

GROWTH

Growth refers to our level of spiritual maturity. We are all called to grow toward maturity in Christ. Our ability to serve in certain capacities can be limited by our spiritual maturity. A higher level of spiritual maturity is always a blessing to ourselves, our families, and those we lead. Here are a few things to keep in mind as you think about your growth.

God created you to Grow.

When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. 1 Corinthians 13:11

God created you to grow into a mature disciple of Jesus. He desires a close and intimate relationship with you. He wants to transform your desire, character, and priorities. He ultimately wants you to become like Jesus and be His representative to the world.

In spiritual growth, there is my part and God's part.

I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. 1 Corinthians 3:6

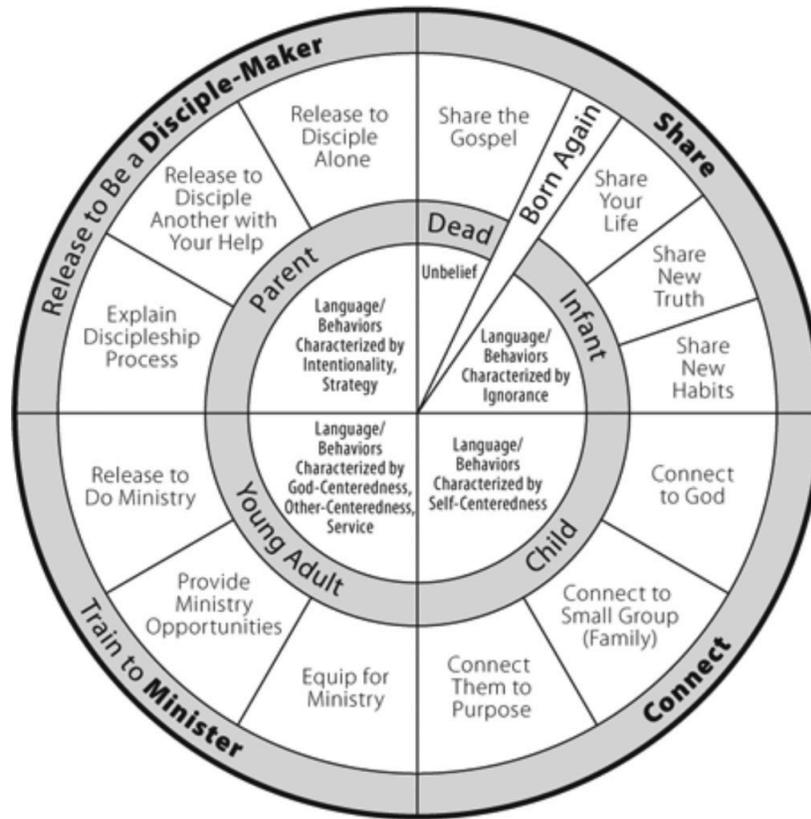
There are certain things only God can do (such as call us to Himself) related to our spiritual growth. There are other things related to our spiritual growth He could do, but chooses not to. Instead, these are things He calls us to do (such as prayer and scripture reading). God gives us a large part to play in our spiritual growth. How we choose to respond to His invitation to know Him more deeply will play a large part in our spiritual maturity.

There is a tension between comfort and growth.

Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God. Hebrews 6:1

Most of us sense a genuine struggle between the desire to grow and become the spiritually mature person God is calling us toward versus the desire to do what is comfortable, convenient, and secure. This is why it's so hard to change even when we know the change will be good for us. Our spiritual growth takes intentionality and discipline.

Willow Creek Community Church and the Gallup Organization completed a large scale study and found that Christians tend to fall into one of four distinct phases of discipleship. They also discovered a correlation between certain spiritual practices and the movement between various phases of growth. Jim Putnam and others at Real Life Discipleship took the information and created a discipleship model based on their research. Their model describes the common traits associated with each phase and what is needed at each phase of discipleship.



[Adapted from Putman, J., Willis, A. T., Jr., Guindon, B., & Krause, B. (2010). *Real-Life Discipleship Training Manual: Equipping Disciples Who Make Disciples* (pp. 111–114). Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress.)

Where would I say I am on the Spiritual Growth Continuum?

What would be different in my life if I had a deeper relationship with God?

What would help me most in moving forward in my relationship with God?

What will I commit to doing to ensure spiritual growth is an intentional and consistent part of my life?

What are my next steps to grow in my capacity to love God with everything I have and love my neighbor as myself?