

Stages of Faith from a Biblical Perspective

If we think of the Christian life as a journey, we can identify a number of stages of growth we need to reach en route to spiritual maturity. These stages of faith do not necessarily coincide with a person's chronological age.

1. The first stage of faith is **SALVATION** (child). We all begin our journey in the same place- spiritually dead and uninterested in what matters to God (Ephesians 2:1-2). There is only one way to receive spiritual life- by grace alone, through faith alone in Christ alone. Jesus took our place and bore God's judgment for our sins. He did so that we might become spiritually alive. At salvation the Holy Spirit creates in us a desire to know God better. As we learn more about our triune God, our faith will deepen and our heart will swell with thanksgiving. Gratitude will lead us to the next stage on our journey.
2. The second stage of faith is **SERVING** God (adolescence). As we grown we will desire to give something back to God in appreciation for His generosity toward us. Rather than deciding what **we** want to do, we ask the Lord what **HIS** plans are and how we can join Him (Ephesians 2:10). As God's teenage children, we are to listen attentively for His call and focus our minds and hearts on obeying. Over time, the Holy Spirit will bring forth "fruit" in us (Galatians 5:22-23) and draw us into service with other believers. Also by understanding our spiritual gifts (Romans 12:6-8) and using them to serve others we in turn serve God and bring glory to Him.
3. The third stage of faith is **DEPENDENCE** on God (young adult). Dependence on God is often learns as we serve Him. As we serve, our own inadequacies will frustrate us, and we will be tempted to give up. Or we may find ourselves falling back into ungodly habits, even though we don't want that to happen (Romans 7:19). A key lesson in this stage is to relinquish control (surrender) and allow the Holy Spirit to direct and help us. In other words we learn to live by faith and not by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7). Whenever we struggle we learn to turn toward the Lord in dependence upon Him. As the same time, when we study His Word, our minds will be redirected to think biblically. Then we can accept God's truth and leave behind messages we've taken in from our upbringing and culture that do not match His perspective.
4. The fourth stage is the **EXCHANGED LIFE** (Galatians 2:20). In this stage we embrace the truth that the only way to live the Christian life is to let the Holy Spirit live Christ's life through us. We make a commitment to God to surrender all that "self" wants and seek only what God wants. Once we make this exchange, we will experience more of the freedom and joy Jesus promised to His followers.

In the child stage of faith we are 'justified' (saved) by grace alone, through faith alone in Christ alone. The remaining stages involve "sanctification" becoming more like Christ (holy). As we grow in faith as Christians we do become more like Christ. We also know as Christians that no matter how much we grow in our faith we will never be 100% mature that is why Jesus came.