

Kneel or Stand, Your Choice

by Joyce Rhoads

As recorded in Daniel 3, when Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego stood before Nebuchadnezzar, they were not certain God would save them from the fiery furnace. But they stood when the king demanded they kneel. Daniel 3:17-18 says, "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. But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up."

There are many things worse than dying. I gave some thought to this recently. In the movie, 'Lonesome Dove', Charley says in response to a mother not wanting her sons to stand up to evil in fear of them being killed, 'Well, you may not know this, but there's things that gnaw at a man worse than dying'.

I started thinking about things for which one would consider dying.

Our "Greatest Generation", documented by Tom Brokaw, went through tremendous hardships. Part of that began during the Great Depression, when almost everyone was destitute. People underwent situations where providing food for their table might cause them to act in a manner they would not otherwise.

That tremendous hardship was most evident as sons and husbands, fathers and brothers received notices from Uncle Sam to join the fight in Europe. These men had to make the decision to fight and perhaps to die to defend our country.

In my raising, accentuated by a father and grandfathers before him that fought during war-time, we were taught to 'stand with a fist'. That expression is from 'Dances with Wolves', exhibited by one of the actresses standing up to

any and all forms of oppression.

Recently, three men went to the aid of total strangers on a train when they were being threatened because of their 'perceived' nationality. Two of those men lost their lives. They made a split-second decision to protect someone vulnerable.

We call them heroes, and rightfully so! How many more people witness brutality and do nothing. They have to live with that knowledge.

What parent reading this would, without

thought for their own safety, protect their child to the death? Mama bears are noted for fiercely protecting their young.

Despite consequences, one must stand up to a bully. Being knocked down is far less damaging than having to live with the thought of just lying down for it.

My brothers were instructed to never start a fight, but they were not to walk away from one, either.

Those words were etched in my mind also. I think we take for granted those men and women who are in harms way protecting those they do not even know personally. I like the ad campaign for firefighters, the military and the police...'When others are running from tragedy, they are running towards it!'

It's a privilege to stand up for God. In some countries, one might die for taking a stand for God. We are not in that situation, but many are. We all must decide for ourselves for what we would die.

