

## Thriving Christians

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The collection of Psalms begins with these illustrative words: “Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers” (Psa. 1:1-3).

Does this passage describe you as a Christian? Are you a thriving Christian? Are you growing? Are you struggling? Are you progressing? Are you stagnant? In this article, we will notice several traits of thriving Christians.

**1). Thriving Christians are self-motivators.** Being a Christian is personal. We certainly can receive help from one another; however, be warned. All the help in the world is for nothing if we do not actively participate in our faith. An awareness of what Jesus did for us on the cross gives us motivation to serve Him: “For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised” (2 Cor. 5:14-15).

Regrettably, there are some Christians who expect someone else to motivate them. They blame their lack of involvement on other Christians. The worship service did not energize them. They did not get anything out of the sermon. Bible class was boring. Such a selfish attitude is destructive personally and a drag on the church collectively.

Thriving Christians look inwardly to work out their own salvation: “Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure” (Phil. 2:12-13). God works in and through us. Yet, we must be willing to work with Him.

**2. Thriving Christians are self-disciplined.** They develop specific habits which aid in the development of character. The process of self-discipline helps strengthen and protect our faith. The apostle Peter promised that if we strengthen our faith, we will never fall (2 Pet. 1:5-11).

Most people want to find a shortcut. We want to get rich quick. We want instant gratification. There are no shortcuts to becoming a thriving Christian. Jesus commanded self-discipline when He said, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me” (Matt. 16:24). To state it plainly, thriving, self-disciplined Christians...

Attend every assembly of the saints possible.

Read the Bible regularly and routinely (3-5 days a week).

Invite others to worship.

Engage in repentance and renewal.

Volunteer to serve in the local church.

Restrain from criticism and complaining.

Exemplify the change they want to see in others.

**3). Thriving Christians have a victory mindset.** The faith of Christians is based on the victory of Jesus over death: the resurrection. Paul expressed victory by taunting death in his letter to the saints at Corinth: “When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 15:54-57).

Some Christians have a “can’t do” mindset. They are paralyzed by inferiority. They do not attempt to become self-disciplined because they do not think they can do better. The resurrection of Jesus proves what can take place in our lives. We can be saved and transformed, but only by faith.

Faith is about being determined and committed to becoming like Jesus. Faith is how we share in the victory of Jesus: “For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith” (1 John 5:3).

**4). Thriving Christians take responsibility.** Some Christians blame others for their dysfunction. They make excuse after excuse for not attending worship or volunteering. Someone else will do the work. Others may wallow in self-pity and bitterness. They used to be more involved with the church, but someone made them mad ten years ago.

There are legitimate reasons for being hurt. However, there comes a point at which each one of us must take responsibility for our actions. We have to take responsibility for our lives. We have to take responsibility for our part in the church.

In the parable of the wise and foolish stewards, Jesus said, “...Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required, and from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more” (Luke 12:48). As Christians, we have been given much. Christ is expecting much from each of us.

### **Conclusion**

Everyone wants to be like the strong tree of the first Psalm. We can thrive as Christians. God has provided us with everything we need to grow into mature Christians. We must use what He has given us to develop new attitudes and habits.