

LIFE GROUP HOMEWORK:

TAKING IT HOME

- Have you seen God honor your convictions to not conform in a specific situation? If so, explain.

- Many people in our current culture complain that we no longer have civil discourse when we disagree. We see this amped up on social media. Do you find it difficult to be respectful when you disagree? What about when an authority figure is involved? How can Daniel's example help us navigate these waters?

- Daniel's desire was to remain true to his God. How do we as Christ followers decide what in our culture we should say no to? Do you have any areas that you are struggling with? How can your group pray for you?

SUNDAY FEB. 12, 2017

Series: "Unshakeable" / The book of Daniel

Message #2: "Thriving when pressured to conform"

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MESSAGE NOTES:

Life principles from the Bible:

1. Before every blessing there is always a **testing**.
2. God tests us with **stress** before He trusts us with success.

Character qualities that will receive God's blessing:

1. **Integrity:** Refuse to forget who you really are.
2. **Discipline:** Control your ego and appetite.
3. **Courage:** Be willing to stand alone.
4. **Humility:** Be tactful with authority.

Tips for making a strong appeal:

1. Develop a reputation for **responsibility**.
2. Be **humble** and not belligerent.
3. Don't be **deceptive** or manipulative.
4. Appeal to their **goals** and interests.
5. Choose the **right** place, time and words.
6. Trust God if your appeal gets **rejected**.

Action steps from today's sermon:

1. What step can you take today to control your ego and/or appetite?
2. What can you start doing now to develop a reputation for responsibility?

LIFE GROUP HOMEWORK:

QUICK REVIEW

We are now two weeks into our study of Daniel. What have you learned from these messages that you didn't know before or that was especially confirmed in your mind?

MY STORY

1. Recall your first days at college, camp, or another away-from-home experience. What was it like? What were you thinking?

2. What does "conviction" mean to you? Can you think of any synonyms?

LIFE GROUP HOMEWORK:

DIGGING DEEPER

1. Take some time as a group and read Isaiah 47.
 - What descriptors does this chapter give us of the Babylonian culture?

 - What does this passage teach you about God's devotion to His people? What verses reveal this to you?

 - This culture was nothing like what Daniel and his friends had come from. Would this difference in culture have made it easier to try to conform? OR, easier to refuse to conform? Why do you think so?

2. Read Jeremiah 29:4-14.
 - What expectations did God give His people?

 - Verse 11 is an oft-quoted verse. Now that we've looked deeper at the context, does the verse mean what we often use it to mean?

 - How do you think they felt being told, "I am doing this for your good?"

 - What do we learn about God's intentions? His purposes in suffering?

 - How do you reconcile God's present judgment with His promise of blessing?