



# ROCKY MOUNTAIN CONFERENCE

## DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRIES

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**RAISING UP A GENERATION OF DISCIPLES  
DEDICATED TO THE PROPOSITION THAT  
LIFE ONLY HAS MEANING IN CHRIST**

### **Discipleship Ministries**

We serve to train and to equip the saints of God to identify and respond to the call of God to live out His eternal plan for their life. We teach fundamental biblical and spiritual disciplines in a practical format that allows for personal spiritual growth, daily discipleship, and local accountability. This maximizes the Godly potential of each believer, leads to the enhancement of the ministry of the local church, furthers the development of the local conference, and brings glory to the Kingdom of God. Only in this way can we reach that level of spiritual maturity and unity needed to influence the society in which we live. It is for this very purpose that we have been called.

### **A Local Resource**

Since we focus on the spiritual development, character, and equipping of the saints, we encompass all age groups, family and organizational contexts. We are a local and available resource for every pastor, leader, ministry department, and member. We serve the Lord by serving you. Our joy and victory is to see your ministry grow as God wishes it to grow in accordance with His eternal plan.

We can help you develop and grow in the areas of:

- ❖ Biblical mentor-based discipleship
- ❖ Christian education
- ❖ Counseling
- ❖ Leadership Development
- ❖ Strategic planning

All of us live and function within both family and organizational structures. The wisdom of God and His ways are very different from ours. A life apart for God requires a renewal of the mind, based upon a complete transformation of values, resulting in the development of Godly character. Here is revealed the fundamental problem we face in Christian growth and maturity today. The principles learned in the scriptures **must be put into practice** in order to experience the transformation needed to live as is worthy of the calling of God.

***What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. – 2 Tim. 2:2***

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# DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRIES

## At a Glance

### Mission

To raise up a generation of disciples who understand and are dedicated to the proposition that life only has meaning in Christ. To train and to equip the saints of God to identify and to respond to the call of God on their life.

### Vision

The study of fundamental biblical and spiritual disciplines in a format that allows for personal spiritual growth, practical daily discipleship, and local accountability is the essential prerequisite that maximizes the Godly potential of each believer, leads to the enhancement of the ministry of the local church, furthers the development of the local conference, and brings glory to the Kingdom of God in accordance with...

### Core Values

**Sound Doctrine** – We believe that God is the only infallible source of truth.

**Biblical Inerrancy** – We believe that the Bible is the infallible word of God.

**Practical Biblical Models** – We believe that God has already shown us the way in His word.

**The Ministry of the Holy Spirit** – We believe that all spiritual gifts are for today.

**The Ministry of the Saints** – We believe that every believer, as a member of the body of Christ, has a place and a calling to function as the Spirit has chosen.

**Truly Biblical Discipleship**– We believe that the discipleship method taught in scripture requires the integration of the study of Biblical truths and principles together with practical daily mentoring that includes the participation of the local pastor and fellowship with other members of the body of Christ.

Only in this way can we reach that level of Spiritual maturity needed to influence the society in which we live. It is for this very purpose that we have been called. We are Christ's ambassadors to a world of darkness dominated by the ignorance of the things of God.



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witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach  
others also. – 2Tim. 2:2*

## **Introduction**

The development of a program for conference wide discipleship ministries is, by its very nature, a work of love. What follows is an outline of a plan for the development and implementation of a biblically defined model of discipleship which promotes character and spiritual maturity in both the new convert as well as in our children. Much prayer and reflection, spiritual insight, patience, and mercy are required, all within the unavoidable context of the passage of time, in order to sort out what truly corresponds to God's will for us over the next four years and beyond.

We first introduced the vision for this plan during the Art of Leadership conference two years ago. The response was overwhelmingly positive. The next step, already in progress, requires meeting with as many pastors and local leaders as possible. Regional and small group meetings followed by some individual meetings will provide opportunities for pastors and local leadership to help form the program according to the needs of their local community.

We must carefully listen. This helps to avoid some of the traps common to this stage. In addition to the individual needs of each congregation, we need to identify the common experience of the group which then becomes the basis for working together in unity and harmony.

The information gathered at this initial stage, confirmed whenever possible, will serve us well in the future to give direction to the process of forming a turn-key actionable plan that local pastors and leadership will support, invest in, and implement. It is also wise to recruit a design team charged with working out the nuts and knots of the plan. This type of process is essential if we are to develop programs and ministries that truly meet the needs of the churches and communities of our conference.

## **Recommendation of the IPHC, RMC Executive Counsel, and Bishop Herrera:**

This initiative originated in Oklahoma and has been accepted and supported by Bishop Herrera and the Executive Counsel of the RMC.

## **At a Glance**

### **Form the vision**

- Meetings with Pastoral and leadership teams
- Prayer and seeking after God
- Discernment of God's Vision, Mission, and Purpose

### **Form the Plan**

- Recruit a design team
- Create the plan with the Input of local pastors and leadership
- Integrate goals, activities, and materials

### **Implement the Plan**

- The Local Church
  - Leadership
  - Local children, youth, and adult Ministries
- Identify and train mentors
  - Men for men, Women for women
  - Adults for youth and children
- Discipleship
  - Assign the disciples
  - Practice, practice, practice

## History

Jesus understood the vital need for discipleship and, as an imperative, incorporated it into the great commission. In modern terms, this defines the “prime directive” of the church. We are called to make disciples. It does not matter what else we do – if we do not make disciples, we are not fulfilling the great commission.

Discipleship, as taught in the Bible, is the ancient and time-honored method of training and preparation that makes use of demonstration, practical application, and correction, to quickly transform character, develop new skills, acquire knowledge, and deepen understanding. A disciple learns by following and copying the example of a master-mentor. The key element of this model of discipleship, which can only be experienced in practice outside of the classroom, is the relationship between the mentor and the disciple. This relationship was lived out as an essential part of Jesus’ ministry and is clearly displayed in the gospels.

## The Church Today

Today, most evangelical churches claim to have a discipleship program but, upon closer investigation, they turn out to be some sort of structured series of Bible studies. While the value of Bible study remains unquestioned and certainly needs to be integrated into any program of Christian spiritual formation and development, we should never confuse this with the kind of discipleship we see in scripture. True Biblical discipleship cannot function without the relational element between mentor and disciple. As such, true mentor based discipleship is almost non-existent in the evangelical church of today.

## The Absolute Need for True Biblical Discipleship

Every Christian needs to understand that life apart from Christ has no real meaning or value. This requires a renewal of the mind, based upon a complete transformation of values, resulting in the development of Godly character. Here is revealed the fundamental problem we face in Christian growth and maturity today. The principles learned in the scriptures **must be put into practice** in order to experience the transformation needed to live as is worthy of the calling of God.

So we see from the scriptures that the development of Godly character cannot be realized in the absence of the practical method of mentoring discipleship. The purpose and mission of discipleship is to reform the hearts and minds of all of God’s children so that they will seek His will, abandon the old ways, and commit their lives to His plan for them. Evangelization efforts generate many conversions but the new Christian must be introduced, as quickly as possible, to a mentoring relationship in order to develop and grow to spiritual maturity.

In addition, whereas Bible study, godly counsel, and good parenting are essential elements in raising up our children to become the next generation of Christians, God’s counsel in the word reveals that these are insufficient in themselves to accomplish the task without mentor based discipleship. We cannot afford to witness another generation of our children leave the church when they become teenagers.

Six years ago, the IPHC presented an initiative to design and implement, in the local church, a program of discipleship that would function to prepare a generation of young ministers to move into positions of leadership on the local, conference, and national levels. The need is real as research has clearly shown that the average age of leadership throughout the Pentecostal movement is aging. Clergy development must be rooted in a mentoring relationship in order to avoid many of the problems that have plagued evangelical churches in recent years due to the lack of solid character development in their leaders. The need to raise up and prepare future local church workers and ministers is now an imperative need in the IPHC as well as in all evangelical denominations throughout the world.

## Responding to God

Discipleship, as mandated by Jesus himself, takes place “in the field” through praying together, intercession, consistent communication, counseling, modeling correct attitudes, decision making, and Godly behavior. It is the most efficient, effective method, preferred and recommended by God, for training up His children and serves as the foundation upon which everything else is built. It is the key element in the formation of the kind of character needed to function and flourish in every facet of Christian life, including leadership.

As disciples, we learn to respond to God as Lord as well as Savior. It should therefore be understood that the discipleship method also includes correction and complete accountability. Accountability is now rarely seen in the day-to-day life of our post-modern culture. This is evident in many ways but one of the most obvious is the anger – in some cases rage – of people when corrected. However, without correction, it is impossible to reach any goals. The lack of accountability, therefore, almost guarantees failure.

The disciple learns that God considers Himself to have the absolute right to hold us all accountable. The Christian life is rooted in a living relationship with God which acknowledges that He is Lord. Jesus himself asked, “Why do you call me Lord, Lord if you do not do what I say?” When this truth is put into practice, the disciple learns to respond to God in ways that will lead to maturity.

## Without Mentor Based Discipleship

Without discipleship, the believer experiences initial growth but eventually becomes stuck in a quagmire of conflict and compromise. The practical skills needed to overcome do not develop. Life becomes a christianized, cleaned up version of whatever it was before knowing Christ. Character development becomes stunted and the probability of the full realization of the purpose of God is greatly reduced.

It is possible that some of you recognize this to be a description of many believers we have known. However, I do not mean to be pessimistic. Quite the contrary, I desire to inspire hope because through mentor based discipleship we have the solution to much of the frustration we have experienced as pastors and ministers. The burden we feel comes from the purpose of our vocation as defined in Scripture:

*To equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. – Eph. 4:12-13*

Is it not the Holy Spirit who has placed this burden upon our hearts?

## The Truth for Denominations

Without mentor based discipleship, the infrastructure of a denomination continues on but experiences a slow, multigenerational deterioration reminiscent of what is described in the book of Judges, concluding with the following spiritual epitaph, “Everyone did what seemed right in their own eyes.” Eventually, this process results in what we see today in non-evangelical denominations that used to be powerful in God: “having the form of religion but denying the power thereof”. The members of these denominations never thought, at the time, that this could happen to them.

## **Effectiveness**

While the mentoring relationship can start at any age, it is most effective when initiated in children. The attitude of Jesus at the age of twelve is precisely what we would like to see in all of our children by the time they reach the same age: "I must be about my Father's business." This requires a well coordinated program that begins in the early years of childhood development.

Never the less, discipleship is essential for every member of the church regardless of the age of conversion. Even believers who have known Christ for years should become disciples if they have not yet been mentored.

## **Therefore,**

As can be inferred from this presentation, discipleship, as revealed in scripture, requires an ongoing, long-term commitment on the part of the conference to the future development of the children and youth of each local congregation. A parallel commitment will also be required on the part of the leadership of each local congregation that wishes to see the benefits promised by God bearing fruit in their families.

1. The RMC will create a workable program of discipleship based upon the model outlined above to be implemented in our local congregations for the benefit of:
  - a. new converts so as to grow to maturity in Christ;
  - b. our children starting at the age of five and continuing until the age of 25 to be called (until a better name is proposed), "5-25".
2. The long-term goals of this program will be "to equip the saints for the work of ministry" as well as to raise up a generation of young adults committed to God's plan and purposes for their lives.
3. A design team will work together with the input of local pastors and leadership to integrate materials, activities, and goals appropriate to each age group in such a way as to move towards long term program goals.

## **Financial Impact:**

The financial impact to the conference over time is difficult to estimate, but initially, will involve the work of the design team as well as the production of materials. We anticipate the use of materials already in existence whenever possible. Eventually, a manual will be produced which will guide each local congregation in the implementation and administration of the program at the local level.

The financial impact on the local congregation will be minimal. After the initial training of mentors, ongoing costs will be small. Talking over coffee or inviting a disciple over for a meal should not put a dent in the budget of either the church or the mentor.

Regardless of the specific circumstances of a local congregation, we should keep in mind that any monetary investment we make will be recovered many times over by the increase in faithful tithes and offerings realized as the disciples make decisions to "Follow the Master" in every area of life.

## THE FOUR STAGES OF CHRISTIAN GROWTH

### Lesson 1

### Christians Are Expected To Grow

As a born-again child of God, Jesus Christ expects us to grow, develop, and mature. We are not called to remain on the same spiritual level year in and year out our entire life. Just as a human baby that never develops mentally or physically is considered to have mental or physical retardation, so likewise a Christian that never develops beyond their born-again experience can be considered to be spiritually retarded in their growth.

In these lessons we will study the four stages of Christian growth. This lesson will show how important it is to keep growing.

#### **JESUS EXPECTED GROWTH**

It is evident from the scriptures that Jesus Christ did not intend for His disciples to enter the Kingdom of God at one level and then remain there. He expected growth.

Jesus rebuked His disciples for an underdeveloped faith.

- **Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?**  
**Luke 24:25**

At His resurrection, Jesus rebuked His disciples even calling them fools for being slow in the development of their faith. What should have been a time of celebration for them became a rough rebuke.

Jesus expected His disciples to learn of Him as they walked with Him. He still does!

- **Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?**  
**John 14:9**

How long have we been with Jesus and yet He could ask us, “Do you not know me?” Jesus seemed disappointed with Philip because he hadn’t grown any more than he had.

When a man sought the disciples to cast a devil out of his son and they could not, he complained to Jesus. Jesus was none too pleased.

- **“You unbelieving generation.” Jesus replied, “how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy to me.”**  
**Mark 9:19 NIV**



Jesus was frustrated because He had been with them for so long and they still hadn't developed their faith. His biggest complaint was their unbelieving condition. Has your faith grown in the last year?

Jesus expects us to continually learn of Him. Learning is a process of growth.

- **Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup>Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. <sup>30</sup>For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. **Matthew 11:28-30****

This verse can be applied to our lives every day. Every day there are things we are to learn of Jesus by binding ourselves to His yoke.

### **THE APOSTLES EXPECTED GROWTH**

The apostles expected the early Christians to grow. The epistles do not give us permission to be stagnant or stunted in our Christian growth.

Paul expected the saints to increase and abound.

- **And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you: **1 Thessalonians 3:12****

Paul did not give the Thessalonians permission to not increase and abound in the love of God.

We are expected to grow in the glory and power of God in our life.

- **But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. **2 Corinthians 3:18****

As we look into the mirror of God's Word, we will be changed from one level of glory to another. Paul clearly taught "glory to glory." Not "same ol', same ol'."

The Bible teaches us to increase with the increase of God.

- **And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God. **Colossians 2:19****

The Body of Christ is designed to increase, not shrivel. To thrive, not dry out. If you stay attached to the Head, Jesus Christ, you will receive nourishment, you will be knit together with the rest of the Body, and you will increase. Any Christian who fails to increase demonstrates they are not holding fast to Jesus Christ.

We are expected to grow in faith.

- **For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: . . . <sup>17</sup>For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, **The just shall live by faith.** **Romans 1:16a, 17****

The righteousness of God is not revealed to us all at once. We must walk by faith in order to have more of it revealed. It is revealed from one level of faith to the next. As we walk with Jesus, our faith grows, and more of the righteousness of God is revealed to us. Are you at the same level of faith today you were six months ago?

The Apostle Peter commanded the Church to continually add the things of God to their life. The Bible promises it will take diligence.

- **And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; <sup>6</sup>And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; <sup>7</sup>And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. <sup>8</sup>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. **2 Peter 1:5-8****

Peter gives us eight things we are to diligently and continuously add to our lives: faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance (self-control), patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and the God-kind of love. These verses give the secret to never being barren or unfruitful in our knowledge of Jesus Christ. Grow! And keep growing!!

### **YESTERDAY'S GROWTH DOES NOT ENSURE TOMORROW'S VICTORY**

We must also be cautious and avoid living off of yesterday's victories. Just because we were once on fire for God does not mean we still are. Do not let yesterday's fires blind you to today's shortcomings.

If anyone had a right to take it easy, it was the Apostle Paul.

- **Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things that are before, <sup>14</sup>I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. **Philippians 3:13-14****

Paul's successes were not good enough to carry him forward. He could not rest on his laurels. He had to forget all that was behind him, including his victories, and keep pressing forward. There is a mark in Christ we must grow towards.

### **HOW BACKSLIDING WORKS**

We cannot draw back. Many take their ease and it costs them spiritually.



- **Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. <sup>39</sup>But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul. Hebrews 10:38-39**

Here, draw back means: *to withdraw, to be timid, to shrink back from declaring due to fear, and the timidity of a stealthy retreat.* Many Christians stop growing because of fear and timidity. They simply shrink back and stop advancing. This is called backsliding.

- **The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways: . . .  
Proverbs 14:14a**

## THE FOUR STAGES OF CHRISTIAN GROWTH

### Lesson 2

### Baby Christian Stage

Just as human beings develop through various stages of life, so do Christians. Once a person has been born again their life starts anew. They must develop spiritually just as they once developed naturally. The New Testament uses very familiar terms to describe the growth of a Christian. The four stages of Christian growth are: babe in Christ, little child, young man, and father or mother in the LORD. We will cover the baby stage in this lesson.

Remember, just because you are born again does not mean you have grown any past your new birth experience.

#### **BABES IN CHRIST**

The baby stage of Christian development is a stage very often spoken of throughout the epistles. Once a Christian is born again, they have literally just begun a new life. They are newly born in the spirit and must develop in their spiritual walk just as a baby must develop a natural walk. The LORD chose to use this allegory to help us understand the spiritual reality of what it means to be a babe in Christ.

- **As newborn babes, desire (*crave, lust*) the sincere (*guileless, pure*) milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:** **1 Peter 2:2**

The most critical key to growing up as a Christian is to crave and desire the Word of God. Without the Word, you cannot grow up. The more you eat the Word, the more you will grow.

#### **15 ATTRIBUTES OF BABY CHRISTIANS**

The New Testament gives us many verses describing the behavior of baby Christians. Babes in Christ parallel their natural counterpart very closely, hence the use of the allegory. Let us look at some Bible verses. Below are 15 attributes of baby Christians.

- **And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.** **1 Corinthians 3:1**

This passage reveals that a baby Christian must be treated differently. Some of the ways a baby Christian must be treated are:

1. **Baby talk**: Babies must be spoken to differently. Babies cannot understand the deep or responsible things of God.

- **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.** **1 Corinthians 3:2**

Just like a human baby, baby Christians require a different spiritual diet.

2. **Milk:** Milk is the simple teaching of the Gospel.
3. **Sensitive Tummy:** Babes cannot handle heavy teaching, instruction, or correction. They are fragile and must be handled accordingly. They must be held and constantly encouraged.

- **For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal and walk as men? 1 Corinthians 3:3**

This verse gives several qualities of a baby Christian:

4. **Carnal:** Carnal means, “to be governed by mere human nature, under the control of the animal appetites.” Natural babies are governed by what they feel and what their flesh wants. They cry when they’re cold, hot, wet, poopy, tired, hungry, alone, overcrowded, startled, and sometimes for no reason at all.
5. **Envious:** Babies are often full of rivalry and jealousy. Envy is baby behavior.
6. **Strife:** Contention is the aroma of a stinky diaper.
7. **Divisive:** This word means, “to rebel due to discontentment.” A baby Christian is easily discontented. When they are discontented, they scream like a little baby.
8. **Walk As Mere Men:** A baby Christian will often still act like a mere man. They have not had time to produce the fruit of the Spirit yet.

- **Not a novice (*neophyte, newly planted one*), lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. 1 Timothy 3:6**

This passage uses the term “novice” or “newly planted one.” That is a baby. This verse gives us three more qualities of a baby Christian.

9. **Pride:** Though we all must contend with pride, a baby Christian is ill-equipped to deal with it. This verse says it will lift him up for a demonic fall.
10. **Easily Condemned:** A baby Christian will often struggle with condemnation. A babe in Christ has yet to learn they are forgiven and therefore falls easily into condemnation.
11. **Roller Coaster Rider:** Notice the two-step action described in this verse: 1) lifted up, 2) falling into condemnation. Baby Christians may often be up and down, up and down. Happy today and sad tomorrow. Rollercoaster Christianity is an indicator of a lack of maturation. God wants us to go from glory to glory.

- **For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. Hebrews 5:12**

From this verse we gather another quality of a baby Christian:

**12. Ignorant:** Babies do not understand the first principles, or the basics, of Christianity. They have not had the time to study or be taught the vital truths.

- **For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.** Hebrews 5:13

**13. Unskilled:** They are unskillful in the Word of God. Babes have only begun to develop and therefore lack skills. Skill requires experience. Babes lack experience due to their new arrival into the Kingdom. Experience comes with time and practice. We must be skilled in the Word of God.

- **But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age (*mature*), even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.** Hebrew 5:14

This verse contrasts mature with immature saints. Again, babes cannot handle strong meat. So what helps us to handle strong meat?

**14. Unexercised:** Baby Christians are unexercised. They have not practiced the Word, either due to brand newness to the Kingdom or laziness and neglect.

**15. Undiscerning:** Babes are also very undiscerning. They cannot tell good doctrine from bad. A clean preacher from a dirty one. A scriptural worship song from one that is unscriptural. Just as a human baby cannot discern what to eat and not eat, what to touch and not touch, it is the same with a babe in Christ.

## OTHER OBSERVATIONS

Below is a list of other observations I have made as both a pastor and a father.

- Babies don't realize they are not the only ones in the world.
- Babies have no responsibilities.
- Babies think everything revolves around them.
- Babies do not control their mouth, e.g., noises, drooling, biting, etc.
- Babies require constant attention.
- Babies are very delicate.
- Babies are easily startled or hurt.
- Babies are always getting into things and making a mess.
- Babies take some time to recognize their home and their family.

The only characteristic of a babe we are permitted to retain is that of desiring “**the sincere (*guileless, pure*) milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby**” (1 Peter 2:2).

May we grow up and grow fast! Do not stay a babe in Christ any longer than necessary.

## THE FOUR STAGES OF CHRISTIAN GROWTH

### Lesson 3

### Little Child Stage

Every living thing grows: trees grow, bugs grow, and animals grow. Christians are to be no exception. Just as a normal human being passes through several stages of physical and mental maturation, so too will a normal Christian pass through similar stages as they develop and mature in Christ.

#### 11 ATTRIBUTES OF LITTLE CHILD STAGE CHRISTIANS

The following verses give us several characteristics we can expect to find in a little child. Notice the term “little child” or “children” is used in each verse. Let us use these verses to judge ourselves.

- **My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you, . . . <sup>20</sup>for I stand in doubt of you (*I am perplexed by you*).**  
**Galatians 4:19, 20b**

The Galatian Church had lost their identity in Christ and had returned to Jewish laws and customs. Paul had to pray for them to regain their Christian lifestyle, witness, and foundation. From these verses we see:

1. Little children are easily influenced by whomever they are around.
  2. Little children lose their true identity very easily.
  3. Little children do things that make mature Christians shake their head. “What are they thinking?”
- **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;**  
**Ephesians 4:14**

Paul listed the famous “Fivefold Ministry Offices” prior to this verse. He states that the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers are given to perfect and mature the saints. Without the influence and ministry of the fivefold ministers in a believer’s life, it will be impossible for a Christian to ever fully mature. This verse gives us several more behavioral traits of childish Christians.

4. Little children are tossed to and fro. The enemy easily ransacks them because they have yet to fully develop a deep foundation of faith.
5. Little children chase winds of doctrine and cannot discern truth from perversion because they lack strong doctrine. Doctrine is defined as a system of teaching you live your life by. Little children easily leave their foundation for new and shiny things, not right things, newer things.
6. Little children are easily carried away by deceivers and their cunning craftiness.

- **When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought (*reasoned*) as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.**  
**1 Corinthians 13:11**

The Bible clearly teaches us we must grow up. Grownups have one manner about them while little children have another manner about them. This verse lists three areas that will distinguish a child from an adult.

7. Speech: Little children speak in a different manner from mature Christians. Mature saints confess the Word. They have clean speech free from vulgarities and dirty jesting. Little children whine, complain, and hurt their lives with their mouths. Sometimes you must wash a little child's mouth out with fullers' soap (**Malachi 3:2**).
8. Understanding: Little children lack the spiritual understanding of a mature Christian. Little children see a rebuke as mean. They see tithing as a burden. They are still carnally minded in many areas. They have not yet learned to discern things spiritually.
9. Reasoning: Little children are immature in their reasoning. The thought process of a spiritual child lacks wisdom, truth, stability, and consistency.

To mature in Christ you must put away these three things: childish speech, childish understanding, and childish reasoning. Until you do so you will not advance much in Jesus.

- **Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.**  
**1 Corinthians 14:20**

This verse only reiterates the previous point: children understand things differently. The level and complexity at which they understand things is fine and acceptable so long as they are in a child development stage. However, if a 40-year-old man still requires a puppet show to learn, something's very wrong. The Hebrew believers were rebuked for not being mature enough to learn about Melchisedec (**Hebrews 5:10-11**). We are commanded to grow up in our understanding.

- **My little children . . . <sup>20</sup>For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.**  
**1 John 3:18a, 20**

We saw in the previous lesson that babes in Christ really struggle with condemnation. Even into little child stage, the believer is still dealing with this issue. This lets us know that one of the signs of deep maturity as a believer is the ability to overcome condemnation while embracing and obeying conviction.

10. Little children still deal with a condemning heart. A little child's heart is still learning to believe that they are forgiven.
- **Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.** **1 John 5:21**



This is the last verse of 1 John. It beautifully sums up what makes a child a child: immature and misplaced affections. Little children love one thing today and something else tomorrow. They love Jesus while at church and they love the world while they are in it. A little child must learn to be faithful to Jesus all the time, in every place, and in every scenario. Idolatry is spiritual adultery.

11. Little children struggle with idolatry. They love things they shouldn't. They chase things they shouldn't. And they have yet to learn the gravity of a life committed to Jesus Christ.

## **12 THINGS LITTLE CHILDREN FORGET**

Even in the natural, little children are very forgetful and must be reminded of many things. This is because they have not practiced them enough to make them a part of their lives. Mom and Dad must constantly remind them, and remind them, and even pick up the pieces behind them. Christians also go through this stage in their spiritual development. According to 1 John, there are many things a little child must be reminded of:

- **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:**  
**1 John 2:1**
  1. Remember to not sin. Little children are often tempted by the cookie jar.
  2. Remember Jesus is our advocate (defense lawyer). Little children have yet to fully grasp the truths of having an advocate pleading their case.
- **I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.**  
**1 John 2:12**
  3. Remember your sins are forgiven. Little children are good at magnifying the wrong they have done over the sacrifice that Jesus made.
- **Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.**  
**1 John 2:18**
  4. Remember it is the last time. Little children forget the time we live in.
  5. Remember there are antichrists. Little children are bad to trust everyone.
- **And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.**  
**1 John 2:28**
  6. Remember to abide in Him. Little children have short attention spans and so sometimes depart from Jesus to chase something new.



- **Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.** **1 John 3:7**
- 7. Remember, people want to deceive you and talk you into sinning. Little children must be encouraged to keep doing righteousness.
- **My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. <sup>19</sup>And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure (to induce one to believe by using words) our hearts before him.** **1 John 3:18-19**
- 8. Remember that love is an action, not a word. Little children must continue to be taught how to properly love.
- 9. Remember to speak to your heart when it wants to doubt. Little children have a heart that fails relatively easily.
- **Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.** **1 John 4:4**
- 10. Remember you are of God, not the world. Little children forget whose they are.
- 11. Remember you have overcome the world and its evil spirits. Little children don't realize the authority they walk in and forget that they are an overcomer.
- 12. Remember the Greater One lives in you. Little children don't fully understand the God who lives on the inside of them.

The only "little child" characteristic the New Testament allows us to maintain is childlike malice. The Greek word here for malice means *ill-will, wickedness, or evil*. **Howbeit in malice be ye children (1 Corinthians 14:20)**. Children are innocent and nearly devoid of ill-will and maliciousness. We must be like that!

Don't stay a child any longer than necessary!! Amen!!

## THE FOUR STAGES OF CHRISTIAN GROWTH

### Lesson 4

### Young Man Stage

As we have seen, God expects His children to grow and develop. We have already studied baby stage and little child stage and we have seen how they very closely mirror the natural developmental stages of life. This lesson will focus on the characteristics and qualities of a Christian who has developed into a young man or woman in Christ. Remember that these stages have no relation to one's natural age.

It is possible to be 65 years old and still be a baby Christian. Likewise, it is also possible for someone to be a 24-year-old and be in the young man stage in Christ and in that regard be more mature spiritually than the 65-year-old babe in Christ.

#### THE NATURAL ALLEGORY

As a child matures from adolescence into a young adult, certain levels of maturity and independence are achieved. A child approaching young adulthood no longer has to be reminded to care for himself. They have become somewhat self-sufficient in most of life's basics. Though there are many areas yet to be encountered, a child entering into adulthood has learned how to learn and how to apply their experience toward future successes. For example, the teenage/college student:

- Understands and maintains personal hygiene and dress.
- Understands and demonstrates proper behavioral protocol for most aspects of social life.
- Understands most of the natural world's dangers and corresponding safety precautions.
- Understands and obeys time and time constraints.
- Understands nutrition and can regulate their own diet.
- Understands and, hopefully, properly manages money.
- Has a much better grasp of their emotions, knows how to share, knows how to sacrifice, and knows how to cooperate.

Though there is much for a burgeoning young man to still learn, he has learned and practiced enough to not require an ever-watchful parental eye. He can be trusted to step out into life and yet find his way home again.

#### SPIRITUAL YOUNG MEN/WOMEN

It should be noted that there are far fewer verses dealing with "young men" than there are addressing babes and little children. This may be because fewer Christians develop into young men than remain babes and little children. Even fewer scriptures address fathers in the faith. Below we will discover what a young man in Christ looks and acts like. For simplicity sake, we will use the term *young man* for both male and female.

## **EIGHT ATTRIBUTES OF YOUNG MEN IN CHRIST**

Let us now look at several biblical traits commonly found in Christians who have entered the young man/woman stage of Christian development.

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

**I John 2:13b**

- **I have written unto you, young men, . . . ye have overcome the wicked one.**

**I John 2:14c**

1. Young men know how to walk in victory. This trait is mentioned twice in two verses, back to back. This is one of the strongest indicators of a maturing saint: they are able to stand on their own. They live lives defined by victories, not attempted victories. They have overcome condemnation. They have overcome sinful habits. They have overcome lying ploys. They live as overcomers, not as coming overs. Overcomers have overcome. Coming overs are still coming over.

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

**1 John 2:14c**

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

**Proverbs 20:29**

2. Young men have a spiritual strength about them. Their faith has grown through hearing the Word, and experience has been gained by acting on the Word. They are now somewhat seasoned in the things of God. They can stand on their own. They can walk with God on their own. They can run their race on their own. They no longer need a cheerleader to be motivated.

- **I have written unto you, young men, . . . because . . . the word of God abideth in you,**

**1 John 2:14c**

3. Young men aren't just hearing and hearing the Word; they have allowed it to take root within them. Young men are students of the Word and have a grasp of the scripture that will only tighten with time. They mustn't always be reminded of the Word. They remind themselves of the Word. They encourage themselves in the Word. They are self-disciplined. They live in the Word. It abides in them.

- **Brethren, be not children in understanding; howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.**

**1 Corinthians 14:20**

4. Young men are not defined by ignorance. They have a biblical understanding of spiritual things and they act on that understanding. Their life is defined by what they understand from the Word and not by how they feel. Their understanding can be described as spiritual and not carnal.

- **But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use (*habit, a power acquired by practice, custom, and use*) have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. Hebrews 5:14**
5. Young men have made a custom of exercising their senses in conjunction with the Word of God and are working to produce a strong sense of discernment in their life. They are, therefore, not easily bamboozled by liars, connivers, false ministers, antichrists, or the like. They graduated from only hearing the Word of God to actually living a life of acting on the Word. The term “full age” means perfect and fully mature. This is not a young man in Christ, this is a Father, but we can see that young men are headed down this road.
  6. Young men discern both good and evil. Childish Christians are really good at only distinguishing blatant evil and calling attention to it. This is often likened unto tattle telling. Young men see the good and commend it, and they see the evil and they condemn it. Young men have begun to distinguish both good and evil in their own lives. Childish Christians can only see the good in their lives, or perhaps, only the bad (**Proverbs 20:6**).
  7. Young men live on meat. The New Testament speaks of meat (**John 4:34; 1 Corinthians 3:2**) and then strong meat (**Hebrews 5:14**). Young men are adept with meat and are in the process of developing strong meat in their lives. Young men still crave the milk of the Word to chase the meat down with.
- **And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: Acts 2:17**
8. Though this verse is speaking of supernatural visions and trances, we can also apply it to life vision. Young men have a vision for their life that exceeds beyond today and themselves. A mature vision glorifies God and seeks to reach as many people as possible. Children only see themselves and immediate gratification. Young men are seeing things much further off into the future and are living today in such a way as to ensure they obtain the vision.

### **TRANSITIONAL GROWTH**

As with any and all healthy growth, stages are not arrived at overnight, instantaneously, or all at once. A young man in Christ is developing into this stage, striving to be a father in the faith while still cleaning up little child messes. These stages are not achieved all at once. They are grown into.

Be encouraged: even the Apostles demonstrated childish behavior at times, whether it was Paul’s stubbornness to return to Jerusalem, Peter’s bigotry against the Gentiles and fear of the Jews, or Barnabas’ bias toward his nephew John Mark that produced a strong contention between him and Paul. We are all still growing. Be sure you never stop!!

## THE FOUR STAGES OF CHRISTIAN GROWTH

### Lesson 5

### Father/Mother Stage

The final stage of Christian development is father or mother stage. This final stage should be an aspiration for every believer. Sadly, very few Christians will reach this stage due to laziness, selfishness, and burnout. This stage can only be obtained if you hold your faith steadfast until the end. However, many Christians cool off and become less active in the Kingdom the older they become.

The Bible speaks of both fathers and mothers. We should strive to fulfill the tremendously needful role of spiritual fathers and mothers. For simplicity sake, we will only use the term *father*.

#### 18 CHARACTERISTICS OF FATHERS

- **I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning.** **1 John 2:13a, 14a**
  
- 1. Fathers have walked with God a long time. It is possible in this verse that John is speaking to believers who had walked with Jesus Christ while He was on the earth. Therefore, they had known Jesus much longer than the other two groups he writes to: the young men, and the little children. Regardless, he addresses the fathers twice in two verses and mentions that they have “known him that is from the beginning.” Fathers get to be fathers by walking with Jesus Christ and never looking back.
  
- **But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use (*habit, custom*) have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.** **Hebrews 5:14**
  
- 2. Fathers diet on strong meat. This is not only the doing of the Word, but the skilled and difficult doing of the Word. It is the doing of the Word for both good situations and bad situations.
- 3. Fathers have a habit and custom of using the Word to try and test situations and thereby know good and evil.
- 4. Fathers can discern good and evil. Immature believers often proclaim only their good and everyone else’s evil.
  
- **The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; <sup>4</sup>That they may teach the young women . . .** **Titus 2:3-4a**
  
- 5. Mothers are always looking to impart into younger daughters. They have an

eagerness to help and teach. A true mother is not selfish or competitive. She isn't worried about herself or her problems. She is looking to invest in the younger generation of women because she has something to invest. She has mastered what it means to be a godly woman.

- **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.**  
**<sup>16</sup>Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me. 1 Corinthians 4:15-16**
- 6. You will not have many fathers in your Christian walk, nor should you. A father in the faith should be much greater and knowledgeable than you in the things of God. They should be someone you can trust more than yourself.
- 7. Fathers produce converts to Jesus Christ, but they don't stop there. Fathers adopt converts to be disciples and in doing so, become spiritual mentors to them, training them up in the things of God.
- 8. Fathers live a life worthy of emulation. It is safe to follow a father in the faith as they follow the LORD (**1 Corinthians 11:1**). Their life has become a living epistle worth reading and ordering your life by.
- **Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.**  
**2 Corinthians 11:28**
- 9. Fathers feel the burden of the church. Just as a natural dad feels and carries the burden of a natural household with all of its bills, maintenance, structure, protection, and management, a spiritual Father knows the burden of the body of believers. While the children haven't a clue, the father works hard to keep it that way.
- **My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you.**  
**<sup>20</sup>I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you.**  
**Galatians 4:19-20**
- 10. Fathers work hard to keep their converts looking like Jesus Christ, both through prayer and discipleship. A father can tell when one of his sons or daughters is changing back into the world's image.
- 11. Fathers want to be with their children when things aren't going well to check on them, encourage them, or even rebuke them. However, not all children want this kind of attention. Some children resist this and must be left to their own devices.
- **But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children:**  
**<sup>8</sup>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.**  
**1 Thessalonians 2:7-8**



12. Fathers possess a tenderness and gentleness lacked by developing believers. They have a true father's love for children. They are not rude, bossy, or arrogant. They truly see their converts as children they are responsible for.
  13. Fathers imprint and impart their own soul and personality on the believers they are around. Just as a natural child takes on the personality of their parents, a spiritual child will begin to look and act like their father or mother in the faith. This indicates a deep level of commitment. Fly-by-night preachers will not be able to impart their souls into the saints.
- **Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burdensome to you: for I seek not yours, but you: for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children. <sup>15</sup>And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved.**  
**2 Corinthians 12:14-15**
14. Fathers are not spiritual or natural burdens. They don't make messes; they clean them up. They are not a burden; they relieve burdens.
  15. Fathers gladly spend for their disciples. They spend their time, resources, energies, and life. In that regard, everything they do is focused around the believers.
  16. Fathers are not interested in money. They are interested in furthering the believer. They have not made the gospel about money but about souls. Any father who trades their children for money is a pimp and is guilty of spiritual prostitution.
  17. Fathers lay up for their children. Fathers are preparing for their eventual departure from this earth and are always setting things in order for their children. This can include getting a ministry debt free, training up a successor, leaving final orders, and praying for the continued success once the parent has departed.
- **I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.**  
**3 John 1:4**
18. Fathers have no greater joy but to hear that their sons and daughters are living a life well pleasing to the real Father, the LIVING GOD. This causes the heart of a spiritual father to smile.

With so many characteristics to aspire to, it is no wonder that few believers reach this echelon of Christian maturity. May we strive and aspire all the same. What else have we to do?



## As intentional disciple-makers, it is important for us to evaluate where our disciples are on their spiritual journey so that we can determine what they need from us.

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### Stage 1:

In the first stage, a person is **spiritually dead**, meaning that he or she has not been born again. This stage is characterized by the word *unbelief*. Paul tells us in Ephesians 2:1 that we were all dead in our trespasses and sins. Without Christ, we are separated from God, who is life, so when we are separated from Him, we will eventually die a physical death. But this is not all. Without Christ, we are dead spiritually as well. Revelation 20:14 speaks of the second death, which will be experienced by all who enter eternity without receiving Christ. When we accept the good news – salvation through Christ – we are saved. At the moment of salvation, we are **born again**. (John 3:3-5)

### Stage 2:

Every new Christian starts out as a **spiritual infant**. As new believers, they are excited and eager to learn. They know something has changed, and they may even experience a spiritual high, which is great. Their unsaved friends often notice the difference, and infants are quick to announce their new faith to whoever will listen. However, in many ways, they tend to make messes. They are oblivious to what this new world is all about. They are characterized by the word *ignorance*. They might know many things, but they are ignorant of the rules in their **new spiritual life**.

### Stage 3:

As they grow, spiritual infants move into the **spiritual child** stage of development. At this point, they understand the basic language of faith. They can be excited about their faith, and in many ways, they are innocent and cute. However, they still act childishly and are often *rebellious* and *self-centered* in many ways. Spiritual children tend to do what they should only when they are rewarded or threatened with some kind of punishment. They may do the right thing, but it's usually to avoid an outcome they dislike or to get something they want.

### Stage 4:

As spiritual children grow up, they mature into the spiritual **young adult** stage. At this stage, they have grown tremendously from where they started. They are eager to serve, think independently, and look much like adults; however, they still have much to learn about responsibility and about how to care for the spiritual needs of others. They are zealous for God and can be characterized as being "*God-focused*" and "*other-centered*." They are becoming intentional or **strategic** about sharing their faith and will see people converted, but they are not yet able to reproduce disciples who can make disciples. They serve intentionally but don't make disciples intentionally. They want their independence, and in some cases, they should have it, but they need continued **coaching/parenting**.

### Stage 5:

In the final stage of spiritual development, we become spiritually mature enough to reproduce disciples – we become spiritual **parents**. I am purposely using the term parent here rather than the word adult. As Christians, we are called to make disciples – to do our part to reproduce our faith in another. Adults are **able** to reproduce, but that does not mean they **are** reproducing. I know many Christians who have the ability to be spiritual parents but don't make it a priority.

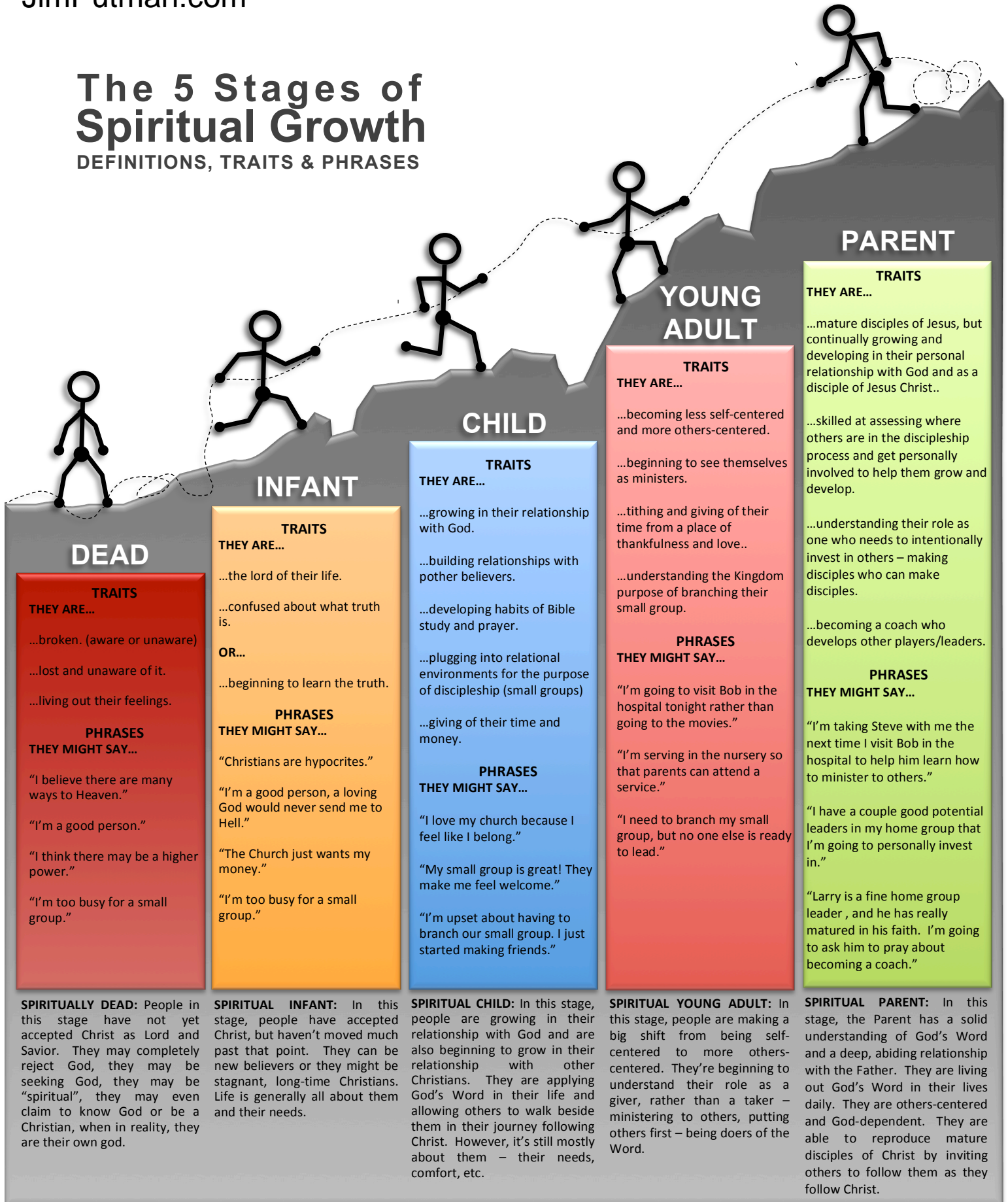
Though they would like to call themselves mature, I would say that they are not. Why? Because they have not *prioritized* their lives around the mission of Christ, which is to make disciples. Just as the human race continues because we physically reproduce, so Christianity continues on this planet because Christians spiritually reproduce, or make disciples.

So there you have the **5 stages of the spiritual growth of a disciple**. I want to emphasize that this assessment is **not** a way of designating one believer as more valuable than another. It's very important that disciple-makers and disciples understand the difference between *value* and *usefulness*. While a mature Christian is more useful to the purpose of the Lord and the church than a spiritual infant or child, he or she is not more valuable.

Determining someone's level of spiritual development is done **purely** for the sake of knowing where how and where to lead them in their journey as a disciple. It is not to be used as a weapon to judge, but a **tool** to help you disciple.

# The 5 Stages of Spiritual Growth

DEFINITIONS, TRAITS & PHRASES



## DEAD

**TRAITS THEY ARE...**

- ...broken. (aware or unaware)
- ...lost and unaware of it.
- ...living out their feelings.

**PHRASES THEY MIGHT SAY...**

- "I believe there are many ways to Heaven."
- "I'm a good person."
- "I think there may be a higher power."
- "I'm too busy for a small group."

**SPIRITUALLY DEAD:** People in this stage have not yet accepted Christ as Lord and Savior. They may completely reject God, they may be seeking God, they may be "spiritual", they may even claim to know God or be a Christian, when in reality, they are their own god.

## INFANT

**TRAITS THEY ARE...**

- ...the lord of their life.
- ...confused about what truth is.

**OR...**

- ...beginning to learn the truth.

**PHRASES THEY MIGHT SAY...**

- "Christians are hypocrites."
- "I'm a good person, a loving God would never send me to Hell."
- "The Church just wants my money."
- "I'm too busy for a small group."

**SPIRITUAL INFANT:** In this stage, people have accepted Christ, but haven't moved much past that point. They can be new believers or they might be stagnant, long-time Christians. Life is generally all about them and their needs.

## CHILD

**TRAITS THEY ARE...**

- ...growing in their relationship with God.
- ...building relationships with other believers.
- ...developing habits of Bible study and prayer.
- ...plugging into relational environments for the purpose of discipleship (small groups)
- ...giving of their time and money.

**PHRASES THEY MIGHT SAY...**

- "I love my church because I feel like I belong."
- "My small group is great! They make me feel welcome."
- "I'm upset about having to branch our small group. I just started making friends."

**SPIRITUAL CHILD:** In this stage, people are growing in their relationship with God and are also beginning to grow in their relationship with other Christians. They are applying God's Word in their life and allowing others to walk beside them in their journey following Christ. However, it's still mostly about them - their needs, comfort, etc.

## YOUNG ADULT

**TRAITS THEY ARE...**

- ...becoming less self-centered and more others-centered.
- ...beginning to see themselves as ministers.
- ...tithing and giving of their time from a place of thankfulness and love..
- ...understanding the Kingdom purpose of branching their small group.

**PHRASES THEY MIGHT SAY...**

- "I'm going to visit Bob in the hospital tonight rather than going to the movies."
- "I'm serving in the nursery so that parents can attend a service."
- "I need to branch my small group, but no one else is ready to lead."

**SPIRITUAL YOUNG ADULT:** In this stage, people are making a big shift from being self-centered to more others-centered. They're beginning to understand their role as a giver, rather than a taker - ministering to others, putting others first - being doers of the Word.

## PARENT

**TRAITS THEY ARE...**

- ...mature disciples of Jesus, but continually growing and developing in their personal relationship with God and as a disciple of Jesus Christ..
- ...skilled at assessing where others are in the discipleship process and get personally involved to help them grow and develop.
- ...understanding their role as one who needs to intentionally invest in others - making disciples who can make disciples.
- ...becoming a coach who develops other players/leaders.

**PHRASES THEY MIGHT SAY...**

- "I'm taking Steve with me the next time I visit Bob in the hospital to help him learn how to minister to others."
- "I have a couple good potential leaders in my home group that I'm going to personally invest in."
- "Larry is a fine home group leader, and he has really matured in his faith. I'm going to ask him to pray about becoming a coach."

**SPIRITUAL PARENT:** In this stage, the Parent has a solid understanding of God's Word and a deep, abiding relationship with the Father. They are living out God's Word in their lives daily. They are others-centered and God-dependent. They are able to reproduce mature disciples of Christ by inviting others to follow them as they follow Christ.