

The 7 Stages of Spiritual Growth (The PROCESS and PATTERN of Spiritual Growth)

We all should desire to **GROW** to Spiritual Maturity in our relationship with Jesus Christ. God's Word reveals to us **SEVEN STAGES** of Spiritual Maturity that MIRROR our own Physical Maturity. This **PROCESS** of growth is also **PATTERNED** by Jesus' ministry in maturing his disciples.

*2 Peter 1:5-8 And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith **virtue**; and to virtue **knowledge**; 6 And to knowledge **temperance**; and to temperance **patience**; and to patience **godliness**; 7 And to godliness **brotherly kindness**; and to brotherly kindness **charity**. 8 For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

For each STAGE of Spiritual Growth, we will see 4 things:

- A. MILESTONE
- B. DEFICIENCY
- C. WHAT NEEDS TO BE ADDED
- D. SEEN IN JESUS' MINISTRY

STAGE 1: _____

A. MILESTONE: SPIRITUAL _____

1. Every Christian needs 2 things to grow:

- _____

1 Pet. 2:2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

- _____

*1 Thess. 2:7-8 But we were gentle among you, even **as a nurse cherisheth her children**: 8 So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us.*

2. To grow out of the BABE stage, you need a _____ for God's Word, and a _____ who can give it to you.

B. DEFICIENCY: _____

1. They obey the sinful desires of their _____

1 Cor. 3:1

*And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto **spiritual**, but as unto **carnal**, even as unto **babes in Christ**.*

1 Cor. 3:3

*For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not **carnal**, and **walk as men**?*

2. The need to be _____ because they are incapable of feeding themselves from the Word of God

1 Cor. 3:2

I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.

3. They are _____ in the Word

Heb 5:13

*For every one that useth milk is **unskilful** in the word of righteousness: **for he is a babe**.*

C. WHAT NEEDS TO BE ADDED: _____ (2 Pet. 1:5)

1. A _____ obedience to the truth...simply put, it is **CHOOSING** to _____ what you know to do.

2. If VIRTUE is preceded by _____, the disciple gets _____ UP

1 Cor. 8:1

*Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. **Knowledge puffeth up**, but charity edifieth.*

D. SEEN IN JESUS' MINISTRY:

1. Both John the Baptist & Jesus began their ministry preaching _____.

Matt. 3:2

*And saying, **Repent** ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*

Luke 3:3-18

*v.10...And the people asked him, saying, **What shall we do then?***

*v.12...Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, **what shall we do?***

*v.14...And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, **And what shall we do?***

Matt. 4:17

*From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, **Repent**: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*

2. Repentance always hits at the _____ of the sin in one's life

John 3:3-10, John 4:16-18, Mark 10:17-22, Luke 10:25-37

STAGE 2: _____ CHILD

A. MILESTONE: SPIRITUAL _____

1. Little children understand the nature of their RELATIONSHIP with the Father. They begin to _____ with, **TALK** to, and _____ the Father.

1 John 2:12-13

*12 I write unto you, **little children**, because **your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake**. 13 I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, **little children**, because **ye have known the Father**.*

2. Little children are _____

Matt. 18:3-4

*And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. 4 Whosoever therefore shall **humble himself as this little child**, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.*

B. DEFICIENCY: _____

1. Little children are still learning to **WALK** with God – and they still _____ and _____ into sin.

1 John 2:1-2

My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

1 John 3:7-8, 1 John 5:21

2. Many Christians struggle with _____ of their salvation – “Am I really saved?”

1 John 2:12

*I write unto you, little children, **because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.***

C. WHAT NEEDS TO BE ADDED: _____ (2 Pet. 1:5)

1. KNOWLEDGE gets added to _____

Isaiah 5:13

*Therefore my people are gone into captivity, **because they have no knowledge:** and their honourable men are famished, and their multitude dried up with thirst.*

Hosea 4:6

***My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge:** because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.*

2. KNOWLEDGE from God's Word _____ us

Romans 12:2

*And be not conformed to this world: but be ye **transformed** by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

3. KNOWLEDGE from God's Word _____ us

Colossians 3:9-10

*Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; 10 And have put on the new man, **which is renewed in knowledge** after the image of him that created him:*

4. KNOWLEDGE _____ us

John 17:17

***Sanctify** them through **thy truth:** thy word is truth.*

D. SEEN IN JESUS' MINISTRY:

1. **TIMELINE:** Beginning at Christ's _____ until his move to _____.
2. Jesus wanted his disciples to understand _____ He was - to confirm his absolute DEITY – he wanted to _____ their eyes

Matt. 3:16-17

And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: 17 And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

John 1:29-34

The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world...

John 1:35-51

*...40 One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. 41 He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, **We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ...** 45 Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, **We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.***

John 2:1-11 (Miracle of water to wine)

*11 This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; **and his disciples believed on him.***

John 4:46-54 (Miracle of healing the nobleman's son)

⁵⁴This is again the second miracle that Jesus did, when he was come out of Judaea into Galilee.

3. Jesus wanted to his disciple to understand _____ to follow Him.
 - The disciples needed to learn to place their faith in _____, not in his _____.

- The disciples needed to establish a _____ with Him instead of _____ for Him.

STAGE 3: _____

A. MILESTONE: SPIRITUAL _____

1. Spiritual CHILDREN know how to _____ in truth because they have added KNOWLEDGE

2 John 4

*I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy **children walking** in truth...*

3 John 4

*I have no greater joy than to hear that my **children walk** in truth.*

2. Spiritual CHILDREN are _____ of God

Eph. 5:1

*Be ye therefore **followers of God**, as dear **children**;*

B. DEFICIENCY: _____

1. Spiritual CHILDREN are WALKING, but still WEAK in _____

Eph. 4:14-15

*That we henceforth **be no more children**, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;¹⁵ But speaking the truth in love, **may grow up into him in all things**, which is the head, even Christ:*

2. Spiritual CHILDREN are _____ to deceit

C. WHAT NEEDS TO BE ADDED: _____ (2 Pet. 1:6)

1. Temperance is the process of STRENGTHENING by _____ items and _____ items

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

*Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. **25 And every man that striveth for the mastery is***

temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. 26 I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: 27 But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

2. As a BABE, you lay aside _____. As a CHILD, you lay aside _____ so you can WIN!

Hebrews 12:1

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

D. SEEN IN JESUS' MINISTRY

1. **TIMEFRAME:** From the start of the ministry in CAPERNAUM until immediately preceding the CALL of the Apostles (John 3-5, Luke 4:31-Luke 8, Matt. 8-9)

2. The continued growth of the disciples required some form of MINISTRY

3. Major PRINCIPLES learned in this Stage:

i. To follow Christ demands _____surrender.
1. *Matt. 4:20, 22; Mark 1:18*

ii. To follow Christ means to be _____
1. *John 3, John 4*

iii. To follow Christ is to _____the sinner
1. *Matt. 9:10-13, Matt. 11:19, Luke 19:5-10, John 8:3-11*

iv. To follow Christ is to _____in God's POWER and FAITHFULNESS
1. *Matt. 8:23-27, Matt. 9:1-8, Matt. 9:10-26, Matt. 9:35*

4. Major OBSTACLES overcome during this Stage:

- i. A _____ of people
1. *John 15:18-21, Matt. 9:32-34, Ps. 119:165*

- ii. A resistance to _____

- iii. A spirit of _____ and procrastination
1. *Rom. 14:12*

- iv. A conflict of _____
1. *Matt. 4:21-22, Eph. 4:1, Luke 5:1-11*

STAGE 4: _____

A. MILESTONE: SPIRITUAL _____

1. Young men are _____

1 John 2:14

*...I have written unto you, **young men**, because ye are **strong**,...*

Proverbs 20:29

*The **glory of young men is their strength**: and the beauty of old men is the gray head.*

2. Young men have the Word of God _____ in them

1 John 2:14

...and the word of God abideth in you...

3. Young men have _____ the wicked one

1 John 2:13

*...I write unto you, **young men**, because ye have **overcome the wicked one**...*

1 John 2:14

*...I have written unto you, **young men**, because ye are **strong**, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have **overcome the wicked one**.*

B. DEFICIENCY: _____

1. A spiritual YOUNG MAN's _____ & _____ are still growing.

Titus 2:6

*Young men likewise exhort to be **sober minded**.*

2. A YOUNG MAN is not yet a _____

1 Corinthians 4:15

*For though ye have ten thousand **instructors** in Christ, **yet have ye not many fathers**: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.*

C. WHAT NEEDS TO BE ADDED: _____ (2 Pet. 1:6)

1. Patience is about enduring _____. It has a _____ work in the believer's life.

James 1:3-4

*Knowing this, that **the trying of your faith worketh patience**. 4 But let **patience have her perfect work**, that ye may be **perfect and entire**, wanting nothing.*

2. Young men (spiritually) shouldn't be _____ from difficulty. It's required as part of their MATURITY.

D. SEEN IN JESUS' MINISTRY

1. **TIMEFRAME**: Jesus' withdrawal from Capernaum and his prayer on the mountain/choosing of the apostles. *Matt. 12:14-15, Mark 3:6-7, Luke 6:11-12*

2. "Everything rises and falls on _____"

3. God always used _____ to _____ his people

- i. God used _____ to lead Israel out of Egypt.
- ii. God used _____ to lead Israel into the promised land.
- iii. God used _____ to lead Israel to rebuild Jerusalem
- iv. God used _____ to take the gospel to the Jews.
- v. God used _____ to take the gospel to the Gentiles.

4. Leaders are _____, not elected or self-appointed.

Luke 6:12-13

*And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a **mountain** to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. 13 And when it was day, he*

*called unto him his disciples: and **of them he chose twelve**, whom also he named **apostles**;*

5. Anyone can preach, but to hold the office of an elder, pastor, bishop requires an **ORDINATION**, proof of **WORTHINESS**, and **ACCOUNTABILITY** to another pastor or pastors.

Acts 1:2

*Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments **unto the apostles whom he had chosen**:*

Acts 14:23

*And when they had **ordained them elders in every church**, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.*

6. Leaders must **FIRST** be _____

1 Tim. 3:6

***Not a novice**, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.*

1 Tim. 3:10

***And let these also first be proved**; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless.*

7. The **PROVING** ground for leaders many times is the _____

1 Tim. 3:2

*A bishop then must be blameless, **the husband of one wife**, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;*

1 Tim. 3:4-5

*One that **ruleth well his own house**, having his children in subjection with all gravity; 5 (For if a man know not how to **rule his own house**, how shall he **take care of** the church of God?)*

STAGE 5: _____

A. MILESTONE: SPIRITUAL _____

1. Spiritual young men know the WORD of God, but fathers know the _____ of the WORD.

1 John 2:13

*I write unto you, **fathers**, because **ye have known him** that is from the beginning...*

2. The _____ of knowing the Father is what brings forth FRUIT

3. Spiritual FATHERS produce offspring, and _____ offspring

1 Corinthians 4:14-16

*I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you. For though **ye have ten thousand instructors** in Christ, yet have **ye not many fathers**: for in Christ Jesus I have **begotten you through the gospel**. Wherefore I beseech you, **be ye followers of me**.*

B. DEFICIENCY _____ CHILDREN

1. Spiritual fathers (just like physical fathers) are called to BRING UP their children, CHASTEN their children, and NURTURE their children. We have the responsibility to lead our children to _____.

Eph. 6:4, Heb. 12:7-9,

C. WHAT NEEDS TO BE ADDED: _____ (2 Pet. 1:6)

1. Godliness is God manifest in your _____

1 Timothy 3:16

*And without controversy great is the mystery of **godliness**: **God was manifest in the flesh**, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.*

1 Timothy 4:8

*For bodily exercise profiteth little: but **godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.***

D. SEEN IN JESUS' MINISTRY

1. _____ make us more like Christ & _____ we can be trusted with the responsibility of ministry **LEADERSHIP**.

2. Testing is a part of spiritual _____

James 1:2-4

*My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that **the trying of your faith worketh patience.** But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.*

3. Testing makes us more like _____

Romans 8:28-29

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

1 Peter 1:7

That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

4. Two key areas that get tested are _____ and _____

John 6:60-61

*Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, **This is an hard saying; who can hear it?** 61 When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, **Doth this offend you?***

John 6:66-69

*From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.
67 Then said Jesus unto the twelve, **Will ye also go away?** 68 Then Simon Peter
answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.*

STAGE 6: _____

A. MILESTONE: SPIRITUAL _____

1. Spiritual FATHERS have raised their own children to maturity, so now they can be TRUSTED with leading _____

1 Pet. 5:1-3

*The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: 2 **Feed** the flock of God which is among you, taking the **oversight** thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; 3 **Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples** to the flock.*

2. 1 Pet. 5 shows us WHAT to do as a spiritual leader:

- i. Lead by _____
- ii. Lead by _____
- iii. Lead by _____
- iv. Lead under _____ authority

B. DEFICIENCY: HEART _____

1. Leading others can be _____, DISCOURAGING, and _____.

2. 1 Pet. 5 shows us the HOW of spiritual leadership:

- i. Not for filthy _____...but of a ready MIND
- ii. Not _____ over...but being an EXAMPLE
- iii. Lead _____ Christ...because you'll be called into judgment by Him

C. WHAT NEEDS TO BE ADDED: BROTHERLY _____ (2 Pet. 1:7)

1. Fathers learn the ART of leadership, Elders learn the _____ of leadership

2 John 1:1

The elder unto the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth; and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth;

3 John 1:1

The elder unto the wellbeloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth.

D. SEEN IN JESUS' MINISTRY

1. TIMEFRAME: Between the Feast of Tabernacles & Feast of Passover

2. A Proper PERSPECTIVE of God's WORD

i. Refuse _____ Doctrine & Practices that VIOLATE God's Word

1. Fleshly heritage, Pharisees, outward works, racism

ii. Refuse _____ Doctrine & Practices that VIOLATE God's Word

1. Why do we do what we do? KJV, Discipleship, take church attendance, instruments in praise & worship, etc...

3. A Proper PERSPECTIVE of _____

i. Focus on _____ not the masses – Luke 15:3-7, 8-10, 11-32

ii. Focus on the _____ not PHYSICAL - Luke 17:11-19

iii. Focus on _____ not offending – Luke 17:1-5

iv. Focus on _____ not REVENGE – Matt. 18:15-17, 21-22

v. Focus on _____ not difference – John 17

4. A Proper PRESPECTIVE of _____ Life

i. Effective ministry is _____ based on your spiritual life

Matthew 17:21

Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.

STAGE 7: _____

A. MILESTONE: SPIRITUAL _____

Philemon 9

*Yet for love's sake I rather beseech thee, being such an one as **Paul the aged**, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ.*

Psalms 92:13-14

*Those that be planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God. **They shall still bring forth fruit in old age**; they shall be fat and flourishing;*

B. DEFICIENCY: _____

Psalms 71:9

*Cast me not off **in the time of old age**; forsake me not when **my strength faileth**.*

C. WHAT NEEDS TO BE ADDED: _____ (2 Pet. 1:7)

1 Corinthians 13:8

Charity never faileth...

1 Corinthians 13:13

*And now abideth faith, hope, **charity**, these three; **but the greatest of these is charity**.*

Colossians 3:14

*And above all these things put on **charity**, which is **the bond of perfectness**.*

D. SEEN IN JESUS' MINISTRY

1. Exchanged Life & Worldwide Challenge – Accept the inadequacies of the _____, and rest in sufficiency of _____. See the big picture of what God is doing not just your ministry.
2. The disciples were looking for a _____ kingdom, but the _____ kingdom was to come FIRST - Matt. 21:1-11, Zech. 9:9, Luke 24:20-21

3. Accept the _____ of the flesh - John 6:63
4. Apply the _____ of the Spirit – Matt. 26:41-43, Acts 1:14
5. Abandon the need for _____ – 2 Cor. 5:7
6. Acquire the _____ for the _____ – Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 1:8