



## REFLECT

1. What particular sermon, truth, or application from this sermon series reshaped your understanding of community?

## ENCOUNTER

*“...warn those who are idle, comfort the discouraged,  
help the weak, be patient with everyone” (1 Thessalonians 5:14).*

The church in Thessalonica was, for the most part, learning and growing. Paul had much to commend in this community of brothers and sisters in Christ, but he wants them to continue to grow. So Paul concludes his letter with a list of nineteen commands in 1 Thessalonians 5:12-24. Help. Pray. Admonish. Rejoice. David Powlison called these rapid-fire commands “a picture of love in action.”

2. Discuss verse 14. Give both an example of both the command and the recipient for each of the four commands. For example? Give an example of someone who is unruly or idle? What might it mean to admonish them?
3. If the commands of verses 12-15 are horizontal, verses 16-18 are vertical. Powlison said, “They are the ways in which real life comes to real God.” What is the relationship between the horizontal and vertical relationships?
4. God always builds commands upon his promises. Read and reflect on the promise and prayers of verses 23-24.

## TRANSFORM

5. Look back at verse 14. Which command are you more inclined to obey? Which person are you most likely to avoid? Why?
6. Paul’s letter to the Thessalonians is full of prayers (1:2f, 2:13, 2:19, 3:9-13, 5:23). Let 1 Thessalonians 5:23 shape your prayer time as a group.

*This sermon study was developed in part after reading David Powlison, “Familial Counseling: The Paradigm for Counselor- Counselee Relationships in 1 Thessalonians 5.” JBC, Winter 2007.*

## PRAYER REQUESTS

*1 Thessalonians 5:14 aims to make you familial with your brothers and sisters. Paul pushes you to adapt to varied people, varied conditions, varied struggles. The Lord aims to strengthen what’s already your strength —“Excel still more” in the love you’ve already learned to give (4:1, 9f—and grow you up in the areas of love where you are weak. None of us hits on all four cylinders: admonish, encourage, hold on, be patient. We can learn from others who are strong where we are weak. Learning to do all four well is a lifelong learning curve for each of us and all of us together.*

*~ David Powlison ~*