

MORE: Jesus from beginning to end. a study of 1 Thessalonians

Series Intro God is working through the gospel of Jesus Christ for **more** in your life. [Cultivating in you and helping you long for more Jesus is the aim of this series.](#) [To know God is to long for more Jesus.](#)

MORE: Press In to Press On, part 1 1 Thes 5:12-24

MPS: God gives MORE grace in the Christian's life when we press in to press on.

OBJ Every Christ-follower should Press IN with their life to Press ON for more grace in Jesus in Four Areas.

READ 1 Thes 5:12-22

*We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, ¹³and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. ¹⁴And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all. ¹⁵See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone. ¹⁶Rejoice always, ¹⁷pray without ceasing, ¹⁸give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. ¹⁹Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰Do not despise prophecies, ²¹but test everything; hold fast what is good. ²²Abstain from every form of evil. ²³Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it. **1 The 5:12-24***

Review MORE series Today I want to encourage us to press ON for God's MORE in life. Throughout this series we have learned that MORE refers to God at work to transform us into Jesus' image. [MORE is the work of God through the gospel leading us through Christian growth to full maturity in Jesus.](#)

Paul concludes his letter to the Thessalonians with final instructions. These are not hollow words of "signing off", but straight-forward words of exhortation for them to continue to pursue MORE. I want to borrow Paul's concept from another letter to wrap up his exhortations in this letter. Paul tells the Philippians how he pursues God's MORE in chapter three.

READ Philippians 3:13-14

*Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. **Phil 3:13-14***

TRANS I encourage us to Press ON for God's MORE in our life today. [And the way onward in the Christian life is inward.](#)

God gives MORE grace in the Christian's life when we press IN to press ON.

OBJ Every Christ-follower should Press IN with their life to Press ON for MORE grace in Four Areas.

Area #1 to Press In: Submit your life to spiritual leadership. .12-13

We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, ¹³and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves.

Paul exhorts the congregation to respect those who are spiritual leaders over them and the work they are charged by God to do. Let's consider what he is saying to understand how one is to press IN by submitting your life to spiritual leadership.

Respect (eidenai) here means "to acknowledge". Paul begins by urging each person to acknowledge something. He uses three phrases that describe those he wants the congregation to respect.



First, Paul says to acknowledge WHO God has ordained for spiritual leadership in your life: respect those who “*labor among you*”. By God’s design, those you respect as holding spiritual authority in your life are those who labor among you. Spiritual leadership is not an activity that can be accomplished isolated from relational proximity; it demands personal relationship. This doesn’t mean you should expect to be personal friends or besties. It doesn’t mean you know everything about them, spend a lot of time with, or even have immediate access to at all times. This DOES mean that there is a center and commonality to the relationship. A local congregation is to be centered on Jesus. The commonality of relationships is defined by the covenant that forms the commitment of each one to one another as they follow Jesus together. This is what Covenant Membership in a local church is all about. Covenant sets forth the relationship of the followers to center everything on Jesus. “*Those who labor among you*” means spiritual leadership demands relational proximity in covenant with one another as a Biblical essential for faithful pastoring and congregational engagement.

Second, Paul says to acknowledge WHAT God has ordained spiritual leadership to operate for their life: respect those who “*are over you in the Lord and admonish you*”. The word he uses here holds the idea, “to be in charge of”. Now, before you walk out on me, understand that he is not saying spiritual leaders are absolute sovereigns. The Bible establishes spiritual leadership that has a bestowed authority, a plural body and a willing reception.

Elders / Pastors are not lords that rule over but under-shepherds that lead. Leadership flows through relationship of common Lordship, mutual love and trust. Elders / Pastors are not men who always have the right or best answer that fixes every problem, solves every crisis, answers every question, removes every pain, or that performs perfectly in every situation. This isn’t spiritual leadership but fairy-tale dreams of a genie in a bottle! We serve under a call from God to lead. Our authority to lead is bestowed upon us by God as we live, first, and serve in accordance with His Word. It is our work to lead you to follow and wholly submit your life to the rule of the Lord Jesus Christ. If you don’t respect us in this way, then we surely cannot lead you. But when you fail to respect in this manner, you not only reject us but the One who has ordained this leadership for your life, the Lord Jesus Christ. The leadership of elders / pastors is to equip by teaching, and to encourage and help you follow Jesus; to lead you to be a real Christ-follower in life together.

Spiritual leadership includes both instruction and correction. Admonish means to correct. Therefore, it almost ALWAYS means you will get told what you at least do not want to hear, along with “stop doing what you are doing” or “don’t do what you are about to do”. Admonishment is intended lead to repentance. Repentance is the essential practice for the Christian that reflects a posture of humility before God. As we live humble before God, we are quick to confess our sins, to confess to one another because God has placed them in our lives to help us. The regular practice of confession that ignites the activity of repentance demonstrates the posture of humility to be ready to accept admonishment. Respecting those who admonish you requires humility of spirit to, first, trust the Lord Jesus as he speaks through those He has ordained to lead His flock, and second, by living a life of repentance.

Third, Paul says to acknowledge HOW God has ordained spiritual leadership to be regarded in your life: respect those who lead “*to esteem them very highly in love because of their work*”. Respect sets the relationship of love and trust with your elders / pastors as a high priority for your life. The relationship one holds with spiritual leadership should be acknowledged in these ways because there is a covenant agreement under which everyone relates. IF the spiritual leaders God has placed over you are not highly respected by you, they will never be able to serve you well in your life. It’s not about the individual but the role God has ordained them to serve in your life. When you respect and highly esteem the spiritual leaders God has placed over your life, God uses them to serve His purposes in your life, to bring MORE to you.

Faithful, Biblical leadership among the congregation brings peace to the congregation. Paul’s last exhortation to the whole congregation is, “*Be at peace among yourselves*.” Christians know that peace is NOT the absence of turmoil or trouble, but the presence of Jesus fully manifest in our lives. When we submit our lives to spiritual leadership and the God-ordained role in our lives, we increase the manifest presence of Jesus within us and among us, to immerse and consume our lives more fully through the whole congregation by His presence. More Jesus resonates among the church with redeeming and transforming power when leaders are rightly respected to lead the congregation in gospel labors.



APPL Technology is great but it has created a terrible darkness in the minds of the congregations and pastors. Technology has led us to believe we can find our best spiritual leadership electronically because we find “better” from the people we choose and on topics we determine. Christians and pastors alike are neglecting the personal maturity of their own souls by striving after greater digital impulse instead of focusing on the people He’s placed among you. You will find better preachers, better topics, better applause to join and people to applaud you among the digital opportunities out there. But there is one thing you will NEVER find technologically; you will NEVER find “those who are among you”. *Your spiritual life will go awry when you get your spiritual leadership wrong.*

APPL Explore LifePoint and Navigation Series

Explore LifePoint is a luncheon we host monthly to introduce people to LPC. Our purpose is to find out how we can best answer any questions and help people connect to serve their spiritual needs. You are welcome to join us today.

LPC NAVigation Series Covenant Member Seminar is coming up this weekend. In this seminar we introduce LPC by explaining why we have Covenant Membership, defining our core theology, teaching on the identity and ethos of a Christ-follower, and the culture of LifePoint, how we operate, and live on mission. I invite you to join us this weekend to learn what it means to “be among us”. No pressure. All invitation and opportunity.

One of the first and most important ways that you submit your life to Christ, to follow and walk with Him faithfully, is to submit your life to those He places over you. And this is not a general appeal to have good, Christian friends. No! This is an exhortation to invest your life in the local congregation to submit your life to spiritual leadership where Elders / Pastors shepherd you. Paul’s appeal to each person is to urge them to recognize the people God has placed in their life to provide spiritual leadership for their life. *IF you are to press IN for growth to press ON to maturity, then spiritual leadership should be a vital part of your life.*

Pressing ON for God’s MORE in your life begins by pressing IN to submit to the spiritual leadership God has ordained for you.

TRANS The reason the local congregation is so important is because it’s not just about the leaders, but about the culture that gets created when people live *together* in Covenant with one another.

Area #2 to Press In: Surround your life with Spiritual community. .14-15

And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all. ¹⁵See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone.

Paul turns to all the Christians in Thessalonica and offers six exhortations. He urges them to practice the things that cultivate God’s grace among the body. *The only way to press on for God’s MORE is to surround their life with the practices that help form more Jesus in their life.*

admonish the idle Laziness has nothing to do with godliness. But idleness goes farther than only laziness. Idleness refers to a lack of discipline or submitting to that which is beneficial. Paul’s not encouraging a better physical workout routine. He’s urging the Christian’s to build a culture of championing spiritual growth and maturing by how they encourage and admonish one another. Being lazy about our spiritual growth and maturity should be unacceptable among the church. The way we communicate with one another should be to push and encourage one another to grow and grow up in Jesus, more and more for MORE from God.

Is there anyone that surrounds your life that is admonishing idleness in you, or you for others? LifePoint, let our community be one that places the highest value on caring, inquiring, and pursuing growth in maturity in the Lord Jesus Christ. It’s Biblical. It’s encouraging and helpful.



encourage the fainthearted People walk in every day among us that are beat down and weighted down by the world, by many different circumstances. I assure you, a good number of you walked in today having lost hope in some way or area of life. Does anyone know it? Have you shared it? Bring your baggage to church with you, walk it in the door, let others know you are struggling, that you are weak, that your heart is weighed or beat down and faint. But don't expect to walk out the way you walk in. Bring it here to share it among God's people and leave it at God's feet. When people walk in among our community, their heart ought to be lifted and strengthened. **Be present and bring a word every week to speak so others can have the faint lifted off their heart and strength returned.**

help the weak We are here to help the weak. And here's what I have learned in pastoring. Almost nobody likes to be weak, be we all are at some point, in some way or to some extent. Let us be a place where help is generous and free, where we look for one another to be a help. You may only see people once or some twice a week. Make those moments count in the way you look to help one another. Don't wait to be asked; step up to help, to encourage, to serve and bless all.

be patient with them all When we come to help and encourage, we will find that our patience has already grown because we refuse to cast expectations on others. Rather, we look to bear their burden with them. A lack of patience always grows from the demand of selfishness.

See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone. In all things, let us be a people looking to put away evil and multiply good. Let the encounter of people with LifePoint be one of goodness and grace.

This is what it sounds like to surround your life with by spiritual community, people who are concerned with strengthening and growing your whole person. Loose affiliation with and lax participation in the local church is slow death to your soul. God designed the church to be a source of regular, ongoing strength and support for Christians. Press your life IN to pursue God's MORE by these practices that cultivate grace to form Jesus' image in each person.

Pressing ON for God's MORE in your life begins by pressing IN to surround your life with spiritual community.

God gives MORE grace in the Christian's life when we press in to press on.

CLOSE Next week we will consider the last two areas to press In to press On. **Which of these first two areas do you most need to give focus to this week?**

