

FIVE STAGES IN A CHRISTIAN'S LIFE

Acts 2:40-43

Introduction: All of us know that there are many phases or "stages" in a person's life. Some of the "titles" are: infant, toddler, pre-school, child, youth, teenager, young adult, adult, mature adult, and senior adult. There are many sub- phases within each of life stages. If we think about the Christian life there seems to be several stages most Christians go through. Some linger longer at one phase than another, but sooner or later most Christians come and go through these stages.

I. THERE IS THE HONEYMOON STAGE (*Romans 12:4-5*)

1. This phase of a Christian's life is similar to that of newlyweds.
 - It is the beginning of a new way of life with the Salvation experience.
 - It is where the new Christian shares with everyone his/her recent experience with the Lord and is all excited about it.
 - It is often called "a mountain top experience."
2. Everyone knows, however, that honeymoons last only so long, then reality sets in.

II. THERE IS THE FIGHT STAGE (*Romans 7:14-25*)

1. The "honeymoon" is over and life begins to return to "normal" which includes temper, frustrations, resentments, jealousy, gossip, criticism. For some reason it's just not the same as it was at first.
2. Two natures rise up against each other, a situation never encountered before, as upon becoming a Christian, God gives a new nature which is very different from the old human nature. When this happens sometimes one begins to doubt that anything really happened at all, it was just a temporary, never experienced before thing.
3. Every new Christian needs to be quickly told about the new nature God has given him/her and how different it is from what the original nature is like. Both natures need to be explained as soon as possible to the new Christian.

III. THEN THERE IS THE DOUBTING STAGE (*John 14:26-27*)

1. "Was I ever saved in the first place?" is a question many, many have asked after the "newness" has worn off.
 - Most people don't want to live a lie or fake a "happy" Christian life, when on the inside of their heart, there's a lot of doubt and many questions.
2. Lack of knowing what really took place at salvation brings doubt to many. The new Christian needs to be told about how the past is forgiven and how God has work for him/her to be doing right now and will be with him/her through the rest of their life.

3. Someone said that a computer can be given as a gift and knowing how to work that gift is essential to get the greatest benefit from it. Thus it is so when God gives Salvation and the Christian life as a gift, knowing the how's, and what's will enable one to reap the greatest benefits from what God has given.

IV. THERE IS THE SEARCH FOR TRUTH STAGE (Colossians 2:8)

1. By the time a Christian gets to this stage, he/she has seen and heard many things that are so different and questions arise which bring doubt. Who is right?
2. One source for the Christian to consider is the "intellectual source."
 - Think things through, what is right, what is wrong, what is reasonable, by whose standards is this from?
3. Another source is the "experiential source."
 - What do your senses tell you? What are your feelings? What are your impressions? Does this seem right or does it seem wrong?
4. There is the "traditional source."
 - Has this always been the way? Has it always been right? It was good enough for Grandpaw, but has the meaning changed since then?
5. Then there is the "final source."
 - What does the Word of God have to say?
 - Here is the eternal wisdom of God who is the source of all righteousness and truth.
 - One cannot go wrong here.

V. SADLY THERE IS THE LAST STAGE AND IT IS ONE OF SILENCE

1. Most Christians go through these stages and finally become like most other Christians.
 - They do not witness anymore.
 - They are not really sure about whether they are saved or not and don't have real joy.
 - They are satisfied with just attending services and serving on a committee now and then and giving a little off and on but not active as they once were.
2. Did you know that only about 25% of a Church's total membership is in worship on any given Lord's Day? Did you know that only 20% of a Church's total membership carry 80% of the financial load of the church? Where is everyone?

CONCLUSION:

1. Thankfully not every Christian stays in the final stage of inactivity. Some come and go but some never return to it. They are the ones who are "carrying the load" of the Church.
2. Take a look at yourself. Do you recognize where you, as a Christian, are among these five stages?
 - Let's help one another become the Christians God wants us to be and stay active for Him.