

## LEADER'S GUIDE / Life Group Homework (for sermon on 3.19.17)

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### Quick Review

Standing for God can be hard. Based on what you heard from Mark's message, which of the six benefits of standing for God is the most motivating? Most worth remembering? Can you think of other benefits not mentioned by Pastor Mark?

- You will experience victory over fear.
- You build your faith and character. (2 Timothy 1:8)
- You give God and opportunity to perform a miracle. (Daniel 6:19-23, Hebrews 11:35b-38)
- You encourage other believers to stand up for their faith. (Philippians 1:14)
- You set a powerful example to unbelievers. (Acts 4:13, Daniel 6:25-28, Matthew 2:1-2)
- You will be rewarded in eternity. (Matthew 5:11-12)

### My Story

1. As a kid did you ever break something of value? Did you get caught? If so, what was your consequence?
2. Describe a moment in your life when you felt like "the writing is on the wall." What fears or insecurities did you experience as you anticipated the inevitable?

The expression or idiom, "writing on the wall" appears to be derived from Daniel 5. It essentially means that pending doom is on the horizon or that something is going to happen that is impossible to prevent or avoid.

### Digging Deeper

1. Read Daniel 5 before Life Group. Mark did not cover chapter 5 in his sermon, but this study will focus on the content of chapter 5 as a parallel to the sermon offered on 3/19/17.
2. In Daniel 5:1-4, how did Belshazzar and his dinner party dishonor God?

The answer is indicated in 5:2-4: desecration of the sacred and idol worship. Daniel affirms this in 5:22-23 when he rebukes the king for his actions, adding that [he]...has not humbled his heart and has lifted himself against the Lord of heaven.

- A. Recall Lev. 26:1; Deut. 5:1-11. What does idol worship communicate about one's belief in God, especially the king and those at the feast?

Worship of idols is denying God's supremacy as he is rightful ruler over creation.

- B. How is Belshazzar's posture toward God a potential contrast to Nebuchadnezzar?

3. Daniel 5 discusses the “writing on the wall” incident. Answer the following questions:
- A. Why does Belshazzar react the way he does? And what does he turn to in order to relieve himself of his fear and questions?

Belshazzar turns to enchanters, Chaldeans, and astrologers – the wise men of Babylon. (5:7)

- B. How do people today turn to idols, false gods, and false teachers, to address their fears and concerns? Consider the following New Testament passages in your discussion: I Cor. 10:14; I John 5:21. What does Daniel teach us about God supremacy over the “gods” of this world?

Idol worship is more than just worshipping images of gold and stone. Idols are the things that we worship in our hearts such as money, material possessions, statues, etc.

4. Much like Daniel has done before, In chapter 5 Daniel offers his service to the King again. Discuss the following questions about how Daniel interacts with Belshazzar.

- A. Before Daniel interprets the writing on the wall, he offers an introduction. What is his central message? How did Daniel stand strong with his message?

You blew it! You dishonored God. It takes guts to tell a ruler of a nation that he has made a poor decisions. Keep in mind that Daniel rebukes the king based on his actions toward God. This was very much a matter of faith.

- B. What are the 3 points of Daniel’s interpretation? In recalling the end of chapter 5 and Mark’s message concerning chapter 6, how does Daniel's interpretation come to pass?

- God has numbered that days of Belshazzar’s kingdom.
- Belshazzar has been weighed and found wanting. (lacking moral worth or unable to measure up to God’s standard)
- Belshazzar’s kingdom will be divided and given to other empires (Medes and Persians)

- C. Why will Babylon fall? Consider Isaiah 47 in your answer. Finish the following sentence...Rebellion against God results in JUDGMENT/DISCIPLINE/PUNISHMENT by God. Talk about your answer.

Much of this discussion points back to Deuteronomy 28 regarding blessings and curses. Obeying God results in blessing and disobedience results in judgement.

### Taking it Home

1. Consider certain fears in your life. Are you turning to false sources to find solutions or are you turning to God?
2. Is it easy for you stand strong for God or not? What can you do to work on that?

