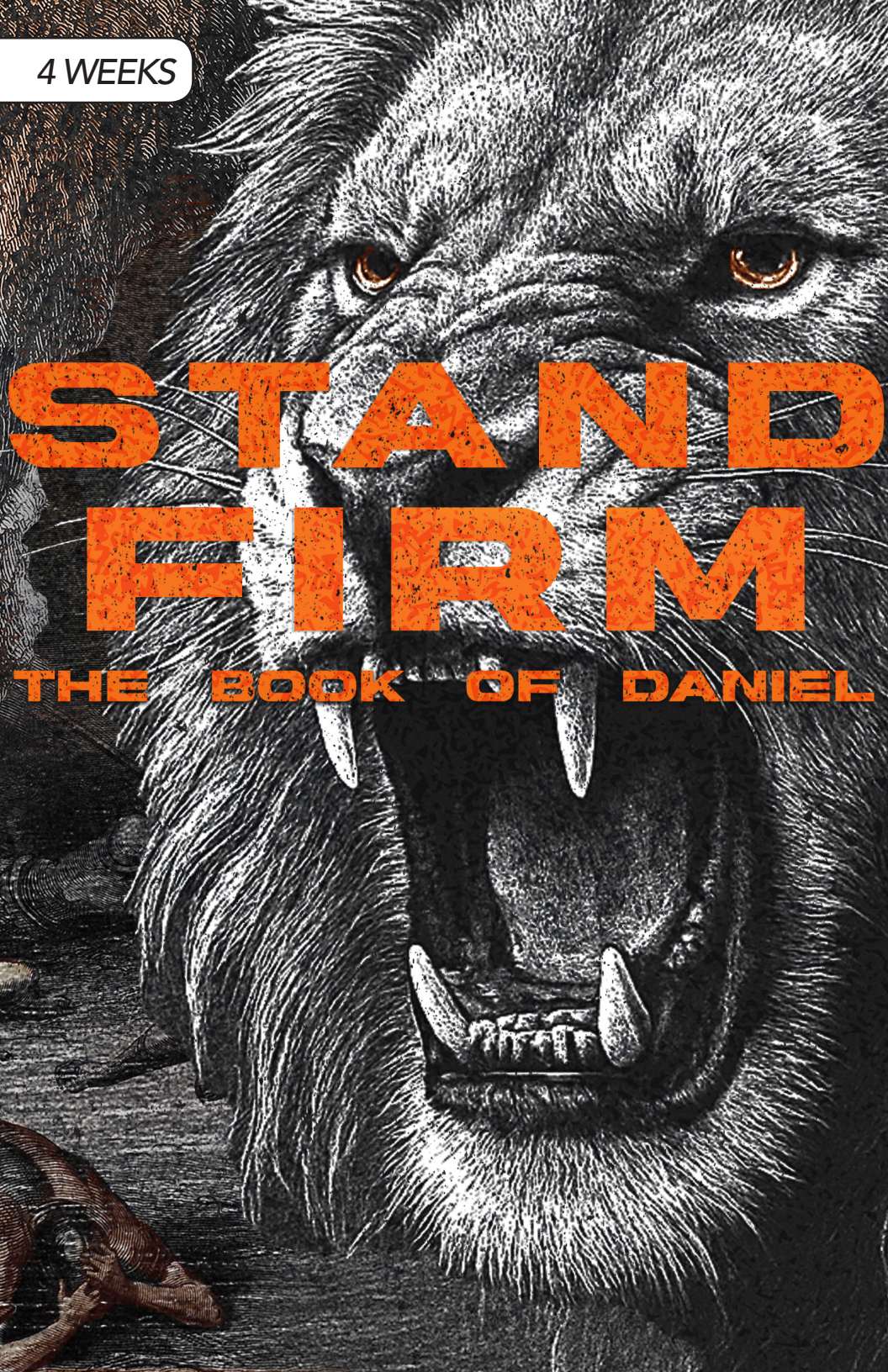


4 WEEKS

# STAND FIRM

THE BOOK OF DANIEL







*Life has a way of pulling us in every direction, and standing up for what we believe in can be tough. How do you find the strength to stay grounded when the world feels unsteady? In this series, we'll learn how to stand firm in our faith no matter what the world throws at us.*

*In addition to the discussion guide, we challenge you to, either on your own or with your group, read through the entire book of Daniel. As you are reading, make sure to focus on observing, interpreting and applying what the passages say. There is a guide in the back of this study guide to help you. Please keep in mind that each week's reading might not line up with the message and questions you will discuss in your groups.*

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# LIVING FOR JESUS IN A CULTURE OF COMPROMISE

WEEK 1

## SMALL GROUP STUDY

### Kicking It Off:

Can you think of a time when you stood your ground for something you believed in, even when it wasn't the popular or easy thing to do?

### Big Idea:

In a culture of compromise, we must stand firm in our identity in Christ.

### Key Scriptures:

Daniel 1:8

*But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way.*

Daniel 1:12-15

*"Please test your servants for ten days: Give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink. Then compare our appearance with that of the young men who eat the royal food, and treat your servants in accordance with what you*

*see." So he agreed to this and tested them for ten days. At the end of the ten days they looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who ate the royal food.*

Ephesians 4:15

*Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.*

### Discussion:

1. Read Daniel 1:8. What do you think it means to be "undefiled"? How do you think this set Daniel apart from the other men?
2. What are some modern-day "royal foods" or things that seem appealing but can compromise your walk with God? What are some ways you can avoid these temptations?
3. In what ways does today's culture challenge our identity in Christ?

4. Is there a part of your life where you feel pressure to follow the world (at work or school, relationships, finances, etc.)? Discuss some ways you can stand firm with your group.
5. How did Daniel's faithfulness open the door for greater influence in Babylon?
6. Who are the "Shadrachs, Meshachs, and Abednegos" in your life? Do you have a community of friends who help you stay faithful?

### Wrapping It Up:

Standing firm in a culture of compromise isn't easy, but with a strong foundation of faith and a supportive community, it's possible. Take time to pray for one another, asking God to strengthen your relationships and help you remain grounded in Him as you face the pressures of today's world.

### Prayer Focus:

Pray for any parts of your life where you are feeling pressure to follow the world, maybe in your workplace, school, in your relationships, or your finances. Ask God to help you resist any temptation and stand firm in His truth.

### Memory Verse:

Daniel 1:8

*But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way.*

### Reading Challenge:

Daniel 1:

Daniel's Training in Babylon

Daniel 2:

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream,  
Daniel Interprets the Dream

Daniel 3:

The Image of Gold and the  
Blazing Furnace



# NOTES:

# WHEN YOU'RE UNDER ATTACK

WEEK 2

## SMALL GROUP STUDY

### Kicking It Off:

Think of your favorite super hero. If you could be them for just one day, who would it be and why? What characteristics about them do you admire?

### Big Idea:

A spiritual attack isn't a sign you're doing something wrong; it's often evidence you're doing something right.

### Key Scriptures:

**Daniel 6:1-5**

*It pleased Darius to appoint 120 satraps to rule throughout the kingdom, with three administrators over them, one of whom was Daniel. The satraps were made accountable to them so that the king might not suffer loss. Now Daniel so distinguished himself among the administrators and the satraps by his exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom. At this, the administrators and the satraps tried to find grounds for charges*

*against Daniel in his conduct of government affairs, but they were unable to do so. They could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent. Finally these men said, "We will never find any basis for charges against this man Daniel unless it has something to do with the law of his God."*

**Colossians 3:17**

*And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

**Daniel 6:10**

*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.*

**Daniel 6:22-23**

*"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.” 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.*

## **Discussion:**

1. Daniel lived with integrity even when no one was watching. What does integrity look like in your everyday life (at work, school, or home)?
2. Daniel also prayed consistently, even when it was risky. Is there a spiritual habit you want to grow in right now that you can share? What steps can you take this week to do that?
3. Why is consistency often harder than big, one-time acts of faith?
4. Living with integrity, consistency, and faithfulness can leave a lasting impact. Which of these comes most naturally to you, and which one do you find most challenging?
5. Read Daniel 6:16–28. After seeing God rescue Daniel, King Darius tells the kingdom they “must fear

and reverence the God of Daniel”. Are there ways you can live out your faith to help point others toward God?

## **Wrapping It Up:**

Living with integrity, consistency and faithfulness isn’t always easy, but it’s always worth it. When we do what’s right, we can trust God with the results. This week, choose one spiritual habit you’d like to grow in, and take intentional steps to be more consistent with it.

## **Prayer Focus:**

Ask God to help you live with integrity, stay consistent in your walk with Him, and remain faithful even when it’s hard. Pray that your life would reflect His love and truth in a way that influences others for good.

## **Memory Verse:**

*Colossians 3:17 And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

## **Reading Challenge:**

Daniel 4: Nebuchadnezzar’s Dream of a Tree, Daniel Interprets the Dream, The Dream Is Fulfilled

Daniel 5: The Writing on the Wall  
Daniel 6: Daniel in the Den of Lions



# NOTES:

# ANXIOUS HEARTS, FEARLESS FAITH

WEEK 3

## SMALL GROUP STUDY

### Kicking It Off:

What's the hottest place you've ever been to? What's the hottest food you have every tried?

### Big Idea:

God doesn't always deliver us from our trials, but He is always with us in our trials.

### Key Scriptures:

Daniel 3:4-7

*Then the herald loudly proclaimed, "Nations and peoples of every language, this is what you are commanded to do: As soon as you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of music, you must fall down and worship the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. Whoever does not fall down and worship will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace." Therefore, as soon as they heard the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp and all kinds of music, all the nations and peoples of every language*

*fell down and worshiped the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.*

Daniel 3:16-17

*Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to him, "King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty's hand."*

1 Peter 1:7

*These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.*

Daniel 3:25

*He said, "Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods."*

Daniel 3:28

*Then Nebuchadnezzar said,*

*"Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants! They trusted in him and defied the king's command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God."*

## **Discussion:**

1. Share a time when your faith was tested? How did that experience shape your trust in God?
2. Why do you think God sometimes allows us to go through the fire instead of rescuing us from it?
3. Do you think our faith grows stronger through testing? Why do you think that is?
4. King Nebuchadnezzar built a giant gold statue and demanded everyone bow down to it. What are some modern idols people are tempted to bow to today? Things that demand our attention, loyalty, or can cause us to compromise?
5. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego said, "Even if He does not..." (Daniel 3:18). What does that kind of faith look like in real life? What would it look like for you to trust God in an "even if He

does not" kind of way?

## **Wrapping It Up:**

What are some ways we can remind ourselves that God is with us in the fire, not just out of it? Think of one step you can take this week to live out a fearless faith, even if your heart feels anxious, knowing God is with you.

## **Prayer Focus:**

Are you currently walking through a trial? If you are comfortable, share with the group and spend some time in prayer together and then continue to pray for one another throughout the week.

## **Memory Verse:**

**1 Peter 1:7**

*These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.*

## **Reading Challenge:**

Daniel 7: Daniel's Dream of Four Beasts, The Interpretation of the Dream

Daniel 8: Daniel's Vision of a Ram and a Goat, The Interpretation of the Vision

Daniel 9: Daniel's Prayer, The Seventy "Sevens"



# NOTES:

# WHEN GOD SEEMS S L O W

WEEK 4

## SMALL GROUP STUDY

### Kicking It Off:

Share something good that happened to you last week.

### Big Idea:

While you are waiting, God is still working—often in ways you can't see. His timing may be different from ours, but He is never absent.

### Key Scriptures:

Psalm 3:3

*But you, Lord, are a shield around me, my glory, the One who lifts my head high.*

Daniel 10:1-3

*In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia, a revelation was given to Daniel (who was called Belteshazzar). Its message was true and it concerned a great war. The understanding of the message came to him in a vision. At that time I, Daniel, mourned for three weeks. I ate no choice food; no meat or wine touched my lips; and I used*

*no lotions at all until the three weeks were over.*

Daniel 10:5-13

*I looked up and there before me was a man dressed in linen, with a belt of fine gold from Uphaz around his waist. His body was like topaz, his face like lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and his voice like the sound of a multitude.*

*I, Daniel, was the only one who saw the vision; those who were with me did not see it, but such terror overwhelmed them that they fled and hid themselves. So I was left alone, gazing at this great vision; I had no strength left, my face turned deathly pale and I was helpless. Then I heard him speaking, and as I listened to him, I fell into a deep sleep, my face to the ground. A hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. He said, "Daniel, you who are highly esteemed, consider carefully the words I am about to speak to you, and stand up, for I have now been*

sent to you.” And when he said this to me, I stood up trembling. Then he continued, “Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia.”

### **Ephesians 6:12**

*For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.*

### **Daniel 10:18-19**

*Again the one who looked like a man touched me and gave me strength. “Do not be afraid, you who are highly esteemed,” he said. “Peace! Be strong now; be strong.” When he spoke to me, I was strengthened and said, “Speak, my lord, since you have given me strength.”*

### **Discussion:**

1. What are some things that make it easy for people to

trust in God? What might make it more difficult?

2. Read Psalm 3:3. What does it mean for God to be your shield, glory, and lifter of your head?
3. Talk about a time when you felt like God seemed slow. What did you need from Him, and how did you grow closer to Him through that experience?
4. Have you ever felt like your prayers were delayed or even unanswered? How do you think Daniel felt when he waited 21 days for a response? How would you have responded? What does this teach us about being persistent in prayer?
5. Daniel gives us a glimpse into unseen spiritual warfare. How does knowing there’s a spiritual battle going on affect how you approach your struggles?

### **Wrapping It Up:**

We can be encouraged in knowing that even when we don’t see it, God is moving. Daniel didn’t stop praying even when it felt like nothing was happening. What he didn’t realize was that from the very first day, his prayers had been heard and God was already at work.



## Prayer Focus:

Is there an area of your life where you feel you are waiting for God right now? He hears our prayers the moment we speak them. This week, pray for God to give you exactly what you need right now—even if it's different from what you want.

## Memory Verse:

Psalm 3:3

*But you, Lord, are a shield around me, my glory, the One who lifts my head high.*

## Reading Challenge:

Daniel 10:

Daniel's Vision of a Man

Daniel 11:

The Kings of the South and the North, The King Who Exalts Himself

Daniel 12:

The End Times



# NOTES:

# BIBLE READING GUIDE

## BEGIN...

by asking God to reveal Himself as you read.

## OBSERVE:

- What does it say?

Setting and Summary

- Read carefully and pay attention to the main characters and settings. In your own words, write a summary (3–5 sentences) and note anything that stood out to you.

Key Words and Phrases

- As you read, mark any words that are repeated or emphasized and consider why the author does this. Note any terms you don't fully understand and take a moment to look them up.

## INTERPRET:

- What does it mean?
- What was hard to understand?
- As you are reading, write down any questions that come to mind. Consider reading it in other Bible translations for deeper understanding.
- Who is the author, and who were they writing to?
- What did you learn about God?
- What attribute of God stood out to you? How does this encourage you?

## APPLY:

- How will you apply it?
- What did you learn about people?
- Others: Is there something you learned you can share with someone this week? Pray for meaningful conversations.
- Yourself: Is there a command for you to obey or an example to follow? What is one action step you can take this week?



# Top 10 Tips for Leading a Small Group

1. Establish a welcoming, accepting, and safe environment.
  - Take time to prepare.
  - Make sure to give a warm enthusiastic greeting to each person.
  - Verbally communicate the environment that you hope to create.
2. On the opening night of your group you need to have some intentional discussions centered around these questions:
  - What is the purpose of our group?
  - What is the vision for our group?
  - What are your expectations?
  - What do you hope to gain from this group experience?
  - What are some things we value as a group?
  - What are some healthy guidelines we need to have in place?

Review and sign a group agreement.
3. Be authentic. Spend time sharing your life stories in order to get to know each other on a deeper level.
4. Find a good balance between:
  - Truth and grace/Bible study and life
  - Encouraging and challenging one another
  - Giving and receiving feedback from each other
5. Ask good questions to stimulate good discussion. Use open ended questions and follow up questions.
6. Hang out together, do things socially, eat together and have fun together!
7. Develop a missional lifestyle, find a service project to do together in the community.
8. Raise up new leadership by rotating facilitation of the group.
9. Share the responsibilities in order to increase individual commitment and ownership of the group.
10. Pray for your group and for each other!

Find ways to celebrate what God is doing in your group! Who else could you invite to join you in order that their life may be impacted by what God is doing in your group?

# Group Agreement

## OUR PURPOSE

To transform our spiritual lives by cultivating our spiritual health in a healthy small group community. In addition, we: \_\_\_\_\_

## OUR VALUES

Group Attendance: To give priority to the group meeting. We will call or email if we will be late or absent.

Safe Environment: To help create a safe place where people can be heard and feel loved. (Please, no quick answers, snap judgments, or simple fixes.)

Respect Differences: To be gentle and gracious to people with different spiritual maturity, personal opinions, temperaments, or imperfections. We are all works in progress.

Confidentiality: To keep anything that is shared strictly confidential and within the group, and to avoid sharing improper information about those outside the group.

Encouragement for Growth: To be not just takers but givers of life. We want to spiritually multiply our life by serving others with our God-given gifts.

Welcome for Newcomers: To keep an open chair and share Jesus' dream of finding a shepherd for every sheep.

Shared Ownership: To remember that every member is a minister and to ensure that each attender will share a small team role or responsibility over time.

Rotating Hosts/Leaders and Homes: To encourage different people to host the group in their homes, and to rotate the responsibility of facilitating each meeting.

## OUR EXPECTATIONS

- Refreshments/mealtimes \_\_\_\_\_
- Childcare \_\_\_\_\_
- When we will meet (day of week) \_\_\_\_\_
- Where we will meet (place) \_\_\_\_\_
- We will begin at (time) \_\_\_\_\_ and end at \_\_\_\_\_
- We will do our best to have some or all of us attend a worship service together.
- Our primary worship service time will be \_\_\_\_\_
- Date of this agreement \_\_\_\_\_
- Date we will review this agreement again \_\_\_\_\_
- Who (other than the leader) will review this agreement at the end of this study \_\_\_\_\_

# STAND FIRM

THE BOOK OF DANIEL



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