



TAKEAWAY: Don't just make decisions based on what you feel.

SCRIPTURE: Jeremiah 17:9 NLT, Psalm 33:4 NLT, Daniel 3:4-6 NLT, Daniel 3:13-15 NLT, Daniel 3:16-18 NLT, Ezekiel 36:26, Romans 12:2 NLT, James 1:5 NIV, Matthew 7:7-11 MSG, Proverbs 3:5-6 NIV, John 10:10 NLT

INTRO

How many of you are animal lovers? Have you ever heard of the slow loris? [[show a picture of a slow loris](#)] It's really cute, isn't it? The eyes are super wide which make it even more adorable. Here's the thing though, it's looks can be really deceiving. While some of you would totally snuggle it that hug could be deadly. They have a small gland on the side of their elbow that secretes poison. They even have a painful bite that secretes venom that can cause illness and even death in humans. So, while you might feel like they're adorable and harmless and you may feel like cuddling them, doing so can lead to becoming really sick or even dying.

TENSION

People can be that way too. Sometimes you think or feel a person is one way and then you find out that they are completely different. Sometimes it's for the better and sometimes not. Have you ever heard the phrase "true colors"? It means to reveal one's real nature or character. Have you ever gotten close with someone and confided in them only to have them break your confidence and spill your secrets to others? They seemed like a good friend at first, but then they showed their true colors.

Situations can be the same way, too. You feel like it's a wise decision or that something is a good idea and then it turns out that it wasn't what you thought it would be. For example, you knew everyone was going to the party on Friday night and you thought it would be a good idea to go. You decided that you wouldn't drink when you're there, but you just wanted to be part of the in crowd. But even if you didn't drink, you're associating with that behavior and that could lead to adults not trusting you, as well as compromising your reputation for Jesus.

I don't know about you, but I find it disappointing when I can't trust my feelings on something. It can be discouraging when you find out people and situations are not what they seem.

So often I hear the advice to follow your heart or to go where your feelings lead you. How can we do that when it seems that our heart and our feelings can be wrong? They can be an untrustworthy source of direction in our lives.

TRUTH

“The human heart is the most deceitful of all things, and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is?” Jeremiah 17:9 NLT

The prophet, Jeremiah, warned us not to just trust our hearts because they can be dishonest. That's why blindly following your heart and passions can cause confusion and lead you in directions that you didn't expect.

Jesus is constant and true. He can be trusted because He is faithful.

For the word of the Lord holds true, and we can trust everything he does. Psalm 33:4 NLT

About 2500 years ago, the Jewish people were exiled and they were forced to live in Babylon. When the Babylonians captured them, they took the young men of Judah's royal family and other noble families and set them aside to be trained in the language and literature of Babylon. Three of these young men were Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. While they were there, King Nebuchadnezzar had a golden statue of himself made that was 90 feet tall. And he made a decree that when music played, everyone must bow down before it. That's where we are going to pick up the story.

“Then a herald shouted out, “People of all races and nations and languages, listen to the king's command! When you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes, and other musical instruments, bow to the ground to worship King Nebuchadnezzar's gold statue. Anyone who refuses to obey will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace.” Daniel 3:4-6 NLT

Even though Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were learning the ways of the Babylonians, they still loved God and were not going to worship anyone but God. Could you imagine being in their shoes? What would you do if you were asked to bow down to a statue of a king or president and told that if you didn't, you'd be burned alive? If I trusted my feelings, I would be able to justify it, "I'll bow down, but I won't mean it in my heart and God will know that." I don't know about you, but I don't want to be burned alive. That sounds horrifying. But these young men didn't trust their feelings. They trusted their God who they knew would be faithful and so they chose to obey Him. Some of the kings' astrologers ratted them out and the King was furious. It says he flew into a rage.

*"Then Nebuchadnezzar flew into a rage and ordered that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego be brought before him. When they were brought in, Nebuchadnezzar said to them, "Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you refuse to serve my gods or to worship the gold statue I have set up? I will give you one more chance to bow down and worship the statue I have made when you hear the sound of the musical instruments. But if you refuse, you will be thrown immediately into the blazing furnace. And then what god will be able to rescue you from my power?" **Daniel 3:13-15 NLT***

Nebuchadnezzar was not playing around. He even gave them another opportunity to change their minds, but they would not.

*Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego replied, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God whom we serve is able to save us. He will rescue us from your power, Your Majesty. But even if he doesn't, we want to make it clear to you, Your Majesty, that we will never serve your gods or worship the gold statue you have set up." **Daniel 3:16-18 NLT***

So, the king had them tied up and thrown into a furnace that was so hot that the flames killed the soldiers who threw the three men in. While they were in the furnace, the king noticed that there were four men walking around inside the furnace. God not only protected them He was with them in the fire. And when they pulled Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego out of the fire they didn't even smell like smoke! My hair smells like smoke when I sit at a campfire for a just a few minutes. They were engulfed in full fire and



SURFACE

- Are there any rules that you have to follow at home, or at school, or even at church that you think don't make sense? What are they?

SERIOUS

- Are you a rule follower, a rule bender, or a rule breaker? How does it make you feel when you don't follow the rules? How does it make you feel when others don't follow the rules?

SPIRITUAL

- In the message, [\[insert name of your speaker\]](#) said that shaming yourself is actually self-righteousness. What do you think they meant by that? Do you agree or disagree? Why?
- We are made right because of what God did for us through Jesus. It has nothing to do with anything we can or cannot do. How does that make you feel?
- We also heard that one of the things we can do to help us remember our freedom is to spend more time with Jesus. How do you think that might help?
- What is something you can do this week to spend more time with God?

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