

The Stages of Spiritual Growth

1 John 2:12-14

1 John 2:12–14 (ESV)

¹² I am writing to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven for his name's sake. 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. I write to you, children, because you know the Father. ¹⁴ 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 abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.

1 Corinthians 3:1–2 (ESV)

¹But I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. ² I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. And even now you are not yet ready,

Hebrews 5:11–6:1 (ESV)

¹¹ About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. ¹² For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, ¹³ for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. ¹⁴ But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil. ^{6:1} Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,

Principles of Spiritual Growth

1. Spiritual growth is the development of your relationship with a person
2. Spiritual growth is expected
3. Spiritual growth does not happen apart from Christ or the Word
4. Spiritual growth occurs over time
5. Spiritual growth can be forward, backward, or plateaued (Galatians 4:9-11)
6. Spiritual growth is consistently opposed by Satanic forces
7. Spiritual growth is the will of God but is our responsibility

The Stages of Spiritual Growth

	Child	Youth	Adult
Characteristic	Forgiveness	Strength	Knowledge
Activity	Salvation	Abiding	Fellowship
Task	Learn the fundamentals	Know the Word Resist temptation	Enjoy the relationship
Diet	Milk	Solid food	
Level of understanding	Elementary truth	Theology	
Skill development	Slow to learn	Disciplined practice	
Role	Learner		Teacher

The Stages of Spiritual Growth are:

Predictable – they follow a general path towards godliness

For all people – they are not specific to any nation or age or gender or group, but for all of us

Purposeful – there is something essential in each one

Progressive – each one brings us to a higher level of godliness

Perceivable – we can know where we are in the process, and we can ascertain where others are as well

Profitable – knowing where we are makes it easier to get where we are going

Personal – we all walk the same path, but we walk it in the context of our lives and personalities

Possible – if God laid it out for us, it must mean that we can achieve it