

Testing Yourself: How Old Are You?

Read: Hebrews 5:12-6:2

If the last three previous points apply to you, you are still a spiritual child.

- Struggle with the flesh
- Ignorant of the deeper truths of God's word and the tactics of the Evil One
- Exercise their faith for their own benefit.

How would you evaluate yourself on these three? Ask someone who knows you to give you their opinion.

If you are not studying God's Word, or applying its principles, you are still a spiritual child.

The first step to knowing God and growing in the knowledge of God is to know and apply His Word. How do you evaluate yourself in this area?

If you are not concerned about your own spiritual condition or growth, you are still a spiritual child.

Write a short list of the things that occupied your mind the most today. At what point did God's purpose, plan, or principles for your life occupy your attention?

A.C.T.

A – Action Point

What will I do in light of what I have learned?

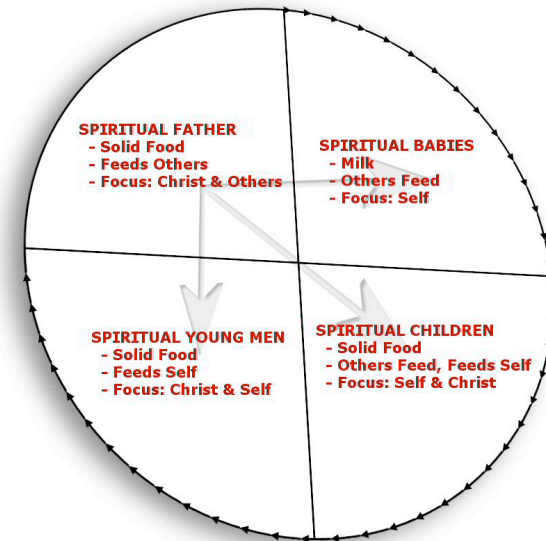
C – Commune (prayer)

What will I commit to God and ask Him for to help me put what I have learned into action?

T – Tell Others

What kinds of things can I say or do to others to demonstrate the biblical truth I have learned?

The Stages of Spiritual Growth: Spiritual Children



Just as every person grows from physical childhood to maturity, so too those who come to know Jesus Christ must grow from spiritual immaturity to spiritual maturity.

Just as natural growth requires food, exercise, and the application of practical knowledge, so too spiritual growth requires spiritual food, the exercise of our faith, and the application of God's Word in our lives.

Many Christians do not understand why spiritual growth is important. They have an attitude that they "prayed to receive Christ," and now they are "in the Kingdom." They think they are done. Nothing could be further from the truth.

This is the first of five studies that will help you understand the Stages of Spiritual Growth, and how you go from being a spiritual child, to a spiritual young man or woman, and ultimately a spiritual mother or father.

The Purpose of Spiritual Growth

Read: I John 2:12-14

To Make Us Strong

(Ephesians 4:14-15)

Just as a child grows up to learn about how the world works, and how to live in such a way that the world does not overcome him, so too spiritual growth is necessary if the Christian is to become strong in the things of God. Look carefully at the passage above, what kinds of traits are necessary in order to grow spiritually. How would apply this equation: Biblical Knowledge + Applied Love = Spiritual Growth, to the passage?

To Make Us Effective and Useful

(I Corinthians 13:11, 14:20)

Childhood is a precious time but imagine a family that had a child that never grew up, but always remained a baby. After a while the cuteness and adorableness that accompanies a newborn would disappear, giving way to despair. What kinds of childish things does God want us to do away with?

To Make Us Just Like Jesus Christ

(Romans 8:28-29, Colossians 3:8-14)

If there is a single passage in the Bible that describes God's plan for us it is this one. Just as many parents desire to pass on their values and heritage to their children, so too good desires to pass on His character traits to us. Read the above passage again. What character traits of God does He want us to grow into?

Discuss or Write your personal reflections:

- 1.) Children who are growing think about what they want to do with their lives in the future. What do you want to do with your life for Christ?
- 2.) Children of loving parents often want to emulate them when they get older. How can your life emulate the character of God?

The Traits of a Spiritual Child

Read: I John 2:12-14

Their sins have been forgiven

(I John 2:12-13)

They are just coming to know God

(I John 2:12)

The word "know" in this passage means, "Coming to know" God. In other words, the new Christian has come to know God, but does not yet know much about His character. He does not yet know Him intimately. What are the character traits of an intimate relationship?

They have overcome the world

(I John 2:17 & 5:3-5)

This passage is very clear, if you have received Jesus Christ, you have already overcome the world. What are the characteristics of the world that you have overcome?

They still struggle with the flesh

(I Corinthians 3:2-3)

The "flesh" means our sinful human nature. We all have a propensity to sin – it is part of our natural human desire. What kinds of sin does this passage encourage us against? Define these traits in your own words.

The are ignorant of the deeper truths of God's Word and the tactics of the Evil One

(Hebrews 5:14, 6:1-2)

Notice what the writer says are the "elementary" things. List them; put them into your own words. Are there any that you think are not "elementary" but advanced?

They exercise their faith for their own benefit

(I Corinthians 3:2-3)

The new Christian's focus is often: MY salvation, MY walk with God, MY spiritual life, etc. Read the passage again. What can a focus on self, lead too?

