

Invitation to a Journey
Friday Overview
July 14, 2006

Components to Understanding the Spiritual Life

1. Spiritual Devotional Life (disciplines and practices)
2. World View
3. Growth and Stages
4. Guidance

Mullholland says that spiritual formation is a process

- a. Process
- b. Being conformed (process of change)
- c. Image of Christ
- d. For the sake of others (avoids the monk mentality)

In the end this is not a part of a selfish endeavor

Let's talk about several models of stages of growth

Classic definition from Mullholland (4 steps to growth) p.81

1. Awakening
 2. Purgation
 3. Illumination
 4. Union
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Fowler is another one that speaks to Piaget's works: relates to ethical behavior

Taken the stages of moral development and applied it to spiritual development

This tends to be age-based (children evolve in their ability to understand God)

Stages of Faith by James Fowler

Not a bad one to read for young people.

M. Scott Peck, psychiatrist who died recently.

People of the Lie, or Road Less Traveled, A Different Drum (talks about community)

4 stages of spiritual development

1. Anomic (or Hell's Angels) [the lawless stage]

Here people rebel against structure (government, school, or parental structure)

2. Institutional or structure change

Suddenly find out it doesn't work—it could be the church, the military, religious sect, or a business company.

3. Questioning stage (agnostic stage)

Institution had some value, but it doesn't answer all your questions.

Why do I have to do this, eat this, behave this way?

4. Communal stage (mystic stage)

At this stage you come to terms with mystery.

You realize that at this point not every situation has an answer.

For example, you get a college class that may have some folks rebelling against everything that is happening.

Most students come to college at the institutional stage.

But it's about that time that there are a lot of questions.

So, how am I going to relate to all that is happening?

And eventually, some people have a short period of this, but eventually they come out of it.

In a classroom, you have all 4 of these stages in the same classroom.

Stage 1 – there because their parents made them come.

Stage 2 – here folks have just had a conversion experience and everything is wonderful (church is perfect)

Stage 3 – people who have been raised in the church or worried about themselves because they are questioning.

One lady: You've let me know that my questioning is a step toward a mature faith. In other words a stage of growth.

Stage 4 – folks here are coming to a religious faith where there is something deeper happening.

This process is what makes teaching fun because everybody hears what you say at different stages.

Most supportive people are stage 4.

Who can help hell's angels most?

You can help people the best who are just one stage behind you.

Teacher who has a lot of questions cannot help folks at stage 1

Stage 2 and 3 have the heaviest dialogue.

Not many at stage 1 in your congregation.

Win Arn talks about web connections; thus, a new family has many loved ones that can be led to Christ potentially.

Stage 2 wants something very clear and straight forward

Stage 3 are looking for openness

Been a problem in the SDA church to not condemn folks; because they might feel put down in sharing their thoughts and criticized.

What people do in their prayer life will be related to your worldview and how God operates and to the growth stage that you are at.

Be careful with no "one size fits all."

There's some similarities

Related to the life of Christ: And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and favor with God and man.

Jesus did experience growth in His experience.

If we're doing the same thing that we did 10 years ago in our devotional life, we're probably growing a bit stale.

