

MORE: Jesus from beginning to end.

a study of 1 Thessalonians

Series Intro "MORE: Jesus from beginning to end" is a study of First Thessalonians to see MORE Jesus IN you. [God is working through the gospel of Jesus Christ for more in your life. To know Jesus is to long for more of Him. Are you longing for more Jesus in your life?](#)

TRANS We are asking....

What is More?, part 3

1 Thess 3:6-13

MPS: God marks a life with MORE His glory by an all-consuming presence of love, faith and hope.

OBJ: Every person can recognize God's MORE in life by Three Realms.

INTRO We are asking, "[How do you identify or measure "more"?](#)" God wants us to KNOW, by godly discernment, what more means and to experience the MORE He has for your life through the gospel of Jesus Christ!

Many people make spiritual decisions that significantly affect their life simply by a "feeling". [Emotions and feelings alone are NEVER spiritual markers for discernment, but spiritual thermometers that indicate the need for discernment. Grace produces evidence of God's MORE in a person's life as they live by faith to follow Jesus.](#)

TRANS We are surveying what evidence of grace looks like, even when, at times, it remains unseen.

WHY Trajectory is so important in understanding God's "MORE".

"Trajectory" is the curve of something in flight, the "path of travel" from its point of origin to its intended destination. I use this analogy to help us conceptualize what Paul is wanting the Thessalonians to understand about how God works through the gospel, and to help us understand how we grow to receive more of God. I want you to know that 'where you stand' in your spiritual walk (relationship with Christ) reflects where you have come from and where God met you in your helpless state; to remind of what you've been through and all God has done to save and redeem you; and to exhort you to never forget how you've gotten to where you are because of all God has done in you and for you. [For a Christian, trajectory traces the path of God's more for us, the testimony of our faithful witness as we live for Jesus and share Him with all people.](#)

Be careful not to hear or understand this as some 'demand of performance' pressure on you or a 'weight of expectation' dumped on you. These trajectories refer to what it means for our lives to be transformed more and more into the eternal reality of the likeness of Jesus Christ in the here and now. [When you consider Christian growth and maturity, 'where you are headed' is always more important than 'where you are standing'.](#)

TRANS **Paul writes with deep affection for the Thessalonians.** As he describes his ministry among them, he tells what they did and why, and reminds them of all that God wants to see and do among them. Paul shows how the gospel worked to produce more to exhort the Thessalonians to look forward, to look to the MORE God is doing among them.

From Paul's exhortation we began looking at [\[Series OBJ\] Five Trajectories that evidence God's grace producing more in you.](#) The last two weeks we have seen how [God nurtures us in love by the gospel for MORE in all of life,](#) and [God leads by the gospel to produce more fruitfulness, persevere in obedience and delight in gospel glory](#) from the first four trajectories.

1. [a humble conviction that produces deep affection.](#) 1 The 2:1-8

A [humble conviction](#) of Jesus leads one to a test their own [heart motives and actions](#) when confronted by opposition and suffering, that brings a [clearer understanding of God's call](#) to move forward with [steadfast in compassion.](#) As we serve the Lord grows [deep love and desire](#) within. [God's grace produces more by nurturing us from a humble conviction to deep affection for the One whom we serve and those to whom we are sent.](#)



2. a faithfulness that produces fruitfulness in life. 1 Thes 2:9-12

Faithfulness in the Christian life holds the distinct purpose of producing the gospel fruitfulness of holiness, righteousness and godliness. [Faithfulness demonstrates itself through practices, but fruitfulness only flows through relationship. And to the one who remains faithful unto fruitfulness, God gives more.](#)

3. a receptiveness to God's Word that produces perseverance in obedience. 1 Thes 2:13-16

When you receive the Word by faith AS God's word, it works by God's power to accomplish God's Will in your life. God's Word strengthens you for whatever you face so that you can persevere in obedience while God brings about His will IN you and THROUGH you. [When you receive God's Word by faith, you persevere in His work because He is working in you.](#)

4. a sacrifice of obedience that delights in the joy of gospel glory. 1 Thes 2:17-3:5

As we live in obedience to the Lord sacrifices will be required of us. Christians are living sacrifices to God.(Romans 12:2) As we accept our sacrifices by faith, we trust Jesus knowing our hope is never lost because His joy will be greater than our sacrifice. [When we persevere in obedience, we are certain that any sacrifice we make will produce greater delight in the joy we receive from God for His glory.](#)

Prayer I hope you are looking for and see evidences of where your life is tracking on each of these trajectories. And that you recognize that because of God at work in you by the gospel, you are moving toward the MORE He has for you.

[God marks a life with MORE of His glory by an all-consuming presence of love, faith and hope.](#)

TRANS Today we finish looking at "What is 'MORE'?" with Trajectory #5.

5. a greater portion measured by a deeper dwelling **READ** 1 Thes 3:6-8

⁶But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and has brought us the good news of your faith and love and reported that you always remember us kindly and long to see us, as we long to see you— ⁷for this reason, brothers, in all our distress and affliction we have been comforted about you through your faith. ⁸For now we live, if you are standing fast in the Lord.

Paul concludes this portion of his exhortation by responding to Timothy's report. He is encouraged and comforted by the news of all that God has done among the Thessalonians. He states, "*For now we live, if you are standing fast in the Lord.*"(8) When Paul hears the good news of their faith and love and the report of mutual affection, a life is breathed into his spirit, though his body is tattered, beaten and weak. [A gospel testimony brings strength from the Lord, a life to the soul.](#)

ILLUS **The potency of gospel testimony in ministry.** In my hardest pastoral moments, the heaviest seasons and darkest situations of planting and leading in the church, God has used the testimonies and reports of our people's faith and love as a source of strength. In my prayers the Lord has put individual "faces" before my mind to remind and strengthen me. Christin and I have called names as reminders of redemption that have become strength for us. Though I dare not pretend my life has endured what Paul's did, in all my distress and affliction, by the mutual affection of this body, the Lord has comforted and strengthened me.

APPL **The life of Christian Community.** If you want to understand the true value of Christian community that cannot be replaced, it is this life Paul mentions. Christin and I have spent the last six weeks with Community Groups talking about this very life, the fellowship of the church where mutual sharing of life together produces this life. When you live in Christian community with other believers, investing your life to strengthen and grow the faith of others, a mutual affection and testimony of God's work grows that becomes a breath of fresh air to your spirit, a strength of life for your soul. [We want to help you connect in Community Group to know this burst of life to your soul by the regular fellowship of God's people.](#)

As he recalls this grand story of redemption that became the Thessalonian church, Paul asks,



“For what thanksgiving can we return to God for you, for all the joy that we feel for your sake before our God, ¹⁰ as we pray most earnestly night and day that we may see you face to face and supply what is lacking in your faith?” .9-10

Then Paul prays for that which he most desires for the Thessalonians to know of all God has done. This forms Paul's highest thanksgiving to God for the Thessalonians. *The capstone of Paul's desire for the Thessalonians, the essence of the MORE God wants to do among them, is to produce more love, more faith and more hope within and through them.*

TRANS Paul's prayer is not only for a greater portion of these things, but for them to increasingly pervade ever more deeply into each person's heart and soul. Trajectory #5 is where the gospel is not simply held more strongly by us, but has a stronger hold upon us because Jesus resides more deeply within us. *The Christian life is not simply that which we hold to, but that which holds us in greater portion and ever more deeply in our being for life.*

OBJ MORE from God can be recognized as it culminates in **Three Realms**.

Realm #1: MORE can be determined by a deeper dwelling of godly love. .12

*Now may our God and Father himself, and our Lord Jesus, direct our way to you,
¹² and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you,*

Love is the motivation for all God's work for us and it is the foundation of our life in Jesus. What we know about God, how we relate to God and how God leads us all begins with His love. The steadfast love of the Lord gives us life and all things for life. *The love of God is greatest of all^{1Cor13:13}, and He lavishes it upon us to consume us in the greatest depths of our soul and being.*

The perfect love of God consumes His followers to increase and abound in two ways, to love fellow believers and all people. There is no love for God where love for other Christians and other people remains absent. The increasing love of God within us abounds from us to others. There is only one reason why our love for other people does not abound, both for believers and unbelievers alike, and it is because the love of God is not increasing in. *The deeper God's love penetrates into your soul the farther your love for others will reach, to people not like you at all, the stronger it will extend to other people in the sacrifice you make to show them love, and the more generously you will offer it to others with no thought of any return.*

Look at your life on Trajectory 5 and ask yourself, Christian, “Am I loving people more that are more unlike me?”, “Am I loving other people by a greater sacrifice of myself?”, and “Am I loving other people more generously, for no good reason that they have given to me but simply to show them how loved they are by God?”

Realm #1 of MORE of God's love tells us that the depth to which God's love is pervading your life determines the extent to which God's love abounds from your life.

Realm #2: MORE can be determined by a deeper dwelling of obedient faith. .13a

¹³ so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father,

God's love establishes our hearts in Jesus, to stand blameless before God. What a power God places within us by Jesus, that erases the full effect of sin upon us! When we are forgiven and cleansed from sin's guilt and shame, we are set free to live fully in His abundant life by faith. *The more deeply our heart is established in God's love the more true our walk will be in His holiness.*

Faith that sets us free from sin does NOT altogether remove its presence in this world but releases us from its power. A life of increasing faith in Jesus is not about the absence of temptation and sin, but the shifting of where you battle it in order to gain victory over it. Faith leads us to confront the things in life that “don't seem all that big of a deal to us” and the things that seem “insurmountable and unconquerable” by us in life.



ILLUS I got into backpacking a few years back. When I first began preparing, I feared getting out in the woods and not having everything I needed. So, I loaded my pack. When you traverse a long trail and others have gone before you, at times you see valuable items discarded and scattered along the trail. It makes you wonder, “oh no, someone must’ve lost that.” Until a bit further down the trail the weight of the load causes you to begin to ask, “**what can I do without?**” and “**what am I willing to part ways with?**” in order to survive this trip.

Faith in Jesus brings into focus the things in life that are hindering your forward progress, calling you to throw them off so you can move ahead further, sometimes faster, and always healthier. Faith in Jesus brings into clear focus those seeming “mountains” that God wants to lead you to climb so He can receive greater glory through your life. **An increase of faith never denies reality and is not without temptation but remains focused on the One who call more than the fears, insecurities and anxieties that clamor for your attention.**

We trust Jesus in His Word by the power of Holy Spirit to walk where He leads us, in convicting us of sin, in conquering sin, in overcoming sin’s effects and consequences, and in being transformed to walk by faith in holiness and godliness. **A measurable increase in faith is evident when a deeper level and greater extent of holiness pervades the walk of your life.**

Are you wrestling with anything God is convicting you about ‘throwing off’ in your life? God is not trying to deprive you. He wants to bless you with more, but you must trust in Him more than anything else.

Realm #2 of MORE faith pervades in us when we throw off what entangles us by fighting it where it tempts us, so that we obey not only in our actions but our desire for His holiness completely consumes us.

TRANS Paul concludes by stating that the last realm of God’s more in hope.

Realm #3: MORE can be determined by a deeper dwelling of eternal HOPE. .13b
at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

Hope forms the last realm for MORE because the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints is the eternal focus of our life. When Jesus says Christians are not OF the world^{John15:19}, He reminds us that our home is not here on earth. **The Christian’s citizenship is in His Kingdom and though we sojourn here and now our hope is anchored in eternity with Him in Heaven.**

When Jesus saves, he changes our identity by transferring the origin of our life from this world to Him, who is not of this world.^{John8:23} Where we set or find our hope identifies where we root or seek our identity. The more our hope rests in Jesus the less this world feels like our home. The more our hope rests in this world the more at odds we find ourselves with Jesus and His Word. The more our hope is set in the world, the more we will be driven by the ups and downs of life. The more our hope rests in Jesus the less we will be destroyed by the things of this life. **The more our hope rests in Jesus the more we will be ruled by His Word and held by His promises at all time.**

Realm #3 of MORE Hope pervades within us so that we not only look to Jesus first to hold to Him at all times, but the very thing we recognize as holding our life, no matter the situation or circumstance, is the Sovereign hand of God.

CLOSE The order here is important. The more you live in and secure in God’s love, the more you will readily trust in all He says to you and leads you in. And the more you trust to obey all Jesus leads you in the more you will rest deeply, no matter what storms rages around you or sufferings come upon you, in the eternal hope of Jesus Christ that holds you.

God marks a life with MORE of His glory by an all-consuming presence of love, faith and hope.

