

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

Can You Believe This?

Questions written by Pastor Mark Collins
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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Would you like to lead your own small group? – Talk to your Small Group Leader and contact Carolyn York at carolyn.york@therocksandiego.org or 619.764.5120.

Boot Camp – Learn more about discipleship and growing your faith in Christ at this dynamic 12 week study course. Next course begins Monday, September 24 and Wednesday, September 26. For more information or to register, go to www.therocksandiego.org/bootcamp.

New to the Rock Reception – If you're new to the Rock, join our pastors in the cafeteria of the Rock Church for fellowship, refreshments and Cold Stone ice cream. Happens every Sunday, 4-5 PM or Tuesday, 7-8 PM.

For all other Rock events, please go <http://www.therocksandiego.org/eventcalendar/>.

MINISTRY PRAYER REQUESTS

As "small groupies," you are the heart and soul of this ministry--who better than you to lift up the Small Group Ministry in prayer? So, it's up to you, you can spend time in your small group praying for these things (weekly or occasionally), or you can pray during the week on your own time. And if you'd like to be added to our Pastor's Prayer Team(s), just let us know. John Dehnert, Mark Collins, or Paul Garrison, our small group pastors, would love your prayers! We send out a monthly email of their personal and ministry prayer requests. Just contact Andy Rodgers at andy.rodgers@therocksandiego.org. May God work through your prayers mightily!

Reaching the Lost: Please pray that God would continue to draw the lost both to the Rock and our small groups.

Current Small Group Leaders/Small Groups: Pray that God would energize, strengthen and restart groups in the fall months.

Potential Small Group Leaders: Pray for the new small group leaders as they start leading their groups this month and next.

Small Group Staff: Pray that God would renew our strength and give us His vision for small groups as we begin our planning for 2008.

The Rock Body: Pray that we would take time to celebrate all that God has done in our midst.

MEMORY VERSE

If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it...but even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up. Daniel 3:17-18

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS – CAN YOU BELIEVE THIS?

Living by faith doesn't always guarantee that we will be rescued from danger or from difficult times. Sometimes, God immediately comes to our rescue because of faith, and other times He provides a supernatural inner strength to make it through difficult circumstances. One thing's for sure, God always responds to those who believe in Him. Therefore, the real question is: How do we grow in our trust in God whose plans are many times difficult to understand?

Getting Started

In the third chapter of the book Daniel is one of the greatest stories of faith in the Old Testament. At this time in history the best and brightest minds of Judah had been deported to Babylon. Their country and the Temple of God lay in a heap of ruin, and God's people were in a strange land being forced to worship the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar. To make matters even worse, the punishment for any kind of insubordination was a slow and painful death.

What might have made things more complicated was a feeling of the Hebrew people that their God, Yahweh, had been defeated. The Babylonian chariots ran over the armies of the "Most High" and even His house (the Temple) wasn't spared. Was Israel's God the one true God? If He wasn't willing to protect His people from the cruel exploitation of the Babylonians, why should they risk their lives for Him?

1. Read Daniel 3. Can you share a time in your personal life when you experienced emotional or spiritual heat from people around you?
2. Have you ever been in a situation where the one in charge, like Nebuchadnezzar, expected everyone to bow to their commands? What happened?

Digging Deeper

3. Take a closer look at Daniel 3:1-6. Why do you think that Nebuchadnezzar called for all his leaders to make a demonstration of public allegiance? What different kinds of heat do you think the three men faced?

4. Look back at Daniel 2:46-49. How did their recent promotions complicate the situation?

5. Read Daniel 3:8-12. Who were the young men's accusers and how did they twist the facts, putting the three in the worst possible light? Why do you think Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego chose civil disobedience rather than participating in this national celebration?

6. Compare Nebuchadnezzar's attitude in 2:46-47 with his outburst in 3:13-15. Why do think there was such a difference?

7. Read Daniel 3:16-18. They told the king that whether or not their God saved them, they would not serve his gods. Do you think they mustered up extraordinary faith in that moment or was their faith built over time, preparing them for that moment? Right now, how is God building your faith for a future moment of truth?

8. Read Daniel 3:26-30. Who might the fourth man (v.25) have been? What does it say to you that He showed up in the fire? How did their faith affect a nation? (Vv. 29-30)

Bringing it Home

9. In Mark 9:15-24, Jesus heals a young boy with an unclean spirit, who the disciples were unable to help. When Jesus inquired about the boy's condition his father demonstrated a lack of faith by saying, "I believe, help my unbelief." Break up into groups and share something that you have had trouble in believing God for.