



Before you can take your next step as a Christian, you need to know where you are, because the practices that spark new growth change as people mature. In other words, certain practices and activities are more catalytic to growth at each stage of the journey toward Christlikeness.

As you read about the four stages of spiritual growth below, keep in mind that no stage is 'better' than another, any more than being 50 years old is better than being 15. What is important is that we are *moving toward, or even better pursuing*, Christlikeness. Jesus is present and at work throughout our spiritual journey, so resist comparing yourself, favorably or unfavorably, to others.

Spiritual Seekers – *“I believe in spirituality, but I am not sure about the Christian God and Jesus. My faith is not a significant part of my life.”*

Key Belief: I have no problem separating the sacred and the secular life
Key Question: What difference does Jesus make?

Believers in Jesus -- *“I believe in God and Jesus as mentor, and I’m working on what it means to get to know Him.”*

Key Belief: Knowing about Jesus is the same as following Jesus
Key Question: Will I risk submitting my life to Jesus?

Followers of Jesus -- *“I feel close to Christ and depend on Him daily for guidance. In Christ, I have found my True North.”*

Key Belief: Following Jesus is a personal intimate experience.
Key Question: How do I experience more of Jesus every day of my life?

Companions of Jesus -- *“My relationship with Jesus is the most important relationship in my life. It influences everything I do.”*

Key Belief: there is no division between the sacred and the secular.
Key Question: What can I do to help others experience more of Jesus?

Cultivate

to improve and prepare, to nurture, foster, to make friends

▶ Tomorrow’s Joy is linked to today’s **CHOICES**

“I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown” v24

The only limit to our realization of tomorrow will be our doubts of today.”

FD Roosevelt

▶ Everyone has far more than they **REALIZE**

“God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.” 2 Cor9:8

When was the last time being a Christian changed your decision?

▶ The more of your **FAITH** you use, the more **FAITH** you will have to use.

“Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness.” 2 Corinthians 9:10-11

Standing Tall

Experience – *Never waste a good failure.* (See 2 Corinthians 1:4)

Spiritual Gifts – *Experience comes from trying* (See 1 Corinthians 14:12)

Passions – *an internal fire that won’t let you give up*

Matthew 25:14-30

¹⁴ “Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them. ¹⁵ To one he gave five bags of gold, to another two bags, and to another one bag, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. ¹⁶ The man who had received five bags of gold went at once and put his money to work and gained five bags more. ¹⁷ So also, the one with two bags of gold gained two more. ¹⁸ But the man who had received one bag went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money.

¹⁹ “After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. ²⁰ The man who had received five bags of gold brought the other five. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with five bags of gold. See, I have gained five more.’

²¹ “His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’

²² “The man with two bags of gold also came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with two bags of gold; see, I have gained two more.’

²³ “His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’

²⁴ “Then the man who had received one bag of gold came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. ²⁵ So I was afraid and went out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.’

²⁶ “His master replied, ‘You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? ²⁷ Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.

²⁸ ““So take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags. ²⁹ For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken

from them. ³⁰ And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

Give God...

The First **Day of Every Week**

The First **Part of Every Day**

The First **Portion of My Income**

The First **Consideration in Every Decision**

cul-ti-vate - to improve and prepare, to nurture, foster, to make friends

1.

a. To improve and prepare (land), as by plowing or fertilizing, for raising crops; till.

b. To loosen or dig soil around (growing plants).

2. To grow or tend (a plant or crop).

3. To promote the growth of (a biological culture).

4. To nurture; foster. See Synonyms at nurture.

5. To form and refine, as by education.

6. To seek the acquaintance or goodwill of; make friends with.