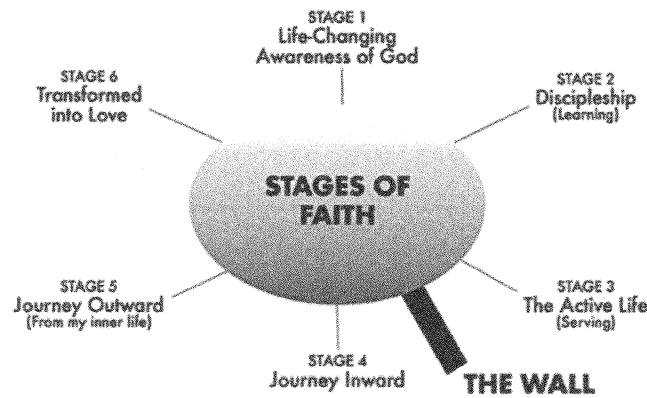


Our FAITH Journey at Hope Reformed Church

Walking with Jesus, Walking with Others, Serving God, Serving Others



During the month of May, we will be learning about the stages of faith. All of these stages are best experienced in a faith community. By being with other Christians in various stages of their faith development we have the chance to more fully experience our own faith. None of these stages are bad or right or wrong or better than another, they just are. All 6 stages of faith and The Wall are important in our spiritual journey. Each one has a profound impact and role in our lives. Spiritual maturity takes time and experience. There is no silver bullet or quick fix to a deep, intimate relationship with Jesus.

STAGE 1: LIFE CHANGING AWARENESS OF GOD

- Awed by God's love
- Need for a Savior and greater meaning in life
- Recognition of God and beginning of journey of faith
- Overwhelmed by the miracles of beauty, the mystery of new life and gifts of time and goodness

Accepting the reality of God can begin while one is young or it can occur later through a religious experience or conversion. This conversion can be instantaneous or can occur over a long period of time.

How to grow in this stage: join a support group, find a spiritual mentor, and become committed to a faith community

God's Word: Mark 1:16-20 Romans 10:17 Hebrews 12:1-3

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STAGES OF FAITH

Stage 1: Recognition of God...starting to believe, there really is something bigger than just me.

Stage 2: Life of Discipleship...beginning to learn more ABOUT God.

Stage 3: The Productive Life...servicing and doing things FOR God.

THE WALL: Things stop working for one reason or another.

Stage 4: The Journey Inward...figuring out a new way to do relationship with God, ourselves, others.

Stage 5: The Journey Outward...learning to live, serve, love out of a totally different place.

Stage 6: Life of Love...it's all about surrender and obedience to God's perfect will.

A bit about the stages:

- You can't skip over them initially. There are no shortcuts or work arounds. You don't go from Stage 1 to Stage 4 or from 2 to 5. It's a 1-2-3-4-5-6 process, but once you have gone through them, it is possible to skip around and revisit certain stages.
- We can get stuck at any of these stages on our journey. They call this getting 'caged' but there are things we can do to keep moving. We will list those as we describe each stage. People usually get stuck at a particular place in the journey because we find it more comfortable to 'sit' than to 'move'. Another sign of 'stuckness' is having to be right and convincing others of our rightness, at any stage of our journey of faith. Rightness becomes more important than the journey.
- Again, remember, none of these stages are bad or right or wrong or better than another, they just are. An important piece to remember is that we couldn't have gotten to where we are now without the first stages.

STAGE 2: TIME OF LEARNING AND BELONGING

- Experience God's love through forgiveness
- Desire to trust God and to want to belong to His family/faith community
- Recognition that we each have unique gifts and are worthwhile servants

During this stage we find meaning in belonging and feel safe and secure in our new-found faith. There is comfort in this stage knowing that we personally do not need to figure out the answers since we belong to a group made up of leaders, mature Christians and others who are on this Faith Journey with us.

How to grow in this stage: read the Bible, take risk, volunteer, join a small group Bible study, try something new

God's Word: Romans 1:16 Mark 10:17-22 Philippians 3:7-11

STAGE 3: PRODUCTIVE, ACTIVE, SERVING GOD

- Serving faithfully using ours gifts to further God's cause
- Energetic and alive
- Motivated by what we have learned—the more we know Him, the more we will become like Him

It's easy to burn out in this stage and become weary in well doing. We have come to think that we 'should' work for the church, no matter what is asked.

How to grow in this stage: continue to actively serve others, remembering we first must serve God

God's Word: John 3:30 John 15:5-8 Galatians 5:22-26