

Small Group Discussion Guide

for leaders (see below for participants' guide)

Gathering Time

- Make sure newcomers are welcomed and engaged in conversation
- Offer a snack and drink if the setting is right (i.e. a home)
- Arrange seating so everyone in the group can see each other

Getting Acquainted

- **This week we are discussing what it means to live well. Describe a season of your life when you lived particularly well. What made that time different than other seasons?**
 - NOTE: Encourage people to reflect on whether it was their attitudes and actions that defined that season or whether it was their circumstances. Or both.
- **How well are you living today, in this season of your life?**

Discussion Starter Video

- To view the video, go to christchurchil.org/future-you-videos. Choose the title, WISDOM. If you open the video in Vimeo, there is a download option to get the video onto your computer. Or you can just play it from the site without downloading.
- The videos are designed as discussion starters to be used at the beginning of the Bible Exploration.

Bible Exploration

- **Are you familiar with the Old Testament account of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the fiery furnace? Share what details you remember about the story.**
 - NOTE: Give people opportunity to share what they know of the story. Then thumb or scroll through Daniel 3:1-30 hitting the highlights and filling in the gaps.
- **What was the significance of worshipping the idol Nebuchadnezzar had erected? Why did he desire that everyone bow to it?**
- **There was strong pressure to comply with the king's demand, to say the least. What "idols" have been erected in our culture, and in what ways are we pressured to comply with the demand to worship them?**

- **How easy is it to live like everyone else versus living differently, based on different convictions?**
- **In what ways would you like to live differently, but don't? What holds you back?**
- **Mike Woodruff points out that, in addition to being courageous, the three friends exhibited great wisdom in taking their stand against the king's demand. What aspects of wisdom showed up that empowered them to live differently?**
 - NOTE. In his sermon, Mike identifies several aspects of wisdom.
 - **Wisdom is practical**—it is not what you know, but what you do
 - **Wisdom is moral**—it is choosing righteousness over sinfulness
 - **Wisdom is effective**—it leads to positive outcomes (vs. the outcomes of foolishness, naivety, or skepticism)
 - **Wisdom requires long-term thinking**—it is focused on eternity
- **So how do we grow wise? How do we avoid the kinds of mistakes most people make and be more like Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego? What clues do we find in Daniel 3? What about the larger context of chapters 1-3?**
 - NOTE. Allow people to offer insights, then point out the suggestions Mike offers:
 - Live in light of eternity
 - Hang out with wise people
 - Study, meditate on and apply Scripture (10 minutes a day)
 - Pray (10 minutes a day)
- **What insights or actions do you sense the Lord leading you to apply in your life this week?**

Prayer

- Invite the group to participate in a time of “conversational” prayer. Each person may pray as often as he or she wants, but only 1-2 short sentences on one topic at a time. This lowers the barrier of participation for people unaccustomed to praying with others.

Wrap-Up

- Be sure to end the formal conversation on time.
- Thank newcomers for joining you, and invite everyone to the next meeting.
- Encourage people to linger for a few minutes, and do your best to have a personal interaction with each individual before he or she leaves.

Small Group Discussion Guide

for participants

Getting Acquainted

- **This week we are discussing what it means to live well. Describe a season of your life when you lived particularly well. What made that time different than other seasons?**
 - NOTE: Take time to reflect on whether it was your attitudes and actions that defined that season or whether it was your circumstances. Or both.
- **How well are you living today, in this season of your life?**

Discussion Starter Video

Bible Exploration

- **Are you familiar with the Old Testament account of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the fiery furnace? Share what details you remember about the story.**
 - NOTE: Help start the conversation by sharing what you know of the story. Then thumb or scroll through Daniel 3:1-30 hitting the highlights and filling in the gaps.
- **What was the significance of worshipping the idol Nebuchadnezzar had erected? Why did he desire that everyone bow to it?**
- **There was strong pressure to comply with the king's demand, to say the least. What "idols" have been erected in our culture, and in what ways are we pressured to comply with the demand to worship them?**
- **How easy is it to live like everyone else versus living differently, based on different convictions?**
- **In what ways would you like to live differently, but don't? What holds you back?**
- **Mike Woodruff points out that, in addition to being courageous, the three friends exhibited great wisdom in taking their stand against the king's demand. What aspects of wisdom showed up that empowered them to live differently?**
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- **So how do we grow wise? How do we avoid the kinds of mistakes most people make and be more like Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego? What clues do we find in Daniel 3? What about the larger context of chapters 1-3?**
 - NOTE. Share your insights from these passages, then consider the suggestions Mike offers:
 - Live in light of eternity
 - Hang out with wise people
 - Study, meditate on and apply Scripture (10 minutes a day)
 - Pray (10 minutes a day)
- **What insights or actions do you sense the Lord leading you to apply in your life this week?**

Prayer

- As a group, have a time of “conversational” prayer. Each person may pray as often as he or she wants, but only 1-2 short sentences on one topic at a time.