



The Cycle of Spiritual Growth

Through the Bible, the One True God not only teaches us how to be accepted by him through Jesus Christ; he also teaches us how to grow in our relationship with him.



Repent of Your Sins (Convict) – As Jesus began his ministry, his very first message to people was “repent and believe the good news” (Mark 1:15). To “repent” quite simply means to “turn around.” Repentance is turning away from our self-righteousness and self-justification. It is accepting that we deserve God’s eternal punishment by nature because we have offended him through the evil we have done and the good we have failed to do. God leads us toward repentance by convicting our hearts with his law.



Believe the Good News (Comfort) – Jesus not only invited people to repent; he also invited them to “believe the good news.” The good news is this: Even though we deserve God’s rejection and punishment, God’s Son Jesus became a human being to save us. He lived the perfect life we should have lived, suffered the punishment we deserve, and rose from the dead to guarantee that we are acceptable to God through him. Jesus invites all people to believe this good news for themselves and be comforted that God has forgiven all their guilt—past, present, and future. You can rest fully in his grace without fear.



Carry out Your Callings (Calling) – Paul writes in Ephesians 4:1, “I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.” Now that we have been accepted by God through faith in Jesus, we are called to live godly lives that reflect Jesus faithfully in all our God-given callings (as spouses, parents, children, workers, students, citizens, etc.). But that is difficult to do, as Jesus tells us, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me” (Matthew 16:24). Even though we are acceptable to God through Jesus and want to reflect him in our lives, our selfish natures wish to continue living in rebellion against him. As God’s beloved children, we must learn to deny what our selfish natures crave and to carry our cross like Jesus did, that is, to humbly reflect Christ in every situation and calling even when it is difficult. Carrying out your callings involves carrying your cross.



Charge Up with God’s Promises (Charge Up) – Because Jesus knows that denying ourselves and carrying our cross can be difficult, even painful, he has given us countless loving promises that empower us to rest in Christ fully and reflect him faithfully. Missionary Paul speaks about this in 2 Corinthians 5:14,17, “For Christ’s love compels us...Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!”

Note: When Jesus was speaking to the religious experts of his day, he reminded them that they could not truly understand the Bible unless they saw him at the center of it (John 5:39). He is the Blessing for all nations. He is the Sacrificial Lamb. He is the Greater King. So, a good question to ask yourself whenever you study the Bible is: Where is Christ evident in this section, even if he is not mentioned specifically?

These four components make up the Cycle of Spiritual Growth. As we daily repent and receive the comfort of the good news, we carry out our callings, empowered by God’s promises. Since we fail in some way every day, we regularly continue the cycle to repent, believe the Good news, carry out our callings, and power up with God’s promises. God strengthens our relationship with him through this process. Memorize the three passages related to this cycle: Mark 1:15, Matthew 16:24, and 2 Corinthians 5:14-17