

Stages of Spiritual Growth

I hope your experience of the COVID-19 lockdown, aka “Family Retreat”, has continued to yield positive results. Indeed, that which the enemy intended for evil, God is using for His glory. The Lord who began His good work in you is surely faithful to bring it to a marvellous completion (Philippians 1:6).

Just want to share with you a simple 5-step gauge to keep track of your family’s spiritual journey.

Key Stages of Spiritual Growth

Stage 1: Seeker

The person at this stage is not born again (John 3:3). They are spiritually dead in trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1). They are separated from God and will experience eternal death unless they believe in Jesus Christ for salvation (John 3:16-18; 1 Peter 1:3; 1 John 5:12).

This person is very much seeking answers to the basic questions of life: Why am I here? Is there life after death? If there is God, why is the world so indiscriminately chaotic with bad things happening to good people?

The greatest need of a spiritually dead person is an explanation of the gospel message with an invitation to receive Christ. They need healthy relationship with a true believer with a lifestyle that exhibits the real Jesus (Mark 16:15-16; Matthew 5:16; Matthew 28:18-20).

Stage 2: Believer

A Seeker (unbeliever) receives Jesus Christ and is born again! As a new born baby into the family of God, every believer starts their spiritual journey as spiritual infants / babies. (1 Peter 2:2; 1 Corinthians 3:1).

New born babies know that they are in a new state of life when they are born, and they usually announce their presence in unmistakable ways. Spiritual infants are aware of changes in their life and are often eager to tell others about it. However, they tend to stumble a lot and make messes. They may know many things in different areas of life and work, but they are ignorant of how to live out this new life as a follower of Christ.

The spiritual infant needs individual attention from a mature believer to explain the basic truths found in the Word of God, and model the habits of a growing believer.

Stage 3: Learner

The spiritual child. (1 John 2:12; 1 Corinthians 13:11). Jim Putman in his book Real Life Discipleship says of this stage: “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-centred 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.”

Key areas of need of a spiritual child for healthy spiritual growth are instruction and modelling as to how to feed themselves on healthy spiritual diets, who they are in Christ and who Christ is in them (Colossians 1:27), how to have fellowship with Christ and other believers, and appropriate expectations concerning fellow believers.

Stage 4: Server

Nurtured spiritual children (Learner) will mature into spiritual young adults (1 Peter 2:2; 1 John 2:13). The believer at this stage has a fair grasp of God’s Word and is

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action/service-oriented, zealous, God-centred, and mission-minded, but they don't often think in terms of making disciples.

They have a great desire to serve, help, bless, and make their life count. They want to make an impact and be used.

Their needs include a place to learn to serve, a spiritual parent who will help them make sense of ministry experiences, ongoing relationships that offer encouragement and accountability, guidance regarding appropriate expectations of people they will serve, and help in identifying their gifts and skills for ministry.

Stage 5: Leader

A stage characteristic of spiritual maturity evidenced with ability to reproduce disciples – truly become spiritual parents (1 Corinthians 4:15-17; 1 Corinthians 11:1; 1 Thessalonians 2:11; Hebrews 6:12; 1 John 2:13-14).

While the spiritual parent is primarily occupied with helping others grow from spiritual infancy to spiritual parenthood, the spiritual young adult (Stage 4) simply thinks of blessing others without any consideration of helping to full spiritual maturity.

Spiritual parents are strategic and intentional in leading people to Christ or helping new believers grow to maturity. They don't easily dismiss anyone one under their care. They willingly expose themselves to all the pangs and joys of parenting. They are genuine disciple makers!

Spiritual parents need ongoing relationship with co-labourers, a church family, and encouragement (Proverbs 27:17; Hebrews 10:25).

Questions to ponder:

What stage do you see yourself and your family members right now?

What do you need in your home that can help you and your children to grow to the next stage?

What are the hindrances to your growth right now?

What help do you need to create a dynamic growth environment in your home?

How can you and your local church strategically and intentionally help believers grow to maturity?

How can our Ministry help you?

God bless you as you continue to stand with us in building strong families and raising godly children.

Chuks Aniereobi,
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