

## **Weekly Study of Sunday's Message.**

### **Sunday May 9, 2021. "Thrive- Flourish. Relationships."**

#### **I Intro.**

Welcome to the weekly devotional that gives you some specific things to work through from the message this Sunday. Whether you were able to participate in this service or not, this devotional is free-standing and you can still use it to help you dig deeper into your own spiritual walk. We're deep into 2021 and thankfully, we're still gathering in person. A small but growing group who follow all the safety guidelines joins us at the church. Our children's and youth area are fully opened, and are seeing a good response. We're so encouraged with your love and presence when you gather with us. If you're still joining us online, we love and so appreciate your presence also. We still are your church family, and if there is ANYTHING you need, prayer, ideas or suggestions you have, please pass them our way. We feel just as isolated as you, and we want to maintain that connection with each of you.

#### **II Recap.**

We're in our second week of our series called **"Thrive"** which is basically how to live a life of flourishing. The abundant life Jesus spoke about found in Matthew 10:10. There are people and things we either allow into our lives or attach to, that Jesus said try to steal, kill, or destroy this abundant life. He called these things 'thieves', and this teaching in Matthew was calling out the Pharisees who were suppressing the abundant life through tradition and forced religion. Last week we simply spelled out a life of thriving is in our hands. We have ownership over the way we live, and it involves a mastery in growing the ability to incorporate things into our life that promote 'thriving'. The two primary truths that came out of last week, were that spiritual blindness is when we cannot 'see' the things that are stealing, killing, destroying our ability to live the abundant life. And the cure for that was to grow our ability to hear and discern the voice of the shepherd, Jesus, over the voice of the thief'. Those who keep us from living the abundant life.

#### **III Sunday.**

Sunday we hit a well worn topic, the importance of relationships. But rather than talking about why relationships are important, we gave specifics of what we need in relationships to help us thrive. We know why we need to have healthy, life-giving relationships. We were created for connection. Genesis records God saying that it's not good for us to be alone. And we know some of the things we need and expect from relationships too. This list won't be new or exhaustive. But hopefully we'll give you a tip or some little insight, how to best nurture these elements of healthy relationships.

#### **A. What elements within your relationships help you thrive or flourish?**

This for all relationships, whether you live in the same house or not. Each of these leads to this abundant life of thriving and flourishing, when we can either grow roots or build circles on these. None of these are new or earth shattering. What I hope to do is give a little more understanding, apply

some principles, of what it takes to cultivate these. These came from crowdsourcing your experiences with what elements within relationships help you thrive/flourish.

**1. Humor.** This was a great and surprisingly welcome answer. There has to be this lightness and fun vibe to healthy relationships. Humor can bring balance, and positive energy to heavy situations. We all know the energy sucking person. Debbie Downer, the drama person, center of the universe person, etc. I want to be, and to have in my life, people who bring joy and a lightness to everything.

**? How can you bring a healthy lightness, humor, to your relationships?**

**2. Communication.** There are some simple basic understandings to good communication. Say what you mean. Don't send mixed messages. Knowing each other well enough you know when and what to say in the moment. Knowing what the words you're saying mean and how they feel to the other person. But also be aware of your tone, and body language. Doing this well means knowing what the other person is experiencing when you're communicating.

**? How can you improve and work on the clarity of your communication skills?**

**3. Trust.** Trusting that the other person is for you...no matter what. You confidently know that the other person is committed to you and to the relationship. It's WITHIN that safe place of trust, any kind of relationship thrives or flourishes. Trust also is when you don't have all the info, you know you can assume the best. Trust is the solid place that an abundant life HAS to have in order to grow.

**? What are you doing specifically to grow trust in your relationship?**

**4. Respect.** This is a kind of an unusual, but underrated trait in relationships. Trust is something we may not be able to define, but we know when it's not there. This is to honor the dignity and personhood of the other. The other person has value and worth, and is seen in how you treat them.

**? Does the other person know you appreciate and value who they are?**

**5. Honesty.** This works just like trust. There is only honesty when you know that honesty won't damage the relationship. It's not unloading a clip about all the things the other person needs to know. Helpful honesty requires appropriateness, and respect. Sometimes when you have those tough conversations, (nudges), there needs to be understanding of how it will land. It's not just telling the other person what you think they need to hear. It's wanting what's best for the other person. Honesty is created by owning your own feelings and experiences in the relationship and sharing appropriately.

**? Does that person know that what they will hear from you is true?**

**6. Openness.** This is a personal, vulnerable, somewhat risky, investment in the relationship. The ability to be open and vulnerable in a relationship comes out of trust. So in order for there to be openness, the other person has to be experienced as trustworthy. And valuing you and the health of the relationship. Nothing good grows in the dark...except maybe mushrooms. When openness happens, there are no secrets, and thriving and flourishing spring forth like a healthy plant.

**? What do you need and what can you bring to cultivate openness in your relationships?**

#### **IV Challenge.**

Again, this is not an exhaustive list of all the things needed to keep relationships healthy and thriving. These are a few that we need to continually be aware of, and nurture, in order to live a life of thriving and flourishing. We were created for connection and we have to put the work into our relationships.