

*"and he will be like a tree ... which yields  
its fruit in its season." Psalm 1:3*



**Your Story**  
in  
*God's Story*

**LAURELWOOD**

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## Growing For His Glory

Someone has said that you get older every day but you can refuse to grow up. It's true, isn't it? There are some people who never seem to mature in their thinking, manner, or behavior. While we are entertained by a little baby's first attempts at speech or the way they stumble and struggle with their first steps, we become concerned when we see a grown adult walking awkwardly or making rudimentary gurgling sounds. It causes us to ask, "What's wrong with that person?" Spiritual growth is similar to physical growth in the fact that there is a time to be a baby, and there is a time to grow up. There is a time for those awkward, gangly steps as a new child of God, and there is a time to walk uprightly and confidently as a mature believer in Christ. The question is, how does someone who has made a decision to believe in Jesus grow up in Christ?

Jesus said to His disciples, *"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."* John 15:5 Spiritual growth comes by remaining attached to Jesus, the Vine. Are there some steps that we can begin to take that will help us to walk closely with Jesus? Are there some words, phrases, and ideas that we can begin to learn so that we can grow up in Christ?

The following verses and instruction are written to help you begin that spiritual journey with Jesus. The Apostle Paul, writing to a church said it this way, *"Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him."* Colossians 2:6

## **Now That You Are A Christian**

Romans 10:9,10 states, *“that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.”*

Confession means to agree with God about who you are, a sinner. Have you turned from your sins to God? Those who agree with God about their sin condition must believe that God provided someone to pay the penalty for the consequences of sin. Did you trust Jesus to be your Savior and thank Him for taking away your sins? If you did, then you are a Christian. John 1:12 says, *“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His Name.”*

### **What must you do to be a child of God?**

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## **A Christian Is a New Person**

When a person becomes a Christian, he actually becomes a new person. II Corinthians 5:17 states, *“Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.”*

It is important to know that Jesus Christ died once for all your sins; the past, present, and future sins in your life. Romans 6:6,7 says, *“knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin.”*

**Which of your sins did Christ die for?**

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## **Will God Ever Abandon Me?**

Once Christ has come into your life, He will never leave. Though you sin, disobeying and falling short of His will for your life, He will always be with you so you can be assured of your salvation and your entrance into heaven. Hebrews 13:5 says, "...I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you." John 10:27-29 declares this promise from God, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, Who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand."

**If you were to die tonight, would you know for sure that you were going to heaven?**

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**How would you know that?**

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# What Happens When Christians Sin?

Though we cannot “lose” our salvation because of God’s love for us and His promise, we can be out of fellowship with God, i.e., sin hinders our relationship with the Lord, for God does not dwell with evil, “...*no evil dwells with You.*” *Psalm 5:4* Common symptoms of being out of fellowship with the Lord include: lack of interest in praying, reading the Bible, and fellowshiping with other Christians. Unanswered prayer can often be the result of sin in a person’s life, though there may be other reasons for what may seem to be unanswered prayer.

Therefore, when you disobey God and sin, it is important to confess it immediately. Agree with God that what you have done is wrong and that you want to turn from the sin back to God. I John 1:9 says, “*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*”

## What happens when we confess known sin in our lives?

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## **Giving Christ Control Of Your Life**

Sin in the life of a Christian hinders fellowship with God, but fellowship is restored when we confess those things that God brings to our attention. Intimacy with God grows out of our obedience to His Word and the leading of His Spirit in our lives. When we allow Christ to have control, we are on our way to Christian growth. Romans 12:1 says, ***“Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.”***

When you asked Jesus to be your Savior and enter into your life, He did not come to be limited to the outer edges but to actually move to the center of your life. This thought is expressed by the Apostle Paul in Galatians 2:20, ***“I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.”***

Jesus Christ comes into your life to be your Lord. One day He is coming again to rule and reign over all the earth, ***“so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth.”*** ***Philippians 2:10*** He offers us a quantity and quality of life that we can find no where else. Jesus said, ***“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.”*** ***John 10:10*** Jesus loves you enough to die for your sins.

**Do you think He loves you enough to direct your life for the very best? \_\_\_\_\_**

As you present your life to God, there are certain basics to Christian growth. Though not exhaustive, these topics will help you to grow in your new life.



# The Bible Is The Word Of God

II Timothy 3:16,,17 states, *“All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”* In other words, all Scripture is God’s Word to us.

## What is the Bible able to do in a Christian’s life?

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It is important to spend time in the Bible every day. A good place to start is with one of the Gospels at the beginning of the New Testament. Mark is one of the shortest and will give you an overall understanding of the life of Jesus. As you read, you should keep a notebook handy to record the new thoughts God has for you and any questions that you have. The key to reading the Bible is not the amount but consistency, reading every day. Before you read it is important that you pray so that you may understand what it is God is saying to you.

## **How Do You Pray?**

Prayer is simply communicating with God. Though God knows everything about everybody at all times, God delights for His people to talk with Him often. Matthew 6:9-13 is often called “The Lord’s Prayer” or “The Model Prayer.” As Jesus taught His disciples to pray He encouraged them to pray to the Father first before praying about anything else. Begin your prayer focusing on God; who He is and what He has done. Ask God to direct you as you read His Word. Thank God for the good things that you have been experiencing. Share your needs and requests to God. Pray for the needs and concerns of others that God has brought to your attention.

## How To Begin The Day With God

Spend some time each day in prayer and reading. You might start with a schedule like this:

Description	Time
<i>"Our Father Who is in heaven"</i> Acknowledge God as the Lord of your life, thank Him for your relationship, the day, and what He is doing in your life.	1 minute
<i>"Your kingdom come, your will be done,"</i> Ask God to guide you as you read His Word; what does it say about Him, His kingdom, you and His plans for your life.	1 minute
Read the Bible	4 minutes
<i>"Give us this day our daily bread,"</i> Reflect upon what you have read, how it affects the way you should live, share your requests to God.	1 minute
<i>"Do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil"</i> Pray for strength to act upon what you have read, pray for others who need His help.	1 minute
<b>Total Time</b>	<b>8 minutes</b>

Remember, it is not how long you pray or how much you read, but rather how consistent you are in doing it every day, including on weekends! You will soon find that eight minutes is not enough time to pray and read all that you want to and really need. Like any good relationship, the time and effort invested increases the intimacy. Increase your time little by little, but be sure to be consistent.

# The Need For Fellowship

You have perhaps heard the expression, “No man is an island.” This is true in the life of a Christian. It is not only important to read the Bible and pray, but it is also important to fellowship with other Christians. Hebrews 10:24,25 states, *“and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near.”*

## Why should you spend time with other Christians?

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One of the best places to find Christian fellowship is in a local church. Going to and getting involved in a local church is fundamental for Christian growth. In obedience to Christ you should follow His command to be baptized, as an outward identification of what has already taken place in your life. Matthew 28:19 & 20 tells us to, *“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”* Make an appointment with the pastor to talk this over with him.

## **Witnessing: Sharing The Good News With Others**

It is the responsibility of each and every Christian to be a walking, talking witness for Jesus Christ. Jesus said in Acts 1:8, “...and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”

You need to walk a life that demonstrates to your family, friends, and the world that you are no longer the self-seeking person of the past, but a new Christ-centered individual. You must show by your attitudes and actions that you are different. Jesus tells us in Matthew 5:16, “*Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father Who is in heaven.*”

**Why should you demonstrate a different way of life to the world?**

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Not only should you live a life of example, but you must also talk of what Jesus Christ has done for you and of what He can do for others. One good way of sharing the good news is by telling others how you came to know Jesus Christ and what He has done in your life.

Without too much effort every one of us can think of a family member, friend, or acquaintance who needs to know about how Jesus has paid the penalty for sin and can set them free.

Write the name of that person or persons here.

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Now begin to pray for their salvation and ask God how He can use you to bring this person to Jesus Christ.

These are not all the topics of the Christian life, but they are some of the basics. This booklet has been designed to help you get started. It is important that you find a local church where you feel comfortable and where you can grow both in being taught as well as having a ministry.



