

## Faith in the Times of Trouble

Umm! Why did you make these cookies and treats?" Latonya asked her sister.

"I made them for work," said Trinity. "You and the kids can eat them."

Trinity's supervisor, Doug, had asked her to pick up baked goods for the office on Valentine's Day. Trinity, a skillful baker, had opted to bring homemade goodies.

"Why are you being a pushover?" asked Latonya. "You should be thumbing your nose at Doug."

Trinity had put in a for promotion on her job. She had been the most qualified candidate. But the job had gone to someone with less qualifications and experience.

"It's because you're Black," Latonya had said. "Doug should be ashamed of himself. Why do you keep giving your best to a supervisor and job that don't value you?"

Doug had said the promotion was out of his control, although he ran the division. "The powers that be want the job to go to Melissa," he had said.

Trinity was contemplating looking for a job that could offer equity in advancement. Until then, she was going to continue being a good worker.

"Doug asked me to bring a holiday treat," said Trinity. "He was going to reimburse me."

"He would have gotten a piece of my mind," said Latonya. "Don't let him use you."

"I'm not," said Trinity, "but I am going to do my work as unto the Lord, regardless of the circumstances."

**1. What kinds of injustices do you witness on a regular basis in our society?**

**2. Have you ever been in a situation where a co-worker or someone else you encounter regularly sabotaged or antagonized you without a just cause?**

**3. What spiritual strategies can you implement when a person comes against you to cause you harm?**

## Defying the Decree

*Daniel 6:10-11, KJV*

10 Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.

11 Then these men assembled, and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God.

*Daniel 6:10-11, NIV*

<sup>10</sup>Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before. <sup>11</sup>Then these men went as a group and found Daniel praying and asking God for help.

When Darius the Mede (Dan. 6:1) conquered Babylon, he made Daniel one of three “administrators” (vs. 2) over the provinces of the Persian Empire. Darius admired Daniel because he was not corrupt or negligent, but honest and trustworthy. So, Darius “planned to set [Daniel] over the whole kingdom” (vs. 3), which enraged the other administrators. They tried to find a way to discredit Daniel and found that he closely followed “the law of his God” (vs. 5). They convinced the king to make a decree that “anyone who prays to any god or human being during the next thirty days, except to you, Your Majesty, shall be thrown into the lions’ den” (vs. 7).

Though Daniel could have protested the unjust conspiracy, and though he knew the consequence of obeying God was his death, he would not hide his faith to save his life. He publicly went to his open window, “just as he had done before” (vs. 10), and prayed three times a day with thanksgiving to God and requests for His help (vs. 11). The administrators easily found him disobeying the king’s decree.

**4.** *What did Daniel do when he learned of the king’s decree?*

**5.** *Why didn’t Daniel obey the king’s decree?*

## The King's Response

*Daniel 6:14, 16, KJV*

14 Then the king, when he heard these words, was sore displeased with himself, and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him: and he laboured till the going down of the sun to deliver him.

16 Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions. Now the king spake and said unto Daniel, Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee.

*Daniel 6:14, 16, NIV*

<sup>14</sup>When the king heard this, he was greatly distressed; he was determined to rescue Daniel and made every effort until sundown to save him.

<sup>16</sup>So the king gave the order, and they brought Daniel and threw him into the lions' den. The king said to Daniel, "May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you!"

When the administrators found Daniel praying, they reported his actions to the king, who then "was greatly distressed" (vs. 14) over the results of his decree. The king had to save face; some things even he could not do or change. The officials reminded him he must follow through on his royal decree and send Daniel to the lions' den. The king obviously knew of Daniel's constant obedience to God, for he told Daniel as he was thrown to the lions, "May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you!" (vs. 16).

**6.** *What did the king do and say that showed he wanted Daniel saved from the lions?*

## The Miraculous Rescue

*Daniel 6:19-23, KJV*

19 Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions.

20 And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel: and the king spake

*Daniel 6:19-23, NIV*

<sup>19</sup>At the first light of dawn, the king got up and hurried to the lions' den.

<sup>20</sup>When he came near the den, he called to Daniel in an anguished voice,

and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?

21 Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever.

22 My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt.

23 Then was the king exceedingly glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God.

"Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to rescue you from the lions?"

<sup>21</sup>Daniel answered, "May the king live forever! <sup>22</sup>My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his sight. Nor have I ever done any wrong before you, Your Majesty."

<sup>23</sup>The king was overjoyed and gave orders to lift Daniel out of the den. And when Daniel was lifted from the den, no wound was found on him, because he had trusted in his God.

At dawn, the king rushed to the den to see if Daniel had indeed been saved by "the living God" (vs. 20). The king called to Daniel in an "anguished voice" and was happy to hear, "May the king live forever!" (vs. 21). Daniel then said that God had sent an angel to save him by shutting the mouths of the hungry lions. It is important that Daniel first said he was innocent of any disobedience to God. The Lord had tested him and found Daniel to still be his loyal servant. Of course, he was also innocent of any charges of disloyalty to the king, who was "overjoyed" (vs. 23) that Daniel was still alive. Not only was he still alive, but he had no wounds of any kind on him because "he had trusted" in the Lord for his safety.

**7.** *Why did the king rush to the lions' den at dawn?*

**8.** *Why did Daniel say he had been saved from the lions?*

## A New Decree

*Daniel 6:26-27, KJV*

26 I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: for he is the living God, and stedfast for ever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end.

27 He delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.

*Daniel 6:26-27, NIV*

<sup>26</sup>“I issue a decree that in every part of my kingdom people must fear and reverence the God of Daniel.

“For he is the living God and he endures forever; his kingdom will not be destroyed, his dominion will never end.

<sup>27</sup>He rescues and he saves; he performs signs and wonders in the heavens and on the earth.

He has rescued Daniel from the power of the lions.”

Perhaps as a punishment for their jealousy, or because the king was mad at being tricked into writing his decree, Darius ordered Daniel’s accusers and their families to be cast to the lions (vs. 24). The lions pounced on Daniel’s accusers before their bodies even hit the floor of the den.

Darius then published another decree that both legitimized the Jewish religion and glorified their God. He called on all people in his kingdom to “fear and reverence” (vs. 26) the God who had saved Daniel from certain death. In his decree, Darius also recognized something that all rulers should realize—God’s kingdom is the only one that will never be “destroyed” or “end” (vs. 26).

How much did Darius believe in Daniel’s God? Though Darius may not have started worshiping the living God, he recognized that a greater power than he was at work in the universe and in the life of Daniel.

**9.** *What was the king’s response to Daniel’s salvation from the lions?*

## Obeying God in the Midst of Injustice

Daniel was a believer who confronted injustice by opening a window and praying to God openly. Another believer who put her obedience to God ahead of her obedience to men, at the risk of death, was Corrie ten Boom. She and her sister Betsie were helping their father run a watch shop in Haarlem, Netherlands when World War II broke out. The ten Booms, Christians who were sympathetic to the persecuted Jews, became part of the Dutch resistance under Corrie's leadership. They built a secret room behind a false wall in Corrie's bedroom and harbored Jewish refugees. Her involvement grew into an organized network that is estimated to have saved the lives of over 800 Jews.

What her family did was against the laws of the Nazi government, and eventually their operation was discovered. Corrie and Betsie spent time in two concentration camps, where Corrie taught the Word of God in secret to fellow prisoners and trusted God to meet their needs. Though her sister passed away, Corrie was miraculously released from the concentration camp on a technical error. She later documented her story in the moving autobiography *The Hiding Place*. Corrie ten Boom's life became an extraordinary testimony of courage as she followed her convictions and obeyed God in the face of injustice.

In Acts 5:29, Peter said, "We must obey God rather than human beings!" The ten Booms obeyed God, rather than men, and thus set powerful examples for other believers.

**10.** *What examples have you seen or heard about of people who obeyed God at the risk of facing imprisonment and death?*

**11.** *Have you ever faced a situation at work or other social situation when choosing to be obedient to your religious convictions conflicted with men? How did you handle that situation?*

**12.** *Would you risk your life and the lives of those you love to obey God? Explain your answer.*

## God Will Be Your Hiding Place

Psalm 34:7 is a verse that has been used for the title of Corrie ten Boom's famous autobiography *The Hiding Place*, as well as the lines in the song "You Are My Hiding Place": "You are my hiding place/You always fill my heart/With songs of deliverance/Whenever I am afraid/I will trust in You/I will trust in You/Let the weak say/I am strong/In the strength of the Lord."

► *Think about a time when you were obedient to God in your own life, even when it was difficult to do so. Look for ways you can continue to be obedient to God's voice, trusting that He will be with you as you act.*

*The occurrence:*

*How to make it a daily part of my life:*

### KEY VERSE

My God hath sent His angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt." —Daniel 6:22, KJV

"My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his sight. Nor have I ever done any wrong before you, Your Majesty." —Daniel 6:22, NIV

### DAILY BIBLE READINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S LESSON

#### Week of February 19 through February 25

(See *The Quiet Hour* and *Cross* devotionals on these passages.)

- Mon.** Jeremiah 29:8-14—God's Plan for Welfare and Hope.
- Tues.** Colossians 1:13-20—In Christ All Things Were Created.
- Wed.** Philippians 1:3-11—God Will Complete His Work.
- Thurs.** Romans 8:19-28—God Works for Our Good.
- Fri.** Proverbs 16:1-9—God Plans Our Steps.
- Sat.** Habakkuk 1:5-17—God's Consuming Judgment.
- Sun.** Habakkuk 2:1-5—Living by Faith.