have an opportunity to do right, you should be thankful. For a person to know what is right, and then not to do it—that would be a sin. To have won the game—I mean, really, who cares? Doing the right thing is more important. It lets you have peace.”

But that's not the end of the story. Sometime later, Rob received a letter from a total stranger who had read about the incident.

The letter read: "Dear Rob, I read Bob Greene's wonderful column about you. I love sports and true sportsmen. My faith in our future was renewed and lifted by that column. Never lose your principles. Always stand for what's decent and right. That's what you told us all when you refused the victory!"

The letter was signed by former president, the father, George Bush.¹

Doing what's right gets people's attention. More important it always gets the attention of God.

Lie #2: Doing the right thing always brings ease.

This is Satan's lie. The Three Hebrew young men had faith that God could deliver them from the fire, but they also seemed to understand that their faith might put them in the fire. Daniel 3:17-18

God may be doing something in your life that only the furnace can accomplish. We would like to read that their obedience brought God's intervention by not even bringing them through the fire.

These two propositions together bring us to lie #3.

Lie #3: If I have enough faith, God will deliver me.

If God would have delivered them from the fire

- they would have missed seeing the fourth person of the fire. [Daniel 3:25](#)
- God could not have displayed His power.
[Daniel 3:28](#)
- If God would have delivered them from the fire they would have missed the bigger blessing God had for them. [Daniel 3:30](#)

¹ Craig Brian Larson, *750 Engaging Illustrations for Preachers, Teachers, & Writers*, p. 610-11.