

Shine With Peers

When the issue of whether gender is fluid or fixed at birth came before the Student Senate of the University of California, Berkeley, Senator Isabella Chow chose to abstain from voting. She told her classmates, “My God is one who assigns immeasurable value to and desires to love each and every human being”, but she also felt led by Christ to say “As a Christian, I personally do believe that certain acts and lifestyles conflict with what is good, right, and true.”

For this, Isabella was lambasted on social media and denounced by *The Daily Californian*, saying she “dehumanized” people and calling her “toxic”. Before voting, Isabella sought out her Christian friends, pleading with God for wisdom. Together they helped her craft a principled stand reflecting a balance of grace and truth.

Four Questions God’s People Will Repeatedly Face:

- 1. What Do We Do When Our _____ (Christian Faith Is Challenged)?**
 - a. *“This is what you are commanded to do...as soon as you hear the sound of...music, you must fall down and worship the image of gold...whoever does not fall down and worship will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace.” Daniel 3:4-6.*
 - b. Daniel’s three friends had plenty of warning that their faith would be challenged. In such situations, we need to discuss with godly friends and mentors, “Is this a stand I need to take?” *“Where there is no guidance, people fall; but in an abundance of counselors there is safety.” Proverbs 11:14.*

- 2. What Do We Do When We Are _____ (Viciously Attacked)?**
 - a. *“There are some Jews, whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon – who pay not attend to you, O king. They neither serve your gods nor worship the image of gold you have set up.” Daniel 3:12.* Jealous rivals openly attacked the three men.
 - b. *“Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.” II Timothy 3:12. “They think it strange that you do not join them in their reckless, wild living, and they heap abuse on you...Don’t be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering...If you are insulted because of the name of Christ you are blessed.” I Peter 4:4,12,14.*
 - c. When facing persecution, talk this over with your Christian friends so you respond wisely (Proverbs 24:6). God’s favor is on you! (Matthew 5:11).

- 3. What Do We Do When _____ (Courage Is Called For)?**
 - a. *“Furious with rage, Nebuchadnezzar summoned Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego...’Is it true...that you do not serve my gods or worship the image?’” Daniel 3:13-14.*

- b. On November 16, 2018, John Allen Chau returned to North Sentinel Island near India. On a previous visit, he was shot with an arrow that hit his Bible. Burdened with our Lord's command to preach the gospel to everyone (Mark 16:15), John made one more attempt to reach them and was shot full of arrows. He was buried on the beach by tribesmen.
- c. The secular world sees mission work to hostile people as crazy. When faced with danger, we should seek out Christian friends and mentors as there is a fine line between faith and foolishness (Proverbs 27:17). Even Jesus "*grew in wisdom*" (Luke 2:52) and asked questions of his teachers.

4. What Do We Do When _____ (Deliverance Is Uncertain)?

- a. *"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, we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up."* Daniel 3:16-18. Although the three men were spared, other godly people were not (Hebrews 11:35-40).
- b. Although some teach today that it is always God's will to heal, prosper, and deliver from danger, seek out what the Scriptures teach with your Christian friends and mentors. *"No prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation."* II Peter 1:20. We need help to see the Bible clearly.

John Wycliffe took a courageous stand in declaring that the Bible alone is a reliable guide to truth about God. He died in 1384 at 64 while leading a church service, hailed as a great man of God. 31 years later, Wycliffe's disciple John Hus made a similar stand and was burned at the stake. He was publicly vilified as a heretic. Why is one vindicated and another isn't? Either way we are called to let our lights shine for Jesus!