

L.I.F.T.

P.O.D. STUDY GUIDE

WEEK SIX - KEEP MOVING FORWARD



INTRODUCTION

LIFT REQUIRES FORWARD MOVEMENT

Throughout this series, we have used flight as a picture of spiritual growth. One of the basic realities of flight is that **lift does not eliminate resistance**. An aircraft moving through the air encounters **drag**, a force that acts against its forward motion. Drag does not necessarily mean the aircraft is going the wrong direction. It exists precisely because the aircraft is moving through the air. That gives us a helpful spiritual picture.

Sometimes resistance does not mean you have missed God. Sometimes resistance appears **because you are moving**. You decide to forgive, and old emotions return. You establish a prayer life, and distractions suddenly seem endless. You begin changing a habit, and the old pattern pulls harder. You decide to trust God, and uncertainty increases. The temptation is to assume, “**If this were really working, it wouldn't be this hard.**” Scripture teaches something different.

Philippians 3:12-14

Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.



Paul had followed Christ for years when he wrote these words, yet he says,

“Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect.”

Then he gives us his response: **“I press on.”**

Paul's maturity did not eliminate resistance. It taught him how to continue moving in the presence of resistance.

The Greek verb translated **“press on”** (*diōkō*) communicates active pursuit. Paul refuses to become spiritually stationary. He is reaching forward toward what lies ahead and pressing toward the goal.

This gives us an important picture of spiritual maturity.

Maturity is not reaching a place where nothing resists you. **Maturity is learning to keep following Jesus when something does.**



GROUP DISCUSSION

1. We sometimes assume that resistance means we are going in the wrong direction. Can resistance ever accompany obedience?

2. Paul had been following Jesus for years yet still said, "I press on." What does that teach us about spiritual maturity and our need for continued growth?



I. IDENTIFY WHAT IS CREATING DRAG

Galatians 5:7-8

You were running well; who hindered you from obeying the truth? This persuasion did not come from Him who calls you.

Proverbs 4:25-27

Let your eyes look directly ahead And let your gaze be fixed straight in front of you. Watch the path of your feet And all your ways will be established. Do not turn to the right nor to the left; Turn your foot from evil.

Paul asks the Galatians a fascinating question:
“You were running well; who hindered you from obeying the truth?”

They had been moving. Something interfered. The word translated “**hindered**” was sometimes used for obstructing someone's path.

Paul wants them to identify what entered their spiritual journey and began interfering with their progress. That is a valuable question for every believer: **What has been slowing me down?**



Sometimes spiritual decline happens dramatically. But often it happens through small amounts of drag accumulated over time. Prayer gradually becomes less frequent. Scripture becomes occasional. An unresolved offense remains a little longer. Our schedules become increasingly crowded. We compromise something small. We stop gathering consistently with believers. None of those moments alone seems catastrophic.

But direction is often altered through accumulation. Proverbs 4 therefore says, “**Let your eyes look directly ahead... Watch the path of your feet... Do not turn to the right nor to the left.**” Spiritual drift rarely announces itself. Nobody wakes up and decides, “*Today I think I'll gradually become spiritually cold.*” We drift because small distractions repeatedly pull our attention away from the direction we once intended to travel. This is why healthy discipleship requires periodic course correction.

We should occasionally ask ourselves: Am I closer to Jesus than I was six months ago? Is my heart becoming softer or harder? Am I becoming more forgiving? More generous? More prayerful? More obedient? Not to condemn ourselves—but to recognize drag before drag becomes drift.



GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Paul asks, “You were running well; who hindered you?” Looking honestly at your own spiritual life, what kinds of things most often interfere with your forward movement?

2. Why is gradual spiritual drift sometimes more dangerous than an obvious spiritual crisis? What early warning signs should we learn to recognize?



LIFE APPLICATION

Conduct a simple spiritual drag check this week. Look at your relationship with God, your relationships with people, your habits, schedule, thought life, and priorities.

Ask: "What is creating unnecessary resistance to the person God is forming me to become?"

Do not try to change ten things. Identify one source of drag and take one concrete step to reduce it.

Small course corrections made early can prevent enormous deviations later



2. DO NOT LET YESTERDAY CONTROL TOMORROW

Philippians 3:13–14

Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Paul reveals another source of spiritual drag: what lies behind us. He says, “**Forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal.**” Biblical forgetting does not mean erasing our memories.

Paul certainly remembered his past. He spoke openly about having persecuted the church. Yet his past no longer possessed the authority to determine his future.

Both **failure** and **success** can create drag. Failure can tell us, You ruined everything. You will never change. God cannot use you. Success can tell us, You've done enough. You know enough. You've grown enough. You can coast now. Paul refuses both voices.



He will not allow yesterday's failures to imprison him, and he will not allow yesterday's victories to satisfy him. He is still **reaching forward**.

This connects directly with everything we have learned in L.I.F.T.

- **LOVE** keeps our hearts directed toward God rather than toward what we left behind.
- **IMITATE** reminds us there is still more of Christ's character to be formed within us.
- **FIGHT** teaches us not to surrender when old patterns resist new obedience.
- **TRUST** enables us to move toward a future we cannot yet see.

God can redeem your past without requiring you to live in it.

The rearview mirror has a purpose, but **you cannot drive forward while staring continuously behind you.**



GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Which is more likely to hinder spiritual progress—past failure or past success? How can either one prevent us from continuing to grow?

2. Is there something behind you—a regret, hurt, accomplishment, season, identity, or failure—that still has too much influence over the direction you are moving today?



LIFE APPLICATION

Identify one thing from your past that has been exerting too much influence over your present.

If it is **sin**, receive the forgiveness Christ has already provided and walk differently. If it is **hurt**, begin the process of forgiveness. If it is **success**, thank God for it without trying to live permanently in yesterday's season.

Then ask: "What is God calling me toward now?" You cannot change yesterday. But through the grace of God, yesterday does not have to control tomorrow.



3. STAY CONNECTED TO THE SOURCE

John 15:4-5

Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.

Colossians 2:6-7

Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude.

Forward movement in the Christian life does not come from endless human effort. Jesus says, “**Abide in Me, and I in you.**” Then He makes an extraordinary statement: “**Apart from Me you can do nothing.**”

The word abide carries the idea of remaining, continuing, or staying. Jesus' picture is a branch connected to a vine. The branch produces fruit not because it strains harder but because it remains connected to the source of its life.



We do not **LOVE** God through sheer emotional effort.
We cannot **IMITATE** Christ without the 'Holy Spirit transforming us.
We cannot **FIGHT** the good fight in our own strength.
We cannot **TRUST** God merely by forcing
ourselves to stop being afraid.

Everything flows from relationship with Christ. Colossians 2:6–7 says, “As you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith.”

Notice the continuity: the way we began is the way we continue. We began by grace, and we continue by grace. We began by trusting Christ, and we continue trusting Christ. We began dependent upon Him, and spiritual maturity does not make us less dependent. **It makes us increasingly aware of how dependent we have always been.**

This is perhaps one of the greatest dangers after experiencing spiritual growth. We can begin depending upon the disciplines, knowledge, habits, or maturity that God has developed in us instead of continuing to depend upon God Himself. The disciplines matter. But **the disciplines are not the Vine. Jesus is.**



GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Jesus says that fruit comes from abiding in Him. How can we pursue spiritual growth while relying on Jesus rather than our own strength?

2. What practices help you remain consciously connected to Christ rather than simply going through the routines of Christianity?



LIFE APPLICATION

Choose one simple practice this week whose only purpose is
remaining with Jesus.

Read Scripture without trying to finish a certain number of chapters. Take a walk and pray. Sit quietly before God.

Worship without asking Him for anything. Return to something from the L.I.F.T. series that God used to speak to you. Do not turn abiding into another performance.

The goal is not simply to do something spiritual. The goal is to remain close to Jesus.



BRINGING IT HOME

KEEP MOVING FORWARD

Flight involves competing forces. Lift works upward. Weight pulls downward. Thrust moves the aircraft forward.

Drag resists that forward movement.

The existence of weight and drag does not mean the aircraft has failed. It means the aircraft must continue generating what is necessary to fly. The same is true spiritually.

There will always be things attempting to pull us downward or resist our progress. Some must be removed. Some must be resisted. Some must be surrendered. And through all of it, we remain connected to Jesus and continue moving forward.

That is what these six weeks have really been about.

LOVE keeps our hearts centered on the One we are moving toward. **IMITATE** gives us the Pattern for the person we are becoming. **FIGHT** teaches us how to remain faithful when resistance comes. **TRUST** keeps us moving when we cannot see the route. **LOSE THE WEIGHT** teaches us not to carry what God never intended us to carry. And **KEEP MOVING FORWARD** reminds us that spiritual growth is not a moment.

It is a life of continually following Jesus.



Personal Reflection

- Where have I experienced the greatest growth during this series?
- What weight has God shown me that I need to release?
- What drag is currently resisting my progress?
- What would one intentional step forward with Jesus look like this week?

Paul never claimed to have arrived. He said: **"I press on."** That may be one of the healthiest declarations a mature Christian can make. I am not where I once was. I am not yet everything Christ is forming me to become...
But I am still moving toward Jesus.

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You for everything You have taught us through this journey. Keep our hearts moving toward You. Show us whatever is creating drag in our spiritual lives and give us courage to make the changes You reveal. Free us from allowing yesterday's failures or victories to control tomorrow. Teach us to abide in Jesus and to depend upon the Holy Spirit rather than our own strength. May we love You more deeply, imitate Jesus more faithfully, fight the good fight with endurance, and trust You when we cannot see the way. Help us lay aside every unnecessary weight and keep moving forward in the life to which You have called us. We have not arrived, but by Your grace, we press on. In Jesus' name, Amen.

