

THRIVE: CONFLICT AS OPPORTUNITY

Scripture used: [Daniel 1:15-16 \(NLT\)](#)

OVERVIEW

Pastor Hurmon led us into the third message of the “Thrive” series. Our Scripture tells the story of Daniel who prayed three times a day. All of Daniel’s innovation, creativity, and integrity were inspired by prayer. During that time, the Babylonians overthrew Jerusalem, and they started assimilating Jews into the Babylonian Empire. The emotional and spiritual wounds of the Jewish people would occasionally surface in conflict. The Scripture here really showcases how our spiritual growth is either constrained or limited by our emotional maturity, particularly around how we deal with conflict.

KEY POINTS

1. Pastor Hurmon quoted from Peter Scazzero’s book “Emotionally Healthy Spirituality.” If we’re under-developed emotionally, it will be hard for us to thrive spiritually. We function emotionally at the level of an infant, child, adolescent, or adult. The infant uses others and seeks instant gratification. The child often complains and interprets disagreement as a personal offense and setback, and is easily hurt. The teenager is often threatened and alarmed by criticism, and is defensive, critical, and judgmental. The adult states his/her beliefs and values without becoming adversarial and negotiates for outcomes that reflect everyone’s needs.
2. We can easily fall into two extremes: avoiding conflict and acting as false peace-makers, or engaging aggressively head-on, raising our shields and being quick to explode. Both behaviors are driven by fear. Instead, we must thoughtfully and wisely engage. We must speak the truth in love: being people of courageous integrity and redemptive motivation. If we are in pain, if our deeply-held values have been violated, or if someone else has been wronged - we must speak up. It’s not just opposition but an opportunity to make things right and to build and strengthen relationships.
3. Daniel is drawing a line, versus running away from conflict. He brings fine skills and insights to the situation. [Psalm 139](#): “Search me, O God.” This is a call to identify our own values and motivations, and to hold a crucial conversation as a result. [Daniel 1:9](#) reminds us that not all conflict is adversarial; we must check our assumptions before we engage into conflict. [Daniel 1:10](#) reminds us that there is often fear & pain that is tied to conflict, and wisdom means that we will discern the source of fear and figure out what is going on with the person we are speaking with. Often, how we begin a conversation will affect the fruitfulness of the ending, and we should seek win-win scenarios that help both us and the other party to thrive. Daniel was determined to avoid conduct that felt wrong, but he wisely began by asking permission for an accommodation, and he created space for non-adversarial engagement, an opportunity for a peaceful outcome.
4. God enables us to not only speak the truth in love, but also receive the truth in love. When we engage conflict and differences with maturity and see potential conflict as a profound opportunity, we end up healthier and stronger for it. [Proverbs 19:20](#) reminds us how valuable constructive feedback is to us; maybe the other side’s tone and timing are not ideal, but is what they say true? We must learn how to say: “Here is what I am feeling and thinking. Tell me what I am missing?” This is a wonderful growth-oriented question.

DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - What is your posture towards conflict? Is it more avoidant or more “jump right in!”? What lessons have you learned about engaging in conflict more productively?
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - Consider the unique perspective of [Daniel 1](#) as a lesson in how to engage in conflict. What principle stands out to you as one that God is desiring to grow in you? What relationship in your life right now (work, family, friendships) would benefit from a “speak the truth in love” conversation?
- 3) **DO** - Pray for wisdom in tough conversations this week. Join next Sunday for Judge Shelyna Brown’s message as she closes our “Thrive” series. And, join our [PF40 - 40 Days of Prayer and Fasting!](#)