

Understanding the Results of Your Spiritual Growth Profile©

So what does the Spiritual Growth Profile© reveal—and doesn't it do? First the *nots*!

- The Spiritual Growth Profile© does not address or claim to address every aspect of spiritual growth. After all, no single means of evaluation can contain the whole of the Christian's spiritual development.
- The Profile does not, for instance, attempt to evaluate the orthodoxy of beliefs, the practice of spiritual disciplines, the performance of certain rituals— aspects of one's faith journey that do not necessarily serve as accurate benchmarks of Christian spiritual growth anyway.
- The SGP does not attempt to measure spiritual well-being, religiosity, or intrinsic/extrinsic motivation, as some other instruments do.



Now for what the Profile *does* offer you:

- The SGP affirms the areas in each of the stages of Childhood, Young Adulthood, and Parenthood where you recognize progress in each Milestone of the three Stages. No stage is ever entirely free of areas that need our attention, so let yourself feel affirmed by those areas where you see growth.
- The Spiritual Growth Profile© also identifies those specific areas that detain, interrupt, or thwart your spiritual growth, areas that you may have been blind to or may not yet have adequately addressed, or a challenge that is new and unexpected that calls for your attention.
- “My Journey of Faith” chart provides you with a snapshot of where you are in regard to each of the eight Milestones. Too, the SGP is like an X-ray – seeing beneath the surface what the eye cannot see.
- The SGP reminds you that God is at work in you, moving you toward deeper spiritual transformation and authentic Christlikeness within each Milestone. Foster that growth by teaming up with a Parent in the faith who can provide skilled listening and sound guidance.
- You can retake the Spiritual Growth Profile© at the completion of your study in *Stages of Faith*. Has anything changed? What might need your attention now?

The SGP has provided you with a window into your private inner world, but, as with the results of any evaluation, you may intellectualize, deny, or rationalize away whatever is revealed. It is up to you to look through that window with honesty and the willingness to learn from it. Transformation begins with awareness.

Finally, as you explore possibilities for spiritual growth, know that the Lord Himself desires you to grow even more than you do—and He will bless your efforts.

It is my intent that, together, the Spiritual Growth Profile© and the *Stages of Faith* workbook will serve as a map that both guides and interprets your spiritual growth. I hope you will also be encouraged, assured that God uses every believer's unique personal story of spiritual progress to make an impact on others.

A breakthrough discovery resulting from *Stages of Faith* research is that we can now reliably measure spiritual growth, and then target the specific areas that fuel or hinder our progress and fitness. A one-of-a-kind instrument—the Spiritual Growth Profile©—has been developed to diagnose your spiritual fitness in each Stage of faith and Milestone. No other instrument like this exists! God is at work in you and you will see exactly where He is working. You can now quickly and accurately identify the underlying issues that impact your growth and transformation. You can intentionally partner with God to get in optimal spiritual shape.

Stages of Spiritual Growth Can Be Measured

The Spiritual Growth Profile© is an analytic tool that will help you identify where you are on your journey, diagnose your spiritual health, and identify roadblocks slowing your growth.

The Spiritual Growth Profile© is a reliable instrument for measuring the depth and distance of your spiritual progress. You can now identify where you are and where you have been. *Stages of Faith* gives this tool a context by describing and explaining the Bible’s map for such a lifelong spiritual journey, a map that will help you chart steps to take in a new direction.

In the Spiritual Growth Profile©, each of the eight Milestones is addressed by five statements which attempt to define the full meaning of each milestone. For each of the Profile’s forty statements, you will indicate along a scale of 1 (“Very unlike me”) to 7 (“Very like me”) how true each statement is about you. This range allows you to record the degree to which you have worked through each item. You were instructed to answer each of the forty items based on your own experience, not your beliefs, your sense of other people’s expectations, or your own ideals for yourself. This exercise will provide you with a window through which to view your private inner world, but, as with any instrument, you may intellectualize, deny, or rationalize away whatever is revealed. It remains up to you to look through that window with honesty and an openness to what you can learn from it.

My Journey of Faith Chart

My Journey of Faith chart will show where you see yourself in regard to each of the eight milestones. The chart intentionally avoids the use of scales and norms and thereby any suggestion of comparison, competition, success, or failure. Instead, the darkened portion in

each box suggests the extent of your own progress while the light portion suggests areas that may need your exploration and attention. Your scores on each milestone (based on your response to the five items in the Spiritual Growth Profile©) are also noted. These scores are clues to the distance and depth of the journey of faith you have traveled so far.

Take note of the areas that may be detaining further growth, realizing that no stage is likely ever entirely free of areas that need our further attention. Although we human beings tend too easily to focus on our weaknesses, let yourself feel affirmed by those areas where you see health, change, and growth.

Step to take: Review the Stages of Spiritual Growth chart on page 7 for an overview of the core issues within the three stages.

Step to take: Rely on the lessons in the *Stages of Faith* book to get a sense of the core truths and potency of each of the milestones of spiritual growth, especially the first page or two of each lesson. Read “A Review of the Childhood Stage of Faith” on pages 48-50, Young Adulthood on pages 86-88, and Parenthood on pages 106-107.

Step to take: Begin by looking at each of the three Milestones of Childhood. Note the items with the highest scores. Then observe those items with the lowest scores.

Keep in mind that, even though we are adults chronologically, you may have some significant work to do here, and remember that these Childhood Milestones are not “kid stuff.” These Milestones form the foundation for a life of deep spiritual growth.

Step to take: Next, read the five items on your Spiritual Growth Profile© for each Milestone. This will help you understand the kind of clues to look for that give evidence of spiritual progress.

- Repeat these two steps for the Young Adulthood stage and the Parenthood stage.

WHAT STAGE AM I IN?

How far have I come in my spiritual development? Where am I in the Childhood, Young Adulthood, and Parenthood stages of faith? The Spiritual Growth Profile© provides a snapshot of how far you've progressed in each of the three Stages and the eight Milestones. Your Christian faith expresses itself out of a dynamic combination of your particular strengths and weaknesses within each Stage. While your chart shows evidence of growth in more than one Stage, you are engaged for the most part facing the challenges of one Stage, and that Stage will define and effect the others. Put differently, you will live largely out of one Stage of faith – Childhood, Young Adulthood, or Parenthood. That one Stage best describes where God is currently at work in your spiritual growth, and that Stage influences, and, in part, determines your progress at each of the other Milestones.



Too, a seasoned Parent can help you develop a strategy that addresses the needs identified in the Spiritual Growth Profile©, a strategy that is uniquely tailored for you. This Parent can also provide you with the support, challenge, and vision you'll need along the way.

The Spiritual Growth Profile© and My Journey of Faith chart are designed to help you, a follower of Christ, locate how far you have traveled on the journey of faith, and better understand how deep change takes place. It is my earnest desire that this exercise and the *Stages of Faith* book together will give you a map giving clear direction to your steps forward. I hope you will be encouraged, assured that God will use your unique personal Story of progress toward Christlikeness and wholeness so you can guide others on their journey.

Don Willett, Ph.D.

THE SKILLED GUIDE

The Spiritual Growth Profile© invites you to talk about your perceptions, feelings, attitudes, experiences, and responses with someone farther along the journey of faith. This self-disclosing and history-giving should not be neglected. These actions enable you to take the vital step of acknowledging the experiences that have significantly shaped your life.



The Spiritual Growth Profile© can reveal much about the significance of your life experiences and your progress on your spiritual journey, but often we ourselves are blind to the full meaning of our life experiences.

We all need transformative friends who have gone before us, who know the journey well. Every follower of Christ would benefit from a fresh pair of eyes – and care and wisdom – from a veteran Parent in the faith who helps us see what God is doing in us to rewrite our Story. That is where a skilled Parent in the faith (i.e., a pastor, counselor, Christian friend, or small group leader) can play an important role in our spiritual growth. A mature Parent—who has already attended to the Milestones in the three stages of faith—knows firsthand what threatens spiritual development and what can enrich your journey of faith. Together, you can share Stories that will bring transparency and trust to your relationship.

Check out the Stages website:

www.stagesoffaith.com.

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Endnotes:

Don Willett. *Stages of Faith: 8 Milestones that Mark Your Journey*. Each of the three Stages and its eight Milestone markers are explored in 13 lessons. Purchase at www.stagesoffaith.com.

For a description of the research and design of the Spiritual Growth Profile©, see chapter 10 of Don Willett's *The Path: How to Understand and Experience Authentic Spiritual Growth*. (Deep River Books, 2014). Purchase at www.stagesoffaith.com. Available also as an e-book.