



How to Thrive Under Historic Pressure

RETURN Conference, Breakout Session

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Session 2: Two Practical Ways to Thrive in Historic Pressure

- I. Practical One: Opening Up and Stewarding Your Heart in Pressure
 - a. Premise: The Lord uses pressure in your life to get to your heart.

**²³ “Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.”
(Proverbs 4:23)**

- i. Your heart is the most valuable thing you’ve been given to steward. Jesus uses pressure in your life not to get to your money or reputation, but to get to your heart. He earnestly desires to have your whole heart and have friendship and intimacy with you.
- ii. Your heart doesn’t naturally thrive, especially under pressure. Make it the priority of your life to open up your heart to Jesus, cultivate an alive heart, and pursue the first commandment.

**³⁷ “Jesus said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ ³⁸ This is the first and great commandment.”
(Matthew 22:37-38)**

- iii. Just as precious oil is cultivated through the pressing of the olive, the Lord uses pressure and pressing in our lives to bring forth the oil of intimacy in our hearts. He will use *anything* to win the attention and affections of our hearts.
- iv. Rather than trying to escape the pressure as quickly as possible, turn your heart to Him in repentance and open your heart to Him in intimacy.



II. Practical Two: Pursuing Community and Godly Friendship

- a. You might be able to survive the last days alone, but you will not be able to thrive in the last days alone.
- b. The way the Bible describes the final generation living under historic pressure is not a terrified people living isolated from one another. On the contrary, the Bible describes the final generation as a corporate, unified people who have been perfected in love, strengthening and encouraging one another.

²⁴ “And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, ²⁵ not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together... but exhorting one another; and so much more as you see the Day approaching.”
(Hebrews 10:24-25)

- c. Jesus said the greatest witness the church can give to lost world being crushed under historic pressure is our “love for one another.” Jesus was confident that in a generation of unprecedented betrayal and accusation and strife, there would be a people on the earth, *His* people on the earth, who would stand in fervent love for one another without an ounce of accusation or betrayal, and this would be a light of revelation to the lost world.
- d. It’s important that we live our Christian life out with other people now, not isolated and alone. Find like-minded and like-hearted Jesus lovers, and run with them. Find communities of people who are talking about this stuff. We need other voices in our life helping us navigate trials and pressures now, so that we have history with God and one another when historic pressure comes.

