

Week #3– Stages of Spiritual Maturity

Foundational Scripture – Ephesians 4:13-15 The Passion Translation (TPT), ¹³ *These grace ministries will function* until we all attain oneness in the faith, until we all experience the fullness of what it means to know the Son of God, and finally we become one perfect man with the full dimensions of spiritual maturity and fully developed in the abundance of Christ. ¹⁴ And then our immaturity will end! And we will not be easily shaken by trouble, nor led astray by novel teachings or by the false doctrines of deceivers^[k] who teach clever lies. ¹⁵ But instead we will remain strong and always sincere in our love as we express the truth. *All our direction and ministries will flow from Christ and lead us deeper into him, the anointed Head of his body, the church.*

STAGE 1: NEWBORN BABE

1. When we become saved, we are not automatically mature Christians. We are babes in Christ. John 3:1-7
2. As babes, we are not ready for the “meat” of God’s Word. We stick to our “milk” for a time 1 Peter 2:2 NLT, “Like newborn babies, you must crave pure spiritual milk so that you will grow into a full experience of salvation. Cry out for this nourishment”
3. Newborn babes need to build their Christian foundation upon first elementary principles of Christ – Hebrews 6:1-2
4. Newborn babes need 24-hour attention.
5. Newborn babes do not know how to communicate when they need something; they scream when they want something.

STAGE 2: CHILD

1. Children are limited in their understanding.
2. Children need others to guide them in many things even though they are able to do some things for themselves.
3. Children tend to appreciate what they receive more than the person who gives it to them.

4. There can be positive and negative things connected with the nature of a child. Matthew 18:2-4
5. Children are full of energy – being zealous without knowledge can be harmful. Romans 10:2 NLT, “I know what enthusiasm they have for God, but it is misdirected zeal.”

STAGE 3: YOUTH

1. At this stage, the Believer has learned how to relate to the Lord. 1 John 2:13-14: “13 I am writing to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. 14 I write to you, dear children, because you know the Father. I write to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God lives in you, and you have overcome the evil one.”
2. Young people tend to believe they know more than their elders.
3. It is more important for them to be accepted by man than God.
4. They only do what is asked of them – they do not go above and beyond.
5. They only behave when supervised.

STAGE 4: ADULT

1. They can be mature naturally but not spiritually.
2. They sometimes straddle the fence – Jesus is Savior but not always Lord of their lives.
3. They can quote scripture but may not have fruit evident in their lives.
4. They are critical and judgmental towards others.
5. They have stopped the “big” sins because of their age or fear of embarrassment not because of righteousness. They focus on doing what they “should”.

STAGE 5: MATURE CHRISTIAN

1. They are fully mature operating in the Word.
2. They are blameless not sinless.
3. They exhibit proper Christian conduct by walking in the Spirit.
4. They have developed a spiritual mind and think spiritually first.
5. **WARNING:** They must continue to grow by:
 - a. Abiding in the Word,
 - b. Not being idle,
 - c. Remaining accountable to a perfecting gift in the Body,
 - d. Remaining humble
 - e. Keeping a pure heart
 - f. Doing everything in love

QUESTIONS TO PONDER:

1. Where would you place yourself on these stages? You might ask a close friend or trusted adviser if you aren't sure. If you are uncomfortable asking someone or if you are afraid of what they might say, that might tell you a lot!
2. Where would you like to be? If you aren't where you'd like to be, what kinds of things could you do to move forward?
3. Let's not be stagnant or complacent with our spiritual maturity. Let's be intentional and GROW UP INTO HIM. 2 Peter 3:18 NIV "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen."