



MARSHALL BAPTIST NEWS

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A GREAT WAY TO GROW INTO A NEW YEAR

The turning of the calendar always brings a sense of anticipation. A new year offers a fresh start, new opportunities, and renewed hope. Many people make Resolutions — promises to do better, be better, try harder. And while intentions are good, history tells us that motivation alone rarely lasts. What if, instead of vague promises, we embraced a clear, biblical plan for growth in 2026?

We have just celebrated the Birth of Jesus and I hope you and your family had a wonderful Christmas. But as we move on from the Christmas story of the Baby King, reigning from the Manger Throne in Luke 1 and 2, we see him begin to grow as everyone does. And from age 12 years old until he reappears to begin His earthly ministry, we have 1 verse to paint a picture of Jesus' life. It's found in Luke 2:52. This one verse gives us a simple yet profound picture of healthy, balanced growth:

“And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.”

What if we patterned our lives — and our churches — after that verse?

First, Jesus grew in **WISDOM**. Wisdom begins with **God's Word**. We always want to encourage you to engage with the Scriptures. Whether you read through the entire Bible or focus on sections of the text, the goal is not simply to finish a Bible reading plan but to **engage God's Word intentionally and consistently**. Scripture reminds us, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” (Proverbs 9:10). So let me ask: **How will you grow in wisdom in 2026?** (if you need a Bible Reading Plan, check with your church or contact us here at MBA and we can help you find the plan right for you.)

Second, Jesus grew in **STATURE**, referring to **physical growth**. This January gyms will be packed, but by February many will be empty again. At Marshall Baptist Association, one of our priorities is **encouraging pastors**, because healthy pastors lead healthy churches. Health includes physical, emotional, relational, and spiritual well-being. We want to help pastors, ministers, and churches pursue an intentional pathway toward health in 2026. **How will you grow healthier this year?** (I encourage you to write down your goals for physical health this year. And revisit them often to track your progress. (and if you fail, DON'T QUIT, Just Start Over!)



Third, Jesus grew in **FAVOR WITH GOD**. We don't earn God's favor — it is given by grace alone. Yet we experience His favor as we walk closely with Him through **intentional obedience, deeper prayer, faithful service, and keeping in step with the Spirit**. *As you consider your life, what areas do you need to be more obedient and faithful to God this year?* **How will you grow in favor with God in 2026?**

Finally, Jesus grew in **FAVOR WITH MAN**. This points to our relationships. Growth in this area requires initiative — **listening well, sharing stories, engaging in gospel conversations, and staying close to people**. Start in your small group or Sunday School class, and extend that posture to neighbors, coworkers, family, and friends. **How will you grow in favor with others this year?**

Imagine what could happen throughout our Marshall Baptist Family of Churches if each of our churches leaned into Luke 2:52 together. Not making empty promises — but charting a clear pathway for real growth. What a powerful way to begin a new year and step more fully into the abundant life God desires for us. Happy New Year. We look forward to all that God is going to do in and through you in this new year.

For the Glory of God and the Good of His Church,

Dr. Eric Taylor, AMS
Marshall Baptist Association

ANNOUNCEMENTS



THIRD THURSDAYS

Mark your calendars on the **THIRD THURSDAY** of EVERY MONTH for **Pastor Leadership Luncheons!** This is a time of prayer, worship, equipping and encouragement from high capacity leaders. To learn more, please email eric@marshallba.com.

DISASTER RELIEF TRAINING FEB. 19-21 IN ARAB

Would you like to get involved with Disaster Relief but don't know where to start? Look no further! Sponsored by the Marshall Baptist Association, there will be a Disaster Relief Training hosted by Gilliam Springs Baptist Church on Feb. 19-21, 2026. Areas of training will include Administration, Chaplaincy, Chainsaw, Clean-up and Recovery, Mass Feeding, and Showers and Laundry. The church is located at 1351 N. Brindlee Mountain Pkwy. in Arab. To learn more, log onto sbdr.org

SCHEDULE YOUR 2026 EVENTS AT MBRC

As the new year approaches, make plans for your church to enjoy a picnic or camping retreat at the Marshall Baptist Retreat Center. Learn more online at: www.marshallbaptistretreat.com

Check out our MBA website for more information on upcoming events and opportunities, as well as open church positions!
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