

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 2 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. **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, straight-forward words of exhortation to continue to pursue MORE. I am borrowing Paul's concept from another letter to wrap up his exhortations in this letter. Philippians says, "I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." (Phil 3:13-14) **We are Pressing ON for God's MORE in our life. 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**.

Review Area 1 & 2

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

Paul exhorts Christians to respect spiritual leaders over them and the work they are charged by God to do, to make an intentional decision to acknowledge them and their work. And in doing do, they would maintain peace among the congregation. Relational proximity in covenant with one another is a Biblical essential for faithful spiritual leadership. **Your spiritual life goes awry when you get your spiritual leadership wrong. Pressing ON for God's MORE in your life begins by pressing IN to submit to spiritual leadership.**

TRANS Then, we identified Paul's second area to press In.

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

Here Paul offers six exhortations to urge them to surround their life with spiritual community. What we learn is that the things spiritual leaders are charged to lead in are regular practices alive among the whole congregation, because these are the practices that build a culture of spiritual health and wholeness as it centers on walking with Jesus and living in holiness. **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.



INTRO A question crossed my newsfeed this week that asked, “**What would you attempt if you knew you could not fail?**” This is not a new question. I have heard it used many times, maybe even used it a few myself. The intent of the question seems obvious, to make you dream big, reach for the stars, push beyond where you are. I mean, if You couldn’t fail imagine what You could do, right? The truth is, if you knew you couldn’t fail you wouldn’t attempt anything because knowing you couldn’t fail means NOTHING would be an “attempt”. The question is totally useless and misleading.

Sometimes, or “often”, we approach our spiritual growth with the same folly as this question. We look at the goal of Christian maturity that God gives to us, to grow and grow up “*to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ*” (Eph 4:13), and begin to think, “oh man, what can I do to get there?” We look for shortcuts, back doors, secret entrances or pathways, we fall into hollow promises, all of these arise because we try to shortcut God’s work with our own. [God is not opposed to our effort in Christian growth and maturity; He opposes our earning it.](#)

Here’s a better question; “**What would you believe, trust and do if you knew the promise maker was always faithful as the great promise keeper?**” THIS is the question we dare to answer with our lives as we Press On for God’s MORE. God’s MORE for your life is not in question, it’s not “if”ey. Paul says, “*And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.*” (Phil 1:6), therefore he continues, “*work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.*” [God, the great Promise keeper is faithful. He will do what He has promised to finish what He started.](#) Therefore, we Press ON by Pressing IN.

TRANS Today we consider the last two areas to Press In.

Area #3 to Press In: Discipline your life for spiritual vitality. .16-22

Knowing what makes the biggest difference for the whole congregation, Paul moves to instruct individual Christians. These exhortations aim at the spiritual vitality of every Christ-follower. [Pressing On for God’s MORE begins first in this area, by Pressing IN to build relationship with Jesus through daily disciplines for spiritual vitality.](#)

“**Rejoice always**”, Paul begins. We often miss this exhortation because we believe it instructs us to look at our life to see if it is true of us. We wait to see what we have to be happy before we take any action. But this is not at all what it is saying to us. “*Rejoice always*” is not an instruction to look within but look at the One who IS our source of life, Jesus who has given us life and take joy in Him. [Rejoice is a command to act that affects our being.](#) Joy does not come from within us, but from the One who is within us that fills us with Himself. Rejoice always means we look to Jesus to take as our joy who He is, what He taught and said, what He has done for us, how He is working in us. Taking joy in Jesus always confronts any other joy-sources that we have drawn from to replace Jesus to make more room for His joy in us. [The less you look to Jesus the less true joy you will find within. The more you rejoice in Jesus, the more, with increasing measure and manner, He fills to overflowing your heart and life with Himself.](#)

“**Pray without ceasing**”, he continues. The definitive aspect here is not that we pray but the continuing nature of our prayers. Christian prayer has many aspects, but first and foremost Paul presses us to understand that our prayer should remain constant and unceasing. I know that many struggle with any prayer, let alone continual prayer. So “unceasing in prayer” seems an absolute impossibility. But the prayers Paul commends here is not to keep recounting of our needs and petitions but reciting our joy-sourcing. THIS is how we rejoice. Constant and unceasing prayer recounting all we know about the One who is our joy is how we fill our lives with Him and His joy. [The Christian life is one continual conversation with God through Jesus about Jesus to fill our lives with Jesus.](#)

Paul follows with, “**give thanks in all circumstances**”. One of the BIGGEST problems Christians wrestle with in the disciplines of our faith is trying to be thankful for things that are not filling us. This often happens because we simply try to “say thank you” without feeling gratitude.



ILLUS We have all experienced **the pain and discomfort of pseudo-gratitude**. It's that disease we are overcome by when we open that bad gift, and the person who gave it to us is right in front of us. At first that blank stare of confusion washes over us as we think, "what in the world is this? Why would they even consider giving this to me?" Then, we hear our mother's voice in us, "You be grateful and say thank you." So, we quickly contort our face to a forced smile and say, "Thank you." And some really try to sell it with head nods, moans, and explanations for why you love it and how you will use it. "Oooooohhhhhh. Thank you. I love it. I've always wanted one of---this. I love the little-thingy color in the middle. It matches my -- socks -- perfectly. I am going to wear this tomorrow." Everybody knows its fake. And the next day when you wear it because you're still hanging out with everyone, you and everyone who sees it thinks, "what is THAT?" But you're still selling it with that fake, awkward smile as you say, "Oh, so-and-so gave this to me." Then, in that instance, the "fake gratitude infection" spreads to that person as their face contorts to say, "I love it. You look wonderful in it."

How often do we say, "Thank you, Lord." Then, we begin our list of all the things wrong with our circumstances. That's not giving thanks. That's called lip service, saying something you don't believe, feel or think, but you do out of obligation. Give thanks in all circumstances means we name the detail and thank God for that. And we don't do it because we've perfected "pseudo-gratitude" but because we draw from the true source of our joy, Jesus. As we take our joy in Jesus we are released from the demand to find it anywhere else. He leads us, by prayer, so that we can give genuine gratitude to Him for our circumstances, no matter what they are. [The more we fill our hearts with Jesus' joy, the more true gratitude flows out of us no matter what is happening to us.](#)

Paul finishes the sentence, "*for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.*" This final portion of the sentence threads the three exhortations together into one practice. The will of God in Christ Jesus for you will be known by you as you continue in this pattern of rejoicing, praying continually and unceasingly and giving thanks out of the overflow of Jesus filling you. We typically see these as three individual exhortations, but Paul strings them together into one, complete action. Any one of these absent of the others is incomplete and disingenuous and is absent of true, spiritual vitality for us. Imagine this, that we actually avoid our own spiritual growth by pseudo forms of these practices disconnected from the others. Paul's exhortation provides a simple practice that centers the Christ-follower's life on Jesus. [God reveals to us as He fulfills through us His will for us as we center our lives on Him at all times and in all circumstances.](#)

TRANS But in the midst of our disciplines that bring spiritual vitality we must regard what else is taking place.

¹⁹*Do not quench the Spirit.* Following Jesus demands the work and power of Holy Spirit. Christ-followers must learn to live in full dependence upon the Spirit. When we do not rely on Holy Spirit or work to achieve things in our own ability, we stop the flow of God's power and purpose in our life. We quench the Spirit when we fail to search God's Word, disobey what God has already told us, and neglect to take time to listen to Holy Spirit. [Not quenching the Spirit means we cultivate an ever-increasing dependency on Holy Spirit for all things in the Christian life.](#)

²⁰*Do not despise prophecies, ²¹but test everything; hold fast what is good.* Next in importance to listening to Holy Spirit is listening to God's people who He has put around us. We test every word from God's people but are careful to not despise it so we dismiss it. God does speak to us through His people. Sometimes they know it and sometimes they do not. We test these words by God's Word. When God's people speak in alignment with what He has said in His Word, we can receive it and hold to it until God brings it about for us. [God speaks to us through His people to reinforce His Word for us.](#)

²²*Abstain from every form of evil.* Finally, we are careful not to let the practice nor the appearance of our life be the deceiving point in our life. Nothing is more deceiving than the practice of sin in life. [Christians guard against participation in sinful practice of any and every form.](#)

These spiritual disciplines don't get you to God, but they do form the practices through which you become more like God's Son, Jesus Christ. [Every Christian that Presses On for God's MORE strives to Press IN to disciplines for spiritual vitality!](#)

TRANS Paul offers a final prayer that forms our fourth area to Press In.



Area #4 to Press In: Measure your whole life by transformation to Jesus. .23-24

Paul's prayer intercedes for the whole of our being to be completely consumed and transformed into Jesus' likeness. Imagine this, Christ-follower, your whole life becoming like Jesus. [God is sanctifying your whole being, Christian, to make you completely like Jesus in every way.](#)

God gives MORE to see transformation in your actions, so your body is kept blameless. This is the way we typically think of holiness. And we are right in knowing that Jesus makes a difference here. God transforms us into Jesus' image so that our outward actions, our words, actions and deeds are more like Him.

But God does MORE!

God sanctifies our spirit and soul so that not only our outward actions but our inward resonations and inclinations become more like Jesus. God transforms the thought patterns of our mind, the attitudes of our heart, and the motivations that drive us. And even deeper than this, God transforms the desires, longings, understanding and purpose of our life. [When God works for MORE there is nothing from us, in us or about us that is left untouched.](#)

When you consider your life, Christian, let this prayer define the boundaries by which you observe, assess and evaluate the God's work in you. [Are you living more like Jesus in your everyday life? Are you learning to think according to His Word, to see others and the world according to His Word, to feel the way about things in this life according to what God has said about them in His Word? Are you wanting, desiring and longing for MORE of the things that God wants, desires and longs to give you?](#) Ask God to transform your desires, your wants, your loves and your passions, so that your actions, attitudes of life will bear the fruit of His Spirit and not the stench of your sin. Submit all of you to the full work that He wants to do in you. Do NOT settle to measure your life by incremental moral adjustments. [Press IN for spiritual transformation. Measure your whole life by transformation to Jesus, the work of God's MORE in your spirit, soul and body.](#)

We have resonated one mantra throughout this series; to know God is to long for more Jesus. As you pursue God's MORE through Jesus Christ for your life, you should hear God's echo; "*He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.*" [Settle for nothing less than pursuing MORE Jesus in all things at all time. And know this; God is faithful. He will do it. God gives you MORE because He is faithful.](#)

[God gives MORE grace in the Christian's life when we press in to press on.](#)

CLOSE [Will you Press On for God's MORE by Pressing In with your life?](#)

