

Subject: Living-out Brotherly Love: Recap of "The Motto of More", 1 Thess 4:9-12

Dear Church Family,

Living in brotherly love is not a biblical suggestion, but a blessing and requirement of our Lord. We have some great discipleship resources on this passage [[HERE](#)].

Summary: The sermon explored the biblical concept of "Philadelphia"—brotherly love—and how God calls us to "increase more and more" in this supernatural unity. While the Thessalonian church was commended for their far-reaching love, Paul challenged them (and us) in three specific areas: pursuing a quiet life focused on Christ rather than worldly ambition, avoiding gossip and meddling in others' affairs, and working diligently with our hands. These principles aren't merely about external behavior but reflect whether Christ truly reigns as King in our hearts. The sermon confronted us with the reality that many churches today foster consumerism rather than genuine biblical community, and challenged us to examine whether our lives demonstrate the sacrificial, practical love that marks true followers of Jesus.

Takeaways:

1. Brotherly love is both a signpost to the world that we belong to Jesus and evidence that we have passed from death to life. It requires sacrificial investment of our time, treasure, and personal comfort—not just warm feelings toward those who are easy to love.
2. The "motto of more" matters eternally. We must choose whether we're pursuing more of the world's fleeting pleasures and positions, or more of Christ's transforming presence and the fruit of His Spirit in our lives.
3. Our work ethic and daily conduct—whether in the workplace or within the church—should reflect Christ's character and draw others into relationship with Him. God promises that when we faithfully follow Him, we will lack nothing we need according to His purposes.

Here are some questions to prayerfully reflect on this week: Does your heart burn for Christ in a way that's evident in your living testimony? Are you fitting God into your busy life, or is He at the center of all your decisions? Are you doing your part to make our church a testimony of brotherly love both near and far?

Let us be a people who increase more and more in the love that truly matters.

In His grip, Pastor Jim

The Motto of 'More'

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1 Thessalonians 4:9-12

I. Introduction: The Core Value of Brotherly Love

1. In our study last week, we considered biblical love, pleasing God, and accountability to God as major tenets of the abounding life God has for us, **along with God's calling us out of the honey trap of defrauding one another through sexual immorality AND, instead, up into sexual purity.**
2. At first blush, the thrust of Paul's letter seems more tame and "easier" for us to process and consider than last week's message. **The heavy emphasis in these verses is to live in brotherly love...a focus that sounds, feels, and is both good and right. Yet, as the living word of God so often does, it confronts us NOT with high-brow philosophy, but with questions of how we actually live our lives AND so can be harder for us to receive.**
3. For sure, some of you have read our core values, including the one regarding brotherly love noted in today's passage. **Yet, I am equally sure there are some who have not.** Since, I know it's important that we connect how we "be" the church directly with God's word, let's take a quick look.

We Love Each Other Like Family

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God has given us unity of purpose in Christ and we therefore have unity in views, affections, and fellowship. **So we love and support one another as brothers and sisters in Christ, through peace or conflict, no matter what.**

4. While we will look at what is happening specifically in the Thessalonian church, please also purpose to glean the principles that Paul is sharing. **This church is loving really well in many ways, but we also see that they are falling short in others...such as being busybody's and having a poor work ethic.**

5. I want to note that in Paul's day the idea of a group of strangers, acquaintances, and friends gathering in brotherly love would have been a foreign concept. Frankly, it's a concept and not a reality for much of the church today. Too many church leaders have fostered a culture of consumerism instead of calling congregants to live the Gospel. Too many attendees have come to think unity is a good idea until they have to invest personal time and treasure in making unity work...along with the other work of being the church.
6. It's into our cultural norms that God injects His unchanging truths that His brotherly love may be present and actively functioning in our church today!

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II. 1 Thessalonians 4:9-12: More-and-More Brotherly Love

1. We find Paul pointing to brotherly love right out of the gates. The word here for brotherly love is...does anyone know...yes, "Philadelphia". It carries with it the idea of affection, mutual support, compassion, forgiveness, and a commitment to care for one another for those united within a Jesus-centered community – put simply it is the love of Christ alive in the body of Christ (Rom 12:10; Heb 13:1, and here in 1 Thes 4:9).

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2. Brotherly love is sacrificial in nature and practical in experience. As Scripture states, it produces supernatural unity in purpose and in pleasing God (Col 3:12-14; 1 Peter 3:8) with forgiveness (Eph 4:2-3; 1 Pe 4:8), impartiality (Romans 12:10), and hospitality (Heb 13:1-3) all front-and-center. And there is more...:

A. Brotherly love is a sign post that others will know we belong to Jesus (Jn 13:34-35; Eph 4:2-3; 1 Pe 4:8);

B. **1 Jn 3:14** says that it is in brotherly love that we pass from death to life;

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- C. Turn with me to 2 Peter 1:2-8. This is a magnificent word picture of God's plan for His church:

Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, ³ as His divine power has given to us all things that *pertain to life and godliness*, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, ⁴ by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption *that is* in the world through lust.

⁵ But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, ⁶ to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, ⁷ to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.

⁸ For if these things are yours and abound, *you* will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

- 2 Peter 1:2–8

3. Returning to our passage, *after reinforcing that Paul's words are a mirror of the truth which God has already taught them*, he praises them for having a far-and-wide reputation for loving the brethren across Macedonia. *Then comes that difficult word, "but"*. I love how you are loving so many...but. *You're doing great...but.*
 - A. The "but" foretells of a clear contrast from how the Thessalonians relate with those in their own fellowship and in the community in which they live. *How often have we seen this kind of thing where one does well with that person or group way over there, but struggles mightily with those close by?!*
 - B. This is a good point for each of us to reflect whether we are doing our part that CCA is a testimony of brotherly love both near and far. *This is not a throw-away line, but a question of where are our opportunities to purposefully "increase more and more"?!*
4. In the case of the Thessalonians, Paul points to three distinct examples of where they can "increase more and more", all of which are to be expressions of brotherly love. *These include*

aspiring to live a quiet life, tend to their own business and not others people's business, and to work hard with their hands in tending to needs. These, along with the two primary purposes Paul notes, are our focus for the rest of our time together.

- A. Up first is Paul's encouragement they "aspire to lead a quiet life". This could rightly be translated, "Make it your ambition to have no ambition".¹

We might short-hand this further by saying 'less is more' or a little bit longer summary in saying attend 'more' to the vertical and less to the horizontal.

- i. Just as it would be received in America today, the ears that heard in Thessalonica would have said some form of "that is crazy or stupid". As I considered and compared how the dominant culture defined victory in that day with our day, I was actually quite surprised how well they lined up despite all of our supposed advances. I think a definition that applies then-and-now is:

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"Achieving financial success, personal freedom, recognition, supportive relationships, sensual satisfaction, and a comfortable, fulfilling life on your own terms."

- ii. Even in taken together, these do NOT require the all-in investment of our heart, mind, body, and soul asked for by Jesus. Instead, we note many of these are measured in relative terms by comparing ones station in life to others station in life. This translates into life being an exhausting hamster wheel of never quite having enough of the fleeting things of this life. It drives us to the "motto of more" while reminding us that our choice of what "more" makes an eternal difference.

¹ Phillips

- iii. Paul is saying it is right and good to want more brotherly love and all the other Godly outworking's therein. He is also warning them away from the "more" of the world...more sexual immorality, more stuff, more power, more position, and more busyness, all of which feed our pride for our own glory sake. It's not that having things is necessarily bad (although some are), it's when these things are placed ahead of God.

God's word lovingly confronts us here, but still it confronts us. Does your heart burn for Christ? Whatever your answer, know that it's clear in the living testimony of your life. Do you fit God's will and His vessel the church into your busy life or is He at the center of all of your life decisions?

- B. The second of Paul's examples is that they stop being such busybodies or we might say gossipers. It seems as though some number of congregants had a lot to say about the brethren and even others in the community regarding matters that were none of their business. Instead of being about their business, including Christ's will in/on/through their lives, they were creating unnecessary friction in the body and in the community at large.

In doing so, they were not representing Christ's heart of brotherly love, but instead creating division, angst, and along with the other two examples, maybe even some chaos.

While it may be easy to sit in our comfortable chairs studying the wrongs of that church, this is not in the canon of Scripture as a history lesson. Paul includes this that we too may examine our hearts and conduct...that we will examine whether our motivations for the things we say are about our being right OR about honoring God in building up the body of Christ.

- C. The third and final of Paul's examples is idleness. There are two primary interpretive considerations with one being cultural centric and the other faith centric.

- i. The Grecian culture of the day despised manual labor as being for slaves while instead pursuing the higher things of life, including knowledge-for-knowledge sake, comforts, and sensuality. So, one thought is some of the recent converts either already had the resources to not work OR purposefully chose to mooch off others in the fellowship and possibly the community at large under the banner of being Christians. Either way, their living testimony did NOT reflect Christ.
- ii. The faith centric interpretation is that some in the church believed that Christ's return was imminent...so imminent – meaning hours, days, weeks, or months – that they chose to not work, expecting the rapture. This too did not witness Christ to others.
- iii. No matter which one, combination thereof, or even some other motivations, Paul was emphasizing the exercise of brotherly love through rolling up their sleeves and working hard in providing for themselves, their families, AND in service of the Gospel. Paul is NOT chastising those unemployed, but those unwilling to be employed.
- iv. V12 closes with 2 primary reasons the Thessalonians (and we) should roll up our sleeves.
 - First, it is a testimony of the Lord in us that we should not take advantage of others while also not being careless about our own lifestyles. Diligence, faithfulness, eyes on Christ and His purposes; all to NOT be culture-bound - but Jesus-bound. In its native state, the Christian faith is attractive to *broken* mankind because it presents the answers to their deepest spiritual needs and desires.
 - The second reason is that Jesus, not man or man-systems, will provide all that we need in pleasing Him and bringing Him glory – this begs the questions of “is

He really the King of your life?” and “do you trust Him?”.

I want to offer you a brief, but important insight for in it we again can know the love and care God has for us. [The focal point is on the end of v12 where Paul says, “and that you may lack nothing.”](#) Even though the opportunity to obey and be in relationship with the Lord is a great blessing, when we do faithfully follow Him, He pours out even more – [so much so that we, in Him, walking in brotherly love will lack nothing we need according to His purposes and plan.](#)

D. Folks, there is God honoring dignity in hard work and correspondingly, there is a selfish pride is placing this burden on others so that you may be comfortable and about your preferred life pursuits. [The principle here is NOT “work for lifestyle or even to put food on the table”.](#) The principle is work that others may see and experience the goodness of God and that this may draw them deeper into relationship with Him. [Yes, this principle applies in the modern workplace, but it applies in the church as well...](#)we are to put our hands, feet, and treasure to work both “out there” and “in here” for His glory.

E. So we close today with the BIG question and a reminder of the priority God places on functioning brotherly love.

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- i. Am I, are you, are we honoring God by living out brotherly love in the body of Christ? [What say you?](#) What say the Spirit of God?
- ii. The Thessalonians failure to apply Paul’s teaching in their lives led God to have him AGAIN address this with this same church in Paul’s next letter – you can find this in **2 Thessalonians 3:10-12.**
- iii. While coincidental, I find it quite fascinating that one of only two churches in Revelation receiving no rebuke and only commendation is named ‘Philadelphia’ (Re 3:7-13), meaning brotherly love. [We see their commendation was](#)

for their hard work in faithfulness despite their lack of strength.

Let's pray...

1 Thessalonians 4:9-12

The 'Motto' of More

I. Introduction: The Core Value of Brotherly Love

- Reject consumerism in living the gospel.

II. 1 Thessalonians 4:9-12: More-and-More Brotherly Love

- Brotherly love is sacrificial in nature and practical in experience.
- Three examples of living in brotherly love:
 - “Aspire to lead a quiet life” or “Make it your ambition to have no ambition”.
 - Stop being busybodies
 - Reject idleness (of all kinds)
- Self-Examination: Are you honoring God by living out brotherly love in the body of Christ?

Additional Scripture References: Col 3:12-14; 1 Pe 3:8; Eph 4:2-3; 1 Pe 4:8; Ro 12:10; Heb 13:1-3; Jn 13:34-35; 1 Jn 3:14; 2 Pe 1:2-8; 2 Thes 3:10-12; Rev 3:7-13

5-Day Devotional

1 Thessalonians 4:9-12

Motto of “More”

Day 1: Taught by God to Love

Reading: 1 Thes 4:9-10; Ro12:9-13

Devotional: God Himself is our teacher in the sacred art of brotherly love. The Thessalonians didn't learn Philadelphia from a manual but from the Holy Spirit working within them. This divine instruction transforms strangers into family, creating bonds that transcend natural affection. Yet God's teaching always includes a call to growth—to "increase more and more." Consider how God has taught you to love through His Word, His Spirit, and His people. Where has your love grown? Where does it need to deepen? Brotherly love isn't a destination but a journey of continual expansion.

Today, ask the Spirit to reveal one specific way you can increase in love toward a brother or sister in Christ, whether through encouragement, practical help, or simply your presence.

Day 2: The Ambition of No Ambition

Reading: 1 Thes 4:11; Mt 6:25-33

Devotional: "Make it your ambition to have no ambition"—a countercultural paradox that confronts our relentless pursuit of more. The world's definition of success demands exhausting competition, constant comparison, and never-ending accumulation. Paul calls us to a quiet life, not of passivity, but of purposeful peace centered on Christ. This quietness isn't laziness; it's freedom from the hamster wheel of worldly achievement.

When Christ becomes our ambition, we escape the tyranny of "never enough." We stop measuring our worth against others' possessions, positions, or popularity. Ask yourself: What drives my daily decisions—cultural expectations or Christ's will? Does my life reflect restless striving or restful abiding? Choose today to redirect one ambition from worldly gain to godly character, trusting that in seeking first His kingdom, everything you truly need will follow.

Day 3: Minding Your Own Business

Reading: 1 Thes 4:11; Pro 26:17-22; Ja 3:1-12

Devotional: The tongue that gossips destroys what hands cannot build. When we busy ourselves with others' affairs, we neglect our own spiritual responsibilities and fracture the unity Christ died to create. Gossip masquerades as concern, criticism as discernment, and meddling as care. But Paul exposes these counterfeits, calling us to tend our own gardens before inspecting our neighbor's. This isn't indifference to

genuine need but wisdom about our proper sphere of influence. Every moment spent in speculation about others is a moment stolen from our own transformation.

Before speaking about someone today, pause and ask: Does this build up or tear down? Is this my business or God's? Am I motivated by love or by pride? Let your words create bridges of brotherly love rather than walls of division. Guard your lips as carefully as your heart.

Day 4: The Dignity of Diligent Work

Reading: 1 Thes 4:11-12; 2 Thes 3:6-13; Col 3:23-24

Devotional: Our work—whether paid employment, household management, or volunteer service—is a canvas displaying Christ's character. Paul confronts both cultural snobbery toward manual labor and spiritual presumption that excuses laziness. Neither wealth nor faith in Christ's return justifies idleness at others' expense. When we work diligently, we witness to God's provision and faithfulness. We demonstrate that our faith produces transformation, not entitlement. Our hands become instruments of brotherly love, providing for ourselves so we don't burden others and creating surplus to bless those genuinely unable to work.

Consider your current work: Are you giving your best as unto the Lord? Does your work ethic attract others to Christ or repel them? Whether you're employed, seeking work, or serving in unpaid capacities, commit today to excellence that glorifies God and serves others.

Day 5: Lacking Nothing in Him

Reading: 1 Thes 4:12; Phil 4:10-13, 19; 2 Pe 1:2-8

Devotional: "That you may lack nothing"—a promise rooted not in prosperity theology but in divine sufficiency. When we walk in obedience, pursuing quiet lives, minding our business, and working faithfully, God ensures we have everything necessary for His purposes. This isn't a guarantee of wealth but of provision perfectly matched to His plan. Peter's magnificent ladder shows the progression: faith leads to virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and finally agape love. Each step builds on the last, and together they create abundance—a life "neither barren nor unfruitful."

Where the world offers the exhausting motto of "more stuff," God offers the satisfying promise of "more of Me." Examine your life today: What are you truly lacking? Is it material, or is it spiritual maturity? Trust that as you increase in brotherly love and Christlikeness, you will discover His provision exceeds every genuine need.

Small Group Study Guide

1 Thessalonians 4:9-12

Motto of “More”

Opening Prayer: Pray that the Lord would open your eyes to see and understand His word as you discuss the sermon.

Key Takeaways: Query the group for takeaways first...you may stay with one or more of those.

1. Brotherly Love is Central to Christian Identity - It's a supernatural unity that shows the world we belong to Jesus
2. The "Motto of More" Matters - We must choose what "more" we pursue: worldly ambition or Godly character
3. Three Practical Applications: Lead a quiet life, mind your own business, work diligently
4. Our Testimony Matters - How we live impacts both the church body and those outside the faith
5. God Provides When We Obey - Faithful obedience results in lacking nothing according to His purposes

Discussion Questions: Did the Holy Spirit prompt any questions with you? Start with those.

1. Read 2 Peter 1:2-8 together. How does this passage describe the progression toward brotherly love? Where do you see yourself in this progression?
2. The sermon mentioned that brotherly love includes "affection, mutual support, compassion, forgiveness, and commitment to care for one another." Which of these comes most naturally to you? Which is most challenging?
3. Why do you think Paul commended the Thessalonians for loving those far away but challenged them about loving those close by? Have you ever experienced this dynamic?
4. The sermon defined cultural victory as: "Achieving financial success, personal freedom, recognition, supportive relationships, sensual satisfaction, and a comfortable, fulfilling life on your own terms." How does this differ from God's definition of the abundant life?

5. What does it mean to "make it your ambition to have no ambition"? How is this countercultural today?
6. Personal Reflection: Does your heart burn for Christ? Is that clear in the living testimony of your life? (Take time for silent reflection before sharing)
7. Why do you think Paul addressed the issue of being busybodies? How does gossip or meddling in others' affairs damage brotherly love?
8. What is the difference between genuine concern for someone and being a busybody? How can we discern our true motivations?
9. Paul addresses those who were unwilling to work, not those unable to work. Why is this distinction important?
10. How does our work ethic (whether in employment, church service, or family responsibilities) serve as a testimony to those outside the faith?

Practical Applications: Query the group for applications first...you may explore one or more of those.

1. Identify one area where worldly ambition has crept into your priorities
2. Take one practical step to reorder your life around Christ rather than cultural success
3. Journal about what "more" you truly want in life
4. Before speaking about someone, ask yourself: "Is this my business? Am I building up or tearing down?"
5. If you've been a busybody, confess it to God and make it right with those affected
6. Practice speaking words that build up the body of Christ
7. Evaluate your work ethic (job, home, church service) - does it reflect Christ?
8. Identify one area where you've been idle or taking advantage of others
9. Volunteer for one practical service opportunity in the church this month

Closing Prayer Points:

- Pray for a spirit of genuine brotherly love to characterize your group and church

- Ask God to reveal areas where you need to "increase more and more"
- Pray for wisdom to choose God's "more" over the world's "more"
- Ask for strength to lead quiet lives, mind your own business, and work diligently
- Pray that your testimony would draw others to Christ

Discussion Questions

1 Thessalonians 4:9-12

Motto of “More”

1. How does the cultural concept of 'brotherly love' (Philadelphia) challenge our modern tendency toward consumerism and individualism in church life?
2. In what ways might we be excelling at loving those far from us while neglecting to show brotherly love to those in our immediate church community?
3. What does it mean to 'make it your ambition to have no ambition' in a culture that constantly pushes us toward achievement, recognition, and personal success?
4. How can we discern whether our possessions and pursuits are serving God's purposes or whether they have subtly taken priority over Him?
5. In what areas of church life might you be a consumer rather than a contributor, and what practical steps could you take to shift toward active participation?
6. How does the warning against being busybodies and gossipers relate to our use of social media and our conversations about others today?
7. What is the connection between working diligently with our hands and being a witness for Christ to those who do not yet know Him?
8. According to 2 Peter 1:2-8, how does brotherly love fit into the progression of Christian virtues, and why is it placed where it is in that sequence?
9. How might the promise that we will 'lack nothing' when walking in obedience and brotherly love challenge our anxiety about financial security and material needs?
10. What specific opportunities exist in your life right now to 'increase more and more' in living out brotherly love through quiet living, minding your own business, and working hard?

Dinner Conversation Starters

1 Thessalonians 4:9-12

Motto of “More”

1. “More” of What?

Based on the sermon’s idea of the “motto of more,” ask: As a family, what do we tend to want “more” of (money, comfort, recognition, time, screens, etc.)? What would it look like if we wanted “more” of brotherly love instead—more patience, forgiveness, hospitality? Is there one “more of Jesus / less of _____” shift we could each make this week?

2. Loving Far and Near

Paul praised the Thessalonians for loving believers far away but challenged them about how they loved those close by. Is it easier for us to be kind and generous with people outside our home than with those inside it? Why? Can you think of a time you were more patient with a stranger than with a family member? What is one specific way we can show “brotherly love” to each other at home this week?

3. Quiet Lives in a Loud World

Paul said to “aspire to live a quiet life.” What does a “quiet life” look like in our world of constant noise, busyness, and social media? Are there activities or habits that keep our hearts noisy and distracted from God? Is there one way we could simplify our schedules or routines as an act of faith and obedience?

4. Mind Your Own Business (In a Godly Way)

The sermon warned against being busybodies and gossipers. What’s the difference between caring for someone and meddling in their business? How does gossip hurt brotherly love—in a church, at school, at work, or in our family? Can we agree on one “house rule” about how we talk about people who aren’t at the table?

5. Work as Worship

Paul told the church to work with their hands so they would “lack nothing” and be a good witness. How can our daily work (jobs, school, chores) be a way of loving God and loving others, not just “getting stuff done”? Is there a chore or responsibility one of us has been avoiding that affects others? What is one practical way we can show “God-honoring dignity in hard work” as a family this week?

Family Conversation Guide for Children & Early Teens

1 Thessalonians 4:9-12

Motto of More

AGES 5-7: SIMPLIFYING THE MESSAGE APPLICATION POINTS

1. **We Treat Friends Like Brothers and Sisters**: Brotherly love = being kind, sharing, including others, forgiving. Pick one person at school or church to “love like family” this week (share a toy, invite to play, say something encouraging) and talk about how it went.

Discussion Questions:

- (a) “How can we show Jesus’ love to a kid who is left out?”
- (b) “What can you do when your brother/sister/friend hurts your feelings and says ‘sorry’?”
- (c) “Is it more important to be right, or to love like Jesus? What would loving like Jesus look like in this situation?”

2. **We Mind Our Own Business**: Not being a busybody = not spreading stories, not jumping into drama that isn’t ours. Create a simple rule: “If it’s not kind, not true, or not needed, we don’t say it.” Practice by role-playing short conversations.

Discussion Questions:

- (a) “If you hear kids talking about someone, how can you show Jesus’ love instead of joining in?”
- (b) “When is it right to tell a teacher or parent, and when is it better to keep quiet and pray?”
- (c) “How can we check: ‘Am I helping, or am I just being nosey?’”

3. **We Do Our Part and Work Hard**: Work is good; we don’t expect others to do everything for us. Give each child one daily “family helper job.” Connect it clearly to loving the family and honoring Jesus, not just “because Mom/Dad said so.”

Discussion Questions:

- (a) “What jobs can you do all by yourself to help our family?”
- (b) “How does working hard show that we love Jesus and our family?”
- (c) “How do you feel when someone leaves you all the work? Do we want other people to feel that way?”

AGES 8-12: BUILDING UNDERSTANDING APPLICATION POINTS

1. **Loving People More Than ‘More’ Stuff**: Quiet life vs. “motto of more” = people over popularity, possessions, likes, and achievements. Have kids list “things I’d like more

of” and “ways I can love people more.” Pray together to choose loving people over chasing “more.”

Discussion Questions:

- (a) “What are some ‘mores’ kids chase at your school? (more likes, more stuff, more wins...)”
- (b) “Have you ever chosen ‘more stuff’ or ‘more attention’ over loving someone well?”
- (c) “If Jesus looked at your week, what would He say you care about most: things, popularity, or people?”
- (d) “How can we practice being content this week?”

2. **Not Getting Pulled Into Drama:** Brotherly love + quiet life = staying out of gossip, group chats that tear people down, and constant drama. Agree on a simple response line kids can use: “I don’t want to talk about them when they’re not here.” Role-play using it in different situations (at lunch, on a chat, in a carpool).

Discussion Questions:

- (a) “What kind of drama do you see most in your friend groups or messages?”
- (b) “When friends start talking about someone else, what can you say or do to show Jesus’ love?”
- (c) “What is the difference between sharing a concern to help someone and gossiping?”
- (d) “How could minding your own business and living a ‘quiet life’ protect you from drama?”

3. **Working Hard:** Dignity in work; not mooching off others; doing your part in the family and church. Let each child choose one way to serve at church (setting up chairs, holding doors, helping younger kids) and one way to serve at home. Reflect after a month: “How did serving change how you felt about church/home?”

Discussion Questions:

- (a) “Where are you tempted to be lazy (school, chores, helping others)?”
- (b) “How do you think your classmates see Jesus when you work hard and don’t cut corners?”
- (c) “What would it look like to ‘roll up your sleeves’ at church, not just enjoy what others do?”
- (d) “Is there any area where you expect others to carry you when you could do more?”

AGES 11-15: DEEPENING THE CONNECTION APPLICATION POINTS

1. **Choosing a Quiet Life in a Loud, Online World:** Ambition for a “quiet life” = not needing constant attention, validation, or digital noise to feel valuable. Choose a limited “quiet period” (e.g., 1–2 evenings a week) with no social feeds/notifications. 19

Use that time intentionally for real conversations, Scripture, service planning, or restful hobbies.

Discussion Questions:

- (a) “Where do you feel the strongest pull toward the ‘motto of more’—more followers, more attention, more entertainment?”
- (b) “If someone looked only at your digital life, what would they think you care about most?”
- (c) “What might ‘aspire to live a quiet life’ look like for you with your phone, social media, or gaming?”
- (d) “How could setting boundaries online actually free you to love people better?”

2. **Refusing to Be a Digital Busybody:** Not meddling = not digging through others’ posts, stories, or texts to judge, compare, or fuel gossip. Together write a short “Digital Honor Code” (e.g., no screenshots of others for mocking, no sharing private things without permission, no participating in trash-talk). Revisit it regularly.

Discussion Questions:

- (a) “In what ways can social media and group chats turn us into busybodies?”
- (b) “When does ‘staying informed’ cross over into gossip or meddling?”
- (c) “Have you ever felt ‘watched’ or judged online? How did that feel? How might others feel when we monitor their every move?”
- (d) “What would it look like to honor God by minding your business online?”

3. **Being Reliable and Hard Working in a Culture of Shortcuts:** Hard work as a witness; not using faith as a cover for laziness or entitlement. Have each teen identify one commitment where they will intentionally show up fully—on time, prepared, doing more than the bare minimum—for the next 4 weeks. Check in weekly: “How has this changed how you see your role? Do you sense God using your effort as a witness?”

Discussion Questions:

- (a) “Where do teens your age most often cut corners—school, chores, jobs, relationships?”
- (b) “If your teachers or coaches described your work ethic, what would they say?”
- (c) “How could your effort in school, a job, or a team be a way of displaying Christ to people who don’t know Him?”
- (d) “Is there any area where you’ve been ‘mooching’—expecting others to carry responsibilities you could shoulder?”

TIPS FOR PARENTS

- Be patient and listen: Give your child time to think and respond.
- Relate to everyday life: Use real-life examples and stories familiar to your child to make abstract concepts more tangible.

- Encourage questions: Let your son or daughter know it's okay to ask questions, even if things don't make sense right away.
- Share personal insights: Tell a personal story about a time you experienced these themes, adapting as needed for age appropriateness.

Family Conversation Guide for Gen Z

1 Thessalonians 4:9-12

Motto of More

1. Loving Like Family, Not Like Fans

Bible Reference: John 13:34–35; Romans 12:10

Application: In a culture chasing more success, more followers, more experiences, and more noise, God calls you to a quiet life—anchored in Him, not in constant performance or self-promotion. Your ambition should be to grow in godly character, not constant attention.

Scenario: You're in a friend group chat. One person starts struggling emotionally and gets “too much” for the group. Others begin muting them, mocking their long messages, or slowly excluding them from hangouts.

Discussion: How could you demonstrate brotherly love instead of consumer love in this situation? What would it cost you, and why is it worth it in light of Jesus' command?

2. Choosing a Quiet Life Over the Motto of More

Bible Reference: 1 Thessalonians 4:11–12; 2 Peter 1:5–8

Application: In a culture chasing more success, more followers, more experiences, and more noise, God calls you to a quiet life—anchored in Him, not in constant performance or self-promotion. Your ambition should be to grow in godly character, not constant attention.

Scenario: You're tempted to post controversial takes, thirst traps, or edited highlight reels mainly to get noticed, boost engagement, or keep your name circulating. You know it will get attention—but it doesn't really reflect who you are in Christ.

Discussion: If your social media reflected a desire to “lead a quiet life,” what would change about what you post, how often you post, and why you post?

3. Mind Your Own Business (Especially Online)

Bible Reference: 1 Thessalonians 4:11; Proverbs 26:20; Ephesians 4:29

Application: Reject being a busybody—someone who inserts themselves into drama and other people's business for entertainment, control, or clout. Brotherly love

means you don't feed gossip, spread screenshots, or dig into people's private lives just because you can.

Scenario: You receive a screenshot of a private conversation or an embarrassing photo of someone from school/church. The group expects you to react, share it forward, or make memes out of it.

Discussion: How can you honor God and love your "brother/sister" when you have the power to expose or embarrass them? What would a "mind your own business" response look like here?

4. Working Hard as a Witness

Bible Reference: 1 Thessalonians 4:11–12; Colossians 3:23–24

Application: Hard work—at school, at your job, at home, and in church—is part of your witness. God isn't honored by laziness, cutting corners, or mooching off others. He is honored when you show up, take responsibility, and serve with integrity.

Scenario: In a group project, your partners do most of the heavy lifting while you minimize your effort, knowing you'll still get the same grade. You tell yourself you're just "bad at this subject" or "too busy," but you know you could contribute more.

Discussion: If you saw your efforts as a way to represent Jesus to your classmates and teachers, what would change about how you handle group work, chores, or a part-time job?

These points aim to empower Gen Z to live out their faith genuinely and courageously in various aspects of their daily lives, reflecting Biblical integrity, compassion, and steadfastness.