

The Tanner St Church of Christ meets each Lord's Day beginning with Bible classes at **9:30 AM**. We continue with our worship at **10:20 AM** and again at **5:00 PM**. We also meet each Wednesday evening at **7:00 PM** for Bible study and worship. Our meeting place is located about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile from I30 at 1512 Tanner St in Malvern, AR.

If you have questions about what we believe and teach, please visit our website, **TannerSt.com** to listen to sermons or read past articles from our bulletin. Or you can contact us and we will be glad to find a convenient time to study with you.

Phone: (501) 332-8806 Email: preacher@tannerst.com

Needed News

Thelma Echols is still dealing with substantial back pain in addition to the other difficulties of age..

Phyllis Jackson is recovering from knee replacement surgery. She has been in pain much of the time since surgery meds ended, but should be coming home today unless something has changed. She should start therapy very soon.

Chris Wright will have another procedure to remove the remaining kidney stones in early March. This will be a little less invasive than his recent surgery.

Joyce Venable has not been feeling well with the weather changes the past few days. Their Grandson came home from the hospital early last week and was doing much better though what caused his symptoms is still not known.

Dottie Henderson has an appointment scheduled with her heart doctor this week regarding her difficulties last weekend.

This week's article deals with the issue of growth as a Christian. No matter what else we may do, growth will only come if we are feeding our souls from the Word of God. Study is imperative for those who seek to mature in Christ.

Seeking His Righteousness

"...seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.." Matthew 6:33

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Our Christian Development And Growth

Richard Thetford

Before an individual can grow as a Christian they must first desire to be free from sin. Peter writes: "*Therefore, laying aside all malice, all guile, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby*" (**1Peter 2:1-2**). Later he says: "*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*" (**2Peter 1:4**). Many Christians seem to be "spinning their wheels" when it comes to Christianity. They want to be an active Christian, yet they also want to continue to entangle themselves with worldly things. We cannot develop and grow into the Christian that God wants us to be if we are not willing to give it 100% effort! Only when we truly "desire" for the righteousness of God will we become a mature, seasoned, responsible, and respected Christian in His service. We must be determined to escape the world's lusts and have a living faith toward Christ. James writes: "*For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also*" (**James 2:26**). Our true character, development and growth as a Christian will be evident to all based upon our works. Our Christian growth will be seen by all without us having to ever say a word. Remember the words of Paul? "*Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give*

attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership. Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all" (**1Timothy 4:12-15**). A Christian's development, growth, and progress will be evident to all that see him.

Conditions Of Growth

We can only grow in Christ when we place our trust and cares on Him. "*casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you*" (**1Peter 5:7**). Jesus pleads with each of us to "*Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light*" (**Matthew 11:28-30**). When we cast our cares on Jesus, and lean on Jesus, then we are on our way to developing as a Christian ought to. The worrier, the pessimist, the negative individual will not grow spiritually because they have not learned to let Christ be the center of their life. When we try to go through our daily tasks without including God, then we have miserably failed. Each and everyone of us when asked if we would like to grow up to be a strong, active, knowledgeable, fruitful Christian would probably answer **Yes!** What we say we **Want** to be and what we actually **Are**, often times are two different things. You see, our growth is conditional. Conditioned that we **Strive** to be what we say we **Want** to be!

Steps To Christian Growth

So how does an individual grow to become the Christian that God would certainly be proud of? The answer is found in the Bible. Peter writes: "*But also for this very reason, giving*

all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble" (**2Peter 1:5-10**). We learn that the individual that really wants to develop and grow into a servant of God, a dedicated Christian, then there is active work to do. A Christian is one who is virtuous, longs for knowledge (**Ephesians 3:19**; **Proverbs 24:5**), exercises temperance (**1Corinthians 9:25**; **Galatians 5:23**), is patient (**1Thessalonians 5:14**; **James 5:8**), godly (**1Timothy 4:7-8**), shows brotherly kindness always (**Galatians 6:10**), and understands that all things must be done first of all because of **Love** (**1Corinthians 13:1-13**). Peter, inspired by the Holy Spirit informs us that if we are actively pursuing these things then we will never stumble! The apostle Paul wrote to the Philippians and encouraged them to remain faithful and to develop and grow as Christians by saying: "*Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy-- meditate on these things*" (**Philippians 4:8**). May we all strive to develop and grow by putting on the fruits of the spirit (**Galatians 5:22-23**), and meditating on the good, positive aspects of Christianity. As a result, people will be edified by your growth and encouragement!