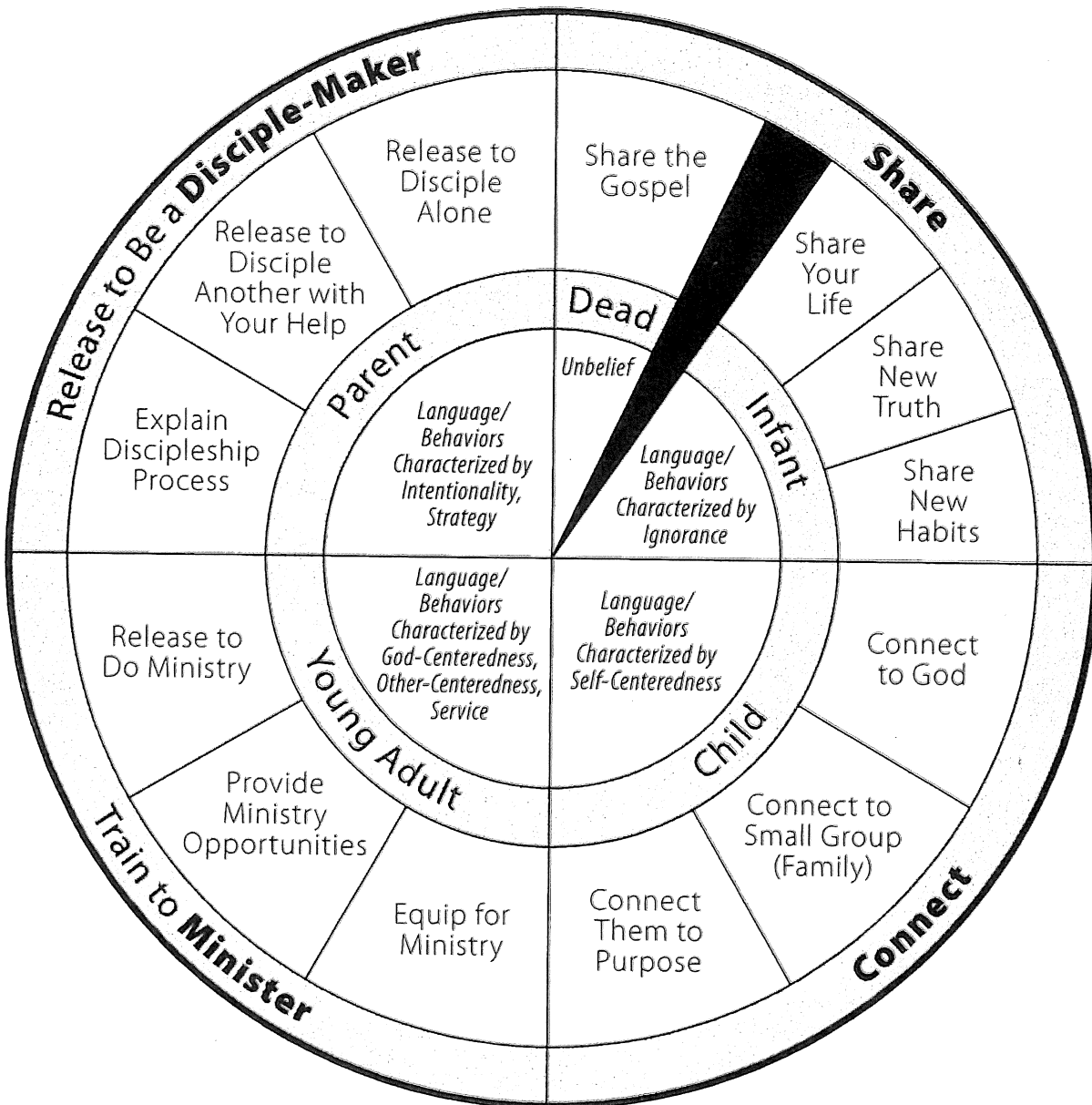


Real-Life Discipleship Wheel

By Jim Putman



summary and profile of each stage of spiritual growth

General Characteristics of the Stage

Spiritual Stage	
Dead	Unbelieving Rebellious
Infant	Ignorant Confused Dependent
Child	Self-centered, self-absorbed Idealistic Prideful Low view of self Interdependent
Young Adult	Action/service-oriented Zealous God-centered Others-centered Mission-minded but incomplete in his or her understanding Independent
Parent	Intentional Strategic Reproduction-minded Self-feeding Mission-minded Team-minded (unity matters) Dependable

Typical Beliefs, Behaviors, and Attitudes of the Stage

Spiritual Stage	
Dead	<p>Disbelief of the supernatural, or belief in many forms of the supernatural (multiple deities, interactions with the dead, superstitions, astrology, and so on)</p> <p>Disbelief in God (atheism) or belief in the possibility of God (agnosticism) or belief in a different God (member of a cult or the occult)</p> <p>Belief in one God but many ways to get to Him</p> <p>Anger toward Christians or the church or family</p> <p>Confusion about God, Jesus, and the church</p> <p>Ignorance regarding biblical truth (spiritually blind)</p> <p>Belief that the answers they are seeking lie in worldly prestige, power, fame, and so on</p> <p>Belief that they are as good as anyone else so they don't need a Savior</p> <p>Belief that they have done too much wrong so fear they can't be saved</p>
Infant	<p>Ignorance about what they need and what the Bible says about life and the purpose of a Christian</p> <p>Ignorance about or frustration toward Christianity and the church</p> <p>Belief that Christians make no mistakes; unrealistic expectations of themselves</p> <p>Belief that they are defined as the culture would define them</p> <p>Worldly perspective about life with some spiritual truth mixed in</p>
Child	<p>Excitement over having deep relationships</p> <p>Disillusionment because of their high expectations of others</p> <p>Belief that feelings are most important, which leads to spiritual highs and lows</p> <p>Lack of wisdom about how to use what they are learning — for example, too aggressive when sharing their faith, or too legalistic in their approach to dealing with their friends and family</p> <p>Belief that people are not caring for them enough</p> <p>Tendency to mimic mature Christians' behaviors in order to look good and gain praise</p> <p>Tendency to serve others in a ministry as long as the benefit outweighs the cost</p> <p>Enthusiasm about new teachings</p> <p>Confusion and unyielding nature regarding complex issues because they have an incomplete view of biblical subjects</p> <p>More knowledge about what Christians say than what the Word says</p>

<p>Young Adult</p>	<p>Desire to serve others for others' good and the glory of God</p> <p>Tendency to feel responsible for how others respond to the message; possible pride if a person accepts their message and possible discouragement if they don't</p> <p>Desire to serve but not strategic about how to train others</p> <p>Naivety about other believers — for example, they believe that others are on fire for Jesus because everyone seems to be "fine" at church</p> <p>Tendency to be black-and-white about what should happen in a church</p>
<p>Parent</p>	<p>Ability to think in terms of what a team (rather than an individual) can do</p> <p>A coaching mindset</p> <p>Desire to see the people they work with mature and become fellow workers who love them but aren't dependent on them to complete the mission</p>

The Spiritual Needs of the Stage

<p>Spiritual Stage</p>	
<p>Dead</p>	<p>A secure relationship with a mature believer</p> <p>A picture of the real Jesus lived out in front of them</p> <p>Answers, evidences for Christianity</p> <p>An explanation of the gospel message</p> <p>An invitation to receive Christ</p>
<p>Infant</p>	<p>Individual attention from a spiritual parent</p> <p>Protection</p> <p>An explanation of the truths (new truths) found in the Word of God</p> <p>An explanation and modeling of the habits of a growing believer</p>
<p>Child</p>	<p>A spiritual family</p> <p>Help for how to start feeding themselves</p> <p>Teaching about who they are in Christ</p> <p>Teaching about how to have a relationship with Christ</p> <p>Teaching about how to have relationships with other believers</p> <p>Teaching about appropriate expectations concerning other believers</p>

<p>Young Adult</p>	<p>A place to learn to serve</p> <p>A spiritual parent who will debrief them about ministry experiences</p> <p>Ongoing relationships that offer encouragement and accountability</p> <p>Help for establishing boundaries</p> <p>Guidance regarding appropriate expectations of people they will serve</p> <p>Help in identifying their gifts</p> <p>Skills training</p>
<p>Parent</p>	<p>An ongoing relationship with co-laborers</p> <p>A church family</p> <p>Encouragement</p>

The Phrase from the Stage

<p>Spiritual Stage</p>	
<p>Dead</p>	<p>"I don't believe there is a God."</p> <p>"The Bible is just a bunch of myths."</p> <p>"Evolution explains away a need for God."</p> <p>"I am not a Christian because Christians are responsible for all the wars in history."</p> <p>"There are many ways to get to God."</p> <p>"I am a Christian because I go to church and I am a good person."</p> <p>"I have been a good person, so I will be okay."</p>
<p>Infant</p>	<p>"I believe in Jesus, but my church is when I'm in the woods or on the lake."</p> <p>"I don't have to go to church to be a Christian."</p> <p>"I gave my life to Jesus and I go to church, but I don't need to be close to other people."</p> <p>"People have hurt me, so it's just me and God."</p> <p>"I don't have time to be in relationship with another Christian."</p> <p>"My spouse is my accountability partner. I don't need anyone else."</p> <p>"I pray and read my Bible. That is good enough for me."</p> <p>"My ministry is my work. I provide for my family. I don't have time for the church."</p> <p>"I didn't know the Bible said that."</p>

<p>Child</p>	<p>"I love my small group; don't add any more people to it."</p> <p>"Who are all these people coming to my church? Tell them to go somewhere else!"</p> <p>"I am not coming to church anymore. It has become too big; it has too many people."</p> <p>"My small group is not taking care of my needs."</p> <p>"I don't have anyone who is spending enough time with me; no one is disciplining me."</p> <p>"I didn't like the music today. If only they did it like . . ."</p> <p>"I am not being fed in my church, so I am going to a church that meets my needs better."</p>
<p>Young Adult</p>	<p>"I love my group, but there are others who need a group like this."</p> <p>"I think I could lead a group with a little help. I have three friends I have been witnessing to, and this group would be too big for them."</p> <p>"Look how many are at church today — it's awesome! I had to walk two blocks from the closest parking spot."</p> <p>"Randy and Rachel missed group and I called to see if they are okay. Their kids have the flu, so maybe our group can make meals for them. I'll start."</p> <p>"In my devotions, I came across something I have a question about."</p> <p>"I noticed that we don't have an old folks' visitation team. Do you think I could be involved?"</p>
<p>Parent</p>	<p>People talk about what they love. When spiritual parents talk about what God is doing with them, it is not bragging or name-dropping. Humility is evident.</p> <p>"This guy at work asked me to explain the Bible to him. Pray for me."</p> <p>"We get to baptize someone from our small group tonight. When is the next 101 class? I want to get her plugged into ministry somewhere."</p> <p>"Our small group is going on a mission trip, and I have given each person a different responsibility."</p> <p>"I realize discipleship happens at home, too. Will you hold me accountable to spend time disciplining my kids?"</p> <p>"I have a person in my small group who is passionate about children. Can you have the children's ministry people call me?"</p>