

May 7, 2023

## Focus on Self-Development, Not Self-Fulfillment

by Ken Weliever

Something in human nature tempts us to stay where we're comfortable," wrote the late Fred Smith, a Dallas businessman and board member of Christianity Today.

In an article in Leadership Magazine Smith wrote about "Training to Reach the Top." The theme and thesis of his article spoke to the importance of personal growth, getting out of one's comfort zone and development in the business world, especially for those in leadership positions.

Smith presented six areas vital to growth, all of which could be applied to spiritual growth. It's the first we want to consider today. "Focus on self-development, not self fulfillment."

Growing up in the 1960's we heard a lot about "finding yourself." There was societal emphasis on feeling good, finding happiness and experiencing inner peace. While those goals have some merit, there is a higher calling and a nobler purpose in life.

Self-development is different. Deb Ingino, Life Coach and CEO of Strength Leader Development expressed it this way: Self-development "is a higher calling to develop ourselves and move into our real potential. Why? So we can serve others and make a difference in

the world."

"The motive is the difference," Smith wrote. He further explained, "With self-fulfillment, feeling good is the product. With self-development, feeling good is the by product. It comes from the service performed."

In his book, The Success Journey, leadership guru, John Maxwell, explains the contrasting difference. "Self-development is a higher calling; it is the development of your potential so that you can attain the purpose for which you were created. There are times when that's fulfilling, but other times it's not. But no matter how it makes you feel, self-development always has one effect: It draws you closer toward your destiny."

As we think of the spiritual application, these questions may offer some sobering introspection.

- Why read the Bible every day?
- Why pray several times each day?
- Why study diligently to teach a Bible study class?
- Why spend hours researching and preparing a sermon?
- Why learn music and how to lead singing?
- Why give a Wednesday night talk?
- Why volunteer for a ministry

## Welcome!

When you visit our assemblies, you will be received friendly, kindly and courteously. We believe this to be the natural attitude of those who truly love God and mankind. Though you may at first be among strangers, we hope that you will come to know us well and count us as your friends.

**We offer Bible studies as well as correspondence courses for those interested in learning more about what God expects of us.**

## Important Dates

**Singing** - Northwest church of Christ, Austin, - June 3

*If you know of upcoming events, please inform Darrell so they can be included here.*

project?

- Why write a blog post every day?
- Why contribute to the Lord's work?
- Why support charitable causes?
- Why develop our talents and grow our skills for spiritual endeavors?

If the answer is strictly because it makes me feel good about myself, then I have missed the point. In fact, if we're not careful, we may become like the Pharisee in Jesus' parable, and feel self-righteous, while despising others (Lk. 10:9-14).

However, if we are motivated because we've been saved to serve and we know that God has created us for good works in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:10), then our focus is on self-development. Self-fulfillment will be a by product of serving both God and man (Matt. 25:44-45).

The problem of our narcissistic world was well expressed by the evangelical author, Erwin W. Lutzer, in his book "How in this World Can I be Holy?" "Whenever we are faced with a crucial decision, our generation has been taught to ask, What's in it for me? Will it give me pleasure? Profit? Security? Fulfillment?"

In contrast, the Bible admonishes us, "Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others" (Phil 2:3-4).

Or as Winston Churchill expressed it, "We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give."

Focus on self-development and your self-fulfillment will surface as a wonderful serendipity.

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## Prayer Requests

**Jack Wilson** is still struggling with pain and limited mobility and had a procedure to gauge the viability of a treatment for the pain.

**Jerry Richardson** is still undergoing treatments to strengthen his immune system.

**Dinah Williams** continues to have mobility issues.

**Don Simmons** is still struggling with his breathing; he is on oxygen at all times. **Alene** is having hip issues.

**Randall Vanaman** had surgery on his foot and is recovering.

**Doug Adair** had surgery on his back and is recovering.

**Lisa Mullen (Darrell's sister)** is undergoing chemotherapy.

**Mercedes Munoz (in Chiapas)** is undergoing treatment for her liver and kidneys.

*If you know of someone that needs to be on this list, please tell Darrell (email preferred) and provide updates so names stay on the list as long as needed.*

**"praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints,"**  
(Ephesians 6:18 ESV)

The Oaks West church of Christ is a group of individual Christians who have been added to the Lord's body through baptism (Acts 2:38, 47; Gal 3:26, 27), and have joined themselves together (Acts 2:42ff) in an effort to do the Lord's will.

We are not a part of any larger organization - we do not follow any man-made creeds and we do not answer to anyone other than the Lord.

Our standard of faith and practice is the Word of God. We believe in the God of revelation (Eph 3:1-7; 2 Tim 3:16-17) and follow his instructions in an effort to have an ongoing relationship with him (1 John 4:7-11; 5:3).

Our times of study and worship are open to all, and our members are happy to meet with interested individuals or families for study.

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