

Authentic Leadership Defined

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. **—Daniel 3:16-17, KJV**

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were being trained for authentic leadership, although they may not have known it at the time. There are two kinds of leadership: authentic leadership and passive leadership. What is needed is authentic leadership, and this is determined by how we react to temptation and testing. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were now to undergo a real trial. Here were three men that decided to stand up and be counted.

These three men were characterized by a prior commitment—they had decided long before what they would do. Courage like this is planned in advance.

These three men didn't need to look at each other and wink or nudge; no, they looked straight at the king and said, "We don't have to answer you, and we don't have to defend ourselves; we can tell you right now."

Real strength is not in seeing how close you get to temptation without yielding; it is avoiding temptation altogether. When there is that kind of commitment, and temptation comes, you don't have to pray about it.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego lived by what I can only call the impulse of the Spirit. Their peers listened for music and they fell down. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego listened to the impulse of the Spirit and they stood up. Unimpressed, the king had them bound and thrown into the burning fiery furnace.

Whenever you are in the fire, you know where to find Jesus. He

is in the fire, and if you want to be changed from glory to glory, you may want the shortcut. I wouldn't blame you for that. Just remember this, though: if you are ever given a trial, what can only be called a fiery trial, see it as God issuing to you an invitation on a silver platter to be changed from glory to glory. In the fire you will find Jesus there; you will find Him to be real, and you will be amazed and say, "Look who's here."

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