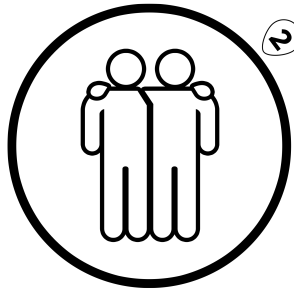




THE PATH

fellowship bible church

Stage 2 — The Life of Discipleship



If anyone would come after [follow] me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. 25 For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. - Matthew 16:24-25

Life of Discipleship - learning what it means to be a follower of Jesus which results in a distinct life.

Case Study

Rashaad is a 32 year old who has become a Christian within the last month. He's new to Christianity and isn't quite sure where to start but he's eager to learn what it looks like to follow Jesus. He's in stage 2.

Tracy is 57 and has followed Jesus for most of her adult life. Her faith is genuinely her own — she has thought hard about what she believes and holds it as hers. What she has never had is someone to walk with her. She reads her Bible when she thinks of it, attends most Sundays, and senses there is more available to her than she has stepped into, but no one has ever shown her what a next step might look like. Tracy is not starting over. She is being discipled for the first time. Tracy is in Stage 2.

Jessie is 16. Two summers ago at camp she heard the good news of all that Jesus has done and is doing in the world, became convicted of her sin, and placed her faith in his finished work. She professed Jesus as Lord for the first time that night and she has never once doubted it. What she has not had since is anyone to show her what comes next. Her home life is hard and her parents do not share her faith, so church is something she gets to rather than something she is carried by. She reads her Bible in bursts, prays when she is scared, and knows there is more available to her than she has found. Jessie is in Stage 2.

Overview

When we begin to follow Jesus in earnest, Stage 2 is marked by great excitement and trepidation. We are excited because a brand new world has been opened up to us and we get to know God. We experience trepidation because we don't always know what our next step is. It is common for

eagerness, zeal, uncertainty, longing, learning, and listening to mark this stage. Of all the stages, Stage 2 is most marked by learning and listening. When we enter Stage 2 we are baby Christians who need, and often desire, to be taught the words and life of Jesus. We are not in the driver's seat. We are in the learner's seat as we learn and develop the basics of what it means to walk faithfully with Jesus. Our faith closely resembles that of those we admire because we aren't yet confident in our own beliefs. The great need in this stage is a discipleship relationship where someone can learn within the context of relationship with another at Stage 3 or further.

What You Carry Into This Stage

From Stage 1 you bring wonder and a sense of need. Stage 2 adds the practices that keep you near to God — Scripture, prayer, gathering consistently, the beginning of putting sin to death.

These are not a beginner's course to be completed. They are how a person at any stage stays close to God, and no later stage replaces them. What changes is not whether you pray and read, but what is underneath it — duty gives way to desire.

Biblical Examples

The Life of Discipleship in the New Testament is most clearly seen in the lives of Jesus and Paul. Jesus had 12 close Disciples¹ as well as a larger group of 72 disciples². These men and women learned from him, imitated his life and ministry, and would go on to make disciples themselves. The apostle Paul had Timothy, Titus, and Tychichus as his most prominent disciples.

We also see the life of discipleship in the lives of Zacchaeus³, Lydia⁴, the Berean church⁵, and the new believers in the Church at Corinth⁶. Their lives are marked by a desire to step into what it means to follow Jesus through connection with other believers, obedience to the way of Jesus, and the life-long fight against sin. Each of these examples gives a snapshot of what life in stage 2 may look like for you.

¹Matthew 10:2-4

²Luke 10:1-3

³Luke 19:1-10

⁴Acts 16:14-33

⁵Acts 17:11

⁶1 Corinthians 3:1-2



The Great Need of This Stage

The great need in Stage 2 is a discipleship relationship. Not a curriculum. A person.

Stage Steps

- 2.1 - Step into the spiritual disciplines of Bible reading and prayer
- 2.2 - Step into regularly attending church
- 2.3 - Step into killing sin - Removing sinful distractions from your life.
- 2.4 - Step into new relationships with mature brothers and sisters
- 2.5 - Step into discipleship

2.1 - Step into the spiritual disciplines of Bible reading and prayer

You may begin to read the Bible and pray or begin to read the Bible and pray more intentionally. This early stage is marked by a desire to fellowship with God in the scriptures and an awareness of the need for and power of prayer.

2.2 - Step into Regularly attending church

You may begin to regularly attend church or begin to more intentionally regularly attend church. Once here you may be drawn to more intentionally engage biblical content, connection into community, and even service within that local church.

2.3 - Step into killing sin - Removing sinful distractions from your life.

You begin to understand sin as rebellion against God and take responsibility for confession and repentance. You are aware of patterns, habits, and relationships that need to be restored, repaired, and/or removed. You will need to develop the habits of keeping short accounts with God and others

as you step into killing sin. “Do you mortify; do you make it your daily work; be always at it whilst you live; cease not a day from this work; be killing sin or it will be killing you.”⁷

2.4 - Step into new relationships with mature brothers and sisters

You begin to seek out and develop relationships with brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus who are a step or two ahead of you on The Path. Your awareness of the need for models of faithfulness and the help that comes from a praying community increase. You may even begin to identify an older sister or brother whom you feel the Holy Spirit is drawing you towards to enter into a discipleship relationship. Godly relationships are the hammer and anvil upon which we are formed into the image and likeness of Jesus.

2.5 - Step into discipleship

You understand what discipleship is and the maximally essential nature of it for your own spiritual growth and health. You have identified and spiritually mature sister or brother and approach them about entering into a formal discipleship relationship. At this point you will schedule an introductory meeting, ask them to pray about discipling you, and follow up with them. Do not lose heart if the answer is “no” or “not right now”. Keep praying for God to open your eyes to the right person to walk alongside of you.

“Being” Milestones Of Stage 2

Stage 2: Domain Milestones

Spiritual - Step into spiritual disciplines, including mortifying sin, and be discipled.

Relational - Step into Christian community and discipleship.

Emotional - Step into recognizing how Jesus is changing your inner world.

Intellectual - Step into radical curiosity; ask questions about everything for the purposes of your spiritual growth.

Physical - Step into thinking about and caring for your body as a gift from God.

Exercise: On A Scale of 1-10, what score would you give yourself for each of these domains? What lesson from the life and ministry of Jesus will help you take a step toward holistic health?

Spiritual -

Relational -

Emotional -

Intellectual -

Physical -

⁷— John Owen, The Mortification Of Sin

“Feeling” Milestones Inventory of Stage 2

1. Do I understand and live out the gospel?

2. Do I recognize the value and contributions of those around me?

3. Do I acknowledge that I have questions and seek out answers to them?

4. Do I care about and act for the good of those around me?

5. Do I notice the feelings and emotions that I'm currently experiencing?

Taking Your Next Step

There is one critical relationship and an important growth step in this stage:

A Disciple-Maker or Jesus-Focused Mentor

Each person in Stage 2 must be discipled. This person may be someone who has entered into a formal discipleship relationship with you or someone who has entered into an intentional mentoring process that centers on Jesus Christ and the Scriptures. This critical relationship is essential for your growth in Christ Jesus.

Become A Member of A Local Church

Faithful Followers of Jesus are connected to his bride — the church. In order to grow out of Stage 2, you should become a member of a local church. Being a part of and truly belonging to a church is

critical for your growth. There you will be encouraged, challenged, and loved within a community of believers which will increase your joy and grow you. This faith community is a necessary aspect of your life. Find a church that: Takes the Bible seriously by preaching and living it, has healthy accountability structures for its leaders, drives its people to be a part of community, and is actively engaged in bringing shalom to the world around them.

Growth Step: Be Discipled

The step out of Stage 2 is not learning more. It is being known by someone who is a step or two ahead of you and willing to walk. Ask them directly. Most people wait to be invited and the invitation never comes, because the people who would say yes assume they are unqualified. Ask anyway.

Owning Your Growth

My Disciple-Maker/Mentor Is:_____.

I Plan To Become a Member Of _____.

Questions For Stage 2 Analysis

1. What are three important questions about your faith that you have?

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2. How would you define sin? How do you kill sin?

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3. What types of relationships do you need at this stage of your journey?
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4. What is God teaching you in this season?

Resources

- Back Porch Theology - Lisa Harper
- The Mortification of Sin - John Owen
- Practicing The Way - John Mark Comer
- The Master Plan Of Discipleship - Dr. Robert Coleman
- We Saved You A Seat - Lisa-Jo Baker
- The Spiritual Disciplines Handbook - Adele Calhoun
- Discipleship Essentials - Greg Ogden