

6 General Levels of Spiritual Growth

- **Spiritually Dead:** Unbelief in Jesus as Savior, forgiver, and giver of life.

Characterized by:

- Antagonism toward Jesus
- Indifference toward Jesus
- Questions what Jesus did & who He is
- Specific denial of Jesus' love and forgiveness

- **Spiritual Infant:** Believer in Jesus, but is functionally ignorant of *how* to live like Christ.

Characterized by:

- Sinful acts (language, perversion, sexual conduct, etc) because they do not know or at least realize that it is wrong
- Makes messes between them and others without realizing it is wrong at the time
- Very little understanding of who God is
- Views Christianity in terms of "not going to hell" instead of "living as Christ did"
- Very judgmental toward others, but ignores his or her own sin.

- **Spiritual Child:** Sincere, open relationship with Jesus, but lives self-centered life.

Characterized by:

- Reward-based Christianity - frequently asks:
 - "What will I get out of this?"
 - "Will people see me?"
 - "Will others think good of me?"
- Likes to share Christ or do good *for a reward*.
- Frequently life is different based on who is around - changes actions based on surroundings - different at church vs not at church (work, school, with friends, etc)
- Very judgmental toward others
- Judges own actions based on how others will perceive them

- **Spiritual Teen:** Sincere relationship with Christ; desires to do right thing even without reward, but normally chooses "self" over "others."

Characterized by:

- Desire to grow
- Sometimes chooses others' needs instead of own.
- Normally chooses to do something because it is good for "self"
- Shares Jesus, self-motivated to be like Him (doesn't need specific reward).
- Thoughts and beliefs are handed to them, instead of intentionally developing their own thoughts and understandings of God, godliness, and decision making
- Realizes own sin & failings
- Somewhat broken over own sin, but will still shift "sin focus" toward others, if possible.
- Bases activity, involvement, and decisions mostly on what they will personally *get* instead of what they can *give* to others.

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- **Spiritual Adult:** Sincere, growing faith in Christ - generally talks and acts like Christ, but is only one person wide (isn't actively seeking to disciple or develop others).

Characterized by:

- Service to others
 - Independent thinking
 - Puts significant time into spiritual growth
 - Intentionally shares Christ with others
 - Ready to make disciples of Christ, but *not actually doing it* (views others' growth as "their responsibility" which I don't need to help with).
 - Broken over sin in his or her own life
 - Less judgmental because there is a deep realization of personal sin
- **Spiritual Parent:** Sincere, growing faith in Christ - generally talks and acts like Christ, and spends intentional time helping others become like Christ as well. There is not a whole lot of difference between the Parent and the Adult stages, other than the Parent takes personal growth and seeks to intentionally extend that growth to another person.

Characterized by:

- Intentionally discipling others to know Christ
- Discipleship as a priority in life.
- Serves others as a way to help them become like Christ
- Views others' growth as "our responsibility" (both "me" and "them")
- Does not ignore own growth or think that they have matured enough and have no more steps to take
- Broken over sin in *both* his or her own life and in the life of those around them – especially in their disciple