

Articles and Sermons :: Don't Stay in the First Grade by A.W. Tozer**Don't Stay in the First Grade by A.W. Tozer - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2021/4/6 6:54**

There are Christians who grow up and have no relish for anything spiritually advanced. They're preoccupied with their first lessons. The average church is a school with only one grade and that is the first one. These Christians never expect to get beyond that and they don't want to hear a man very long who wants to take them beyond that. If their pastor insists they do their homework and get ready for the next grade, they begin to pray that the Lord will call "our dear brother" somewhere else. The more they hate him the more they bear down on the words "our dear brother." All he's trying to do is prepare them for another grade, but that church is dedicated to the first grade, and the first grade is where it's going to remain.

Paul said some of them went up into the second grade and gave it up, and said, "it's too hard here," and they went back to the first.

"How long have you been in the first grade, Junior?"

"Twelve years."...

Paul said, "Forgetting what is behind...I press on toward the goal" Philippians 3. There was a man not satisfied with the first grade.

From Success and the Christian by A.W.Tozer

"Father, I do pray that our church might not get stuck in the first grade. Some of the lessons in the upper grades are pretty hard, Lord, but help us not to shrink from the hard lessons that bring us to spiritual maturity. Amen."

Re: Don't Stay in the First Grade by A.W. Tozer - posted by brothagary, on: 2021/4/6 14:20

Hebrews 6:1 So let us stop going over the basic teachings about Christ again and again. Let us go on instead and become mature in our understanding. Surely we don't need to start again with the fundamental importance of repenting from evil deeds and placing our faith in God. 2 You don't need further instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. 3 And so, God willing, we will move forward to further understanding.

An honest question how many brothers and sisters here are going over and over the basics, continually laying again the foundations of the Christian faith, and not pressing on to perfection, happy to debate basic theology and doctrine, and even quoting the old saints, as if that will bring wisdom, James says if any of you lack wisdom let him ask of God who gives liberally and without reproach, but let him ask in faith not doubting, You will become as wise as you pray life is deep, don't expect wisdom from continual laying again the foundation, but continually and fervently pray and expect wisdom to come from God's spirit of wisdom and revelation, through the knowledge of him, ask, seek and knock.....

Believe for greater things in your life and be dissatisfied with basic Christianity, be convicted, and let God create a real deep hunger for more of His hidden goodness, of the mysteries of the gospel, don't expect to get it all from your pastors and teachers, drink from the fountain itself, for you have been called and invited to sit at the master's table, and eat and drink to your hearts' delight, expect fear and trembling to be your close friend.

ephesians 1:16 I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in your knowledge of Him. 18 I ask that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened,

Re: - posted by passerby, on: 2021/4/6 18:50

What exactly is the difference between a first grader and a second or third grader Christians. What are the measurement standards.

Cults have abused this concept resulting to dysfunctional persons.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2021/4/6 21:21

//Paul said, "Forgetting what is behind...I press on toward the goal" Philippians 3. There was a man not satisfied with the first grade.//

Tozer seems to answer your question. Stagnaters enjoy the status quo.

Re: - posted by brothagary, on: 2021/4/6 22:45

One thing you can be sure of passer-by is the carnal man doesn't receive the things that are of the spirit he won't understand. The carnal Christian won't understand 2nd or 3rd-grade stuff. Paul said I speak to you as men because of the weakness of your flesh, the Bible says he who is spiritual judges or discerns all things but he himself is rightly judged or discerned by no man the common man or the natural mind or the baby Christian or the Christian that's fallen into sin and carnality who's lost his spiritual mind so to speak will not be able to understand revelations spoken from another Christian who's living the deeper life. The deeper life is revealed through revelation by the holy spirit himself though he still uses teachers but the anointing itself becomes a fundamental teacher and guide into the deeper things of God. He enters into the deeper levels firstly through conviction or sin a recognizing of the fleshly nature that still exists and a godly sorry that's produced through that conviction, repentance is produced and an appetite comes to life where one hungers and thirsts for more, when one becomes completely and utterly dissatisfied with his normal state that is living in which still contains part of the carnal nature his heart becomes broken and it produces real groaning prayer and desire to become mature or like the apostles or like Christ this desire has to come to life and then a seeking for God begins and this can go on for possibly years and then God brings trials to test the genuineness of faith like James says and when you go through the fiery trials God teaches you to rely on him for everything including sanctification. The deeper life comes through faith in God for more of God. We believe and trust that God will do it and there's no other way to do it in the flesh and no way to please God or to climb the hill God must purify through trials and through fillings of the holy spirit which include the great baptism of the holy spirit which arguably comes as a 2nd or 3rd blessing and the fillings that come after that are necessary to lift us up into the deeper life, humble yourself in the sight of the Lord and he will lift you up cleanse your hands you sinners and purify your hearts you you double minded lament and mourn and weep let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy into heaviness humble yourself in the sight of the Lord and he will lift you up there's no other way into the deeper life except by God's hand so one must believe that God is the only way that we can get there, not by works or hours of Bible study and hours of meditation our works of meditation or our works of Bible study won't do it God has to do it and it's about faith in God he who comes to God must believe that he is and that he is a reward of those that seek him the Bible says, the mind of the carnal babe in Christ in the first level Christianity thinks that he has something to do with this but it is the same as our salvation we have nothing to do with it we are saved by Grace through faith it's not of ourselves it's the gift of God not of works lest any man should boast we will have no boasting on our journey towards Christlikeness the Bible says he deals to each man even the measure of faith so Faith comes by hearing and hearing itself comes by the word of God. The word of God needs to be preached properly it takes a long time to enter into the deeper life and normally it takes many trials to destroy our flesh nature, he who suffers ceases from sin some people require more suffering than others but once God has taught us and brought us to the end of our self to a place where we know we can't do anything apart from Christ and that we're doomed without him even the smallest thing cannot be done without Christ this revelation becomes real and that becomes the next stepping stone into that deeper life once one has given up on himself and his counted all those things for nothing. And the revelation that in the flesh that is in me as Paul said nothing good dwells we can't be trusted and the journey of by the spirit putting to death the deeds of the body we enter into the next level in this level we learn that it's by the spirit it's sanctification comes not through works or deeds or through charity work all through preaching or teaching none of that will make us holy and bring us into those next levels but it's all done by God through faith in God. These words become a solid revelation, without me you can do nothing but with God, all things are possible to them that believe, and slowly but surely God gives little revelations on each of those verses as Paul taught and Jesus taught, life becomes experiential rather than hypothetical or theoretical. It's normally a theology and doctrine that we hold that stops us from going into the deeper life we have sacred cows so to speak that need to be slaughtered by the sword of the spirit and these sacred cows are;;; you'll stay a sinner you will always have problems with sin and you'll never really get the full victory you got to nature's fighting against one another and that's how it will be for your whole Christian life, and verses that are cherry-picked or taken out of context become our sacred cows that we need to slaughter so that we can let the Bible speak to us in the context it was intended for. if we take out of context and believe in a wrong fa

shion it cause us not to experience the revelation and the reality of the verses on holiness and victory over sin the deeper life is, in a nutshell, walking in holiness as the new man who is created according to God in true righteousness and holiness. So a good first step into the deeper life is to get rid of any ideas that cause you to doubt that you can walk like Christ walked and pray to God ask and it will be given, ask God to convict us of all the sins of the flesh, and then be open to correction and reproves of the holy spirit and other teachers the god May guide are you with. There's no entering into the deeper life without going through those stages first Pride needs to be crucified the pride that thinks that we already have it worked out we need to be brought undone by the holy spirit so he can crush our Pride, there's no point talking about more then this because these first stages and first steps must be taken you can't enter into the sheepfold another way only thieves and robbers would attempt to do that ,the way is the low way through humility and suffering and trial but God will always be there to make our way so that we can just bear it and we come out the other end strong in the spirit and weaker in the flesh , The flesh loses it's self esteem slowly and then sometimes suddenly through the trial and the inner man the new man rises up with Christ esteem, because it is no longer you who live but christ who lives in you though this was true in regeneration in the beginning, we receive these revelations that set us free it's the truth that sets us free the revelations of truth not just the reading of truth. Jesus said these words I speak to you are spirit and they are life, revelations of truth become our life because it is this spirit quickening us, flooding us with Joy unspeakable and full of glory and inner peace that passes all understanding. This becomes our life and we weep like babies for more and more and more our hunger grows as we become weaker then he become stronger as we decrease he increases we must believe this and want this and it's only God that can put that hunger in US, he truly upholds us with the word of his power and in him do all things consist in him do we consist. We in him and he in US becomes who we are the old Adam dies and the new heavenly man becomes our father he becomes our lineage and our genetical makeup, we truly put off the old man and we call no man on Earth our father, the old prophet said he will be called The Prince of peace the wonderful counsellor the everlasting father the mighty god he becomes all in all, for us, and we learn through this process not to love our old lives to the death to count it all is dun faeces, that we might live in the newness of this life, and we can stand with Paul the apostle and say I have no confidence in the flesh, the process teaches us to lose all confidence in the flesh to not trust the flesh whatsoever and to put full trust and belief in God alone and the flow of the holy spirit starts to become unhindered by ,us, we learn not to quench the holy spirit but to make provisions for the holy spirit in our life through setting our mind on heavenly things and not ever on earthly things in a general way, but we fulfill that command also, I hope brothers and sisters you get something out of this, This is the journey that I've been on and I've had many tears as I do now right now for Christians to come to know God in a deeper way it breaks my heart to see Christian struggling with strongholds of sin and demonic oppression, these tears that I shed now tell me that I'm not speaking out of pride I'm speaking out of love and a true desire for others to experience God nothing makes me more happy then to see Christians walking close to God in victory and humility I can't think of anything, bless you all in the name of Jesus Christ May his spirit give me and you and everyone that thirst and hungers for righteousness more of Him, may he open up our hearts wider so that we can be filled with the love of god for perfect love casts out all fear let us be made perfect in love I pray that God does that now in the name of Jesus Christ.

Re: Maturity - posted by billy1980 (), on: 2021/4/7 1:10

Currently learning more about our spiritual enemy and our armor, but felt led to post a piece I've been writing on tonight. Seems to fall under the context of this important discussion.

Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed, and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus. Acts 4:13

It has been just that, that a Wigglesworth, a Spurgeon, a Bunyan, a Tozer, and a watchmen Nee has been brought forth to us by. A real relationship with Christ. All due to Christ finished work long ago, and such created beings obeying and grabbing hold, of the apostles words to repent, believe and pick up their cross and follow Christ! Yes it is this unmistakable mark that those before us had been with Christ, in true fellowship with Him that has allowed them by the Holy Spirit with their deeds, mouths, pen and ink to leave behind even words that even today still call out to pilgrims still journeying on this side of eternity.

Remain in Me, and I in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself but must remain in the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; the one who remains in Me, and I in him bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. John 15:4-5

As we ponder such men, their writings and lives, we find an inward pull from them through God's Spirit pointing us to the very one who made their lives what they became. This is the greatest testimony of such men I believe. They found our Risen Christ, communed with Him and through their relationship with Him pointed others to Him through the Spirit and not to themselves!

“As for you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door, and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.” Matthew 6:6

What were their secrets to such closeness with our Risen Savior? Certainly one was their prayer lives. They knew Him through their continual communion with Him through prayer. Prayer unlocks so much from heavens great treasure horde, but few dare to venture far into its depths.

“the Helper, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and remind you of all that I said to you.” John 14:26

Another quality easy to discern in the writings of such man is the time they spent living within the very Word of God allowing the Holy Spirit to teach them. While many scratch the surface of the truth intellectually. They bowed down and sought the Spirit to teach them inwardly.

“In the days of humanity, He offered up both prayers and pleas with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His devout behavior. Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered.” Hebrews 5:7-8 “My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, Nor faint when you are punished by Him; For whom the Lord loves He disciplines, And He punishes every son whom He accepts.” It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? Hebrews 12:5b-7

I must add they learned obedience as they pressed forward in their relationships with Christ as well. Without learning obedience many keep falling into pits and crashing on the rocks. The ones that learn obedience through such times preserve in maturity.

“for we are not ignorant of schemes.” 2 Corinthians 2:11b “Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. So resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brothers and sisters who are in the world.” 1 Peter 5:8-9

Having these three vital areas attended to and learning more about, prayer, time in the word and obedience. They learned much about their great adversary. They learned how to through Christ gain victory from his constant deceptions Satan constantly throws at any saints advancing in Christ. Who are causing divine chaos to his evil plans for all of humanity.

This I believe is their secret concerning their lives. They learned to truly abide in Christ. I want to encourage you to learn to push forward in learning to abide in Christ as well! For it is through such that God can turn the world upside down by revealing Christ through them in word, by deed, and even way after they leave this world, by pens and ink through His Holy Spirit.

Heavenly Father, we come to your Throne Room through Christ sacrifice alone. Thank you for the many testimonies we have from other brethren who have already took the journey we are now on. Teach us to pray rightly and cherish personal communion with you daily! Allow us also to learn from your Holy Spirit while we go through your Word. Lead us not into temptation, and deliver us from the evil one. We are totally dependent on you concerning all things Father. We present ourselves to you as living sacrifices, Holy and pleasing in your sight through Christ, which is our spiritual act of worship unto you. Thank you for all things within our lives Father. Lead us and guide us according to your good pleasure. Your will be done on earth and in us, as it is already done in heaven. We ask this in Jesus name Amen.

Re: - posted by passerby, on: 2021/4/7 18:37

If one can ask the apostle Paul (at the time of his writing the letter to the Corinthians) this question:

What is your level of maturity as a christian, scoring from the scale of 1- 10, explain.

The pharisees will say, who told you.

How do you think the apostle Paul will answer.

Re: - posted by brothagary, on: 2021/4/7 18:56

I don't think understand your question, can you rephrase it please so I don't misunderstand you. I don't think Paul would care what a pharisee says to him. If I understand you, are saying what level is paul on and what would be his answer, that is such a hypothetical question that I don't think there is a correct response to a vague question like that, what point are you trying to make passerby, the point that Tozer and me and billy are making is the same point Paul is making which many Christians would like to ignore, which is complete with bible verses. To gain deep wisdom and a deeper walk with God through maturity.

Re: - posted by passerby, on: 2021/4/7 20:24

I understand why the question could be vague. I am currently involved in an innovative postgraduate curriculum design.

One of the recurring issue that we have to resolve is how do we measure performance of the students, the faculty, and the whole program itself.

For the students, we know that the class record will not suffice to be an all in all basis, and grading by the traditional scale of 5.0 to 1.0 would not be entirely effective.

I have great relief when TMK posted his view, and your post as well as Billy, having tasted what the gospel mean to sinners like us.

If Paul will be asked the way I posted it, he will probably define first what is 1, what is 10, and what is in between and then will talk and talk about the grace and power of God.

In your post, the parable of the sower came to my remembrance how the cares of life would choke us, and the concern of Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians. The christians and the church should not live that way. We have to forsake sins everyday, every moment of our lives. We must live for the name of Christ for the sanctity of the gospel for the love and fear of God and that the gospel may not be defamed.

I'll stop for now.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2021/4/7 20:54

In 55 AD, Paul wrote he was "least of the apostles." In 60 AD, he wrote he was "least of all the saints." Around 64 AD, he said he was the "chief" of sinners. Note the progression.

Re: - posted by billy1980 (), on: 2021/4/7 22:36

Going off of what TMK said, the bigger the revelation of Christ we are given the smaller we view ourselves. The first will be last, and the greatest in the kingdom will have served the others the greatest.

So not sure you will be able to compute grade point averages from a spiritual scale rightly... (Unneeded info)

Re: - posted by brothagary, on: 2021/4/7 23:32

Ahh now I see where you coming from I agree with Billy I wouldn't know where to start to try to create a grading system from 1 to 10 in it in a context of spiritual growth I've never even really thought about it and when I use the term grade one and then two, second and third grade I'm sort of speaking as a man so that that's easy to understand I suppose my view would be when you get born again you remain a babe in Christ for a certain amount of time and are more than likely, well I guaranteed to be carnal because of what Paul said in Hebrews that babes in Christ who only drink the milk of the word don't know good from evil as a fully matured Saint would and I suspect as you grow from being a babe you lose some of that carnal nature through becoming aware of evil and the sinful nature of the flesh into an intermediate somewhere in between the babe and the fully mature age Saint. So my way of looking at it there's at least three stages, it could be more like 4 or 5 stages where we seem to enter into areas of deeper revelation on certain aspects of Christianity but this may depend personally on god and how much he sanctifies the individual with the baptism of the holy spirit and with further in fillings of the holy spirit May depend on how much one's prayer life is deep, he might skip a stage if he's devoted to prayer and meditation on the word I would assume that would be possible and likely, so I don't think we can put it in a box just like we can't put God in a box because you know Jesus said the spirit is like the wind and it blows where it wills and you can hear the sound but you can't tell which way it comes from which way it goes so too are those who are born of the spirit. Then when it comes to knowledge and Bible knowledge you could probably grade that out to a grade from 1 to 10 but that would be something teachers would talk about and work out for themselves in their class,

knowing this that Paul said we all have knowledge but knowledge puffs up but love edifies. So you could quite easily get someone who is 9 or 10 on the knowledge scale but is on one or two on the spiritual scale, and you might get someone who's only five on the knowledge scale when it comes to all the stories of the Old Testament and all the Bible knowledge that one can have and even on different doctrines he might only be number 5 but they may have reached a much higher spiritual level with a closer relationship with God regarding the deeper life, the idea would be to grade the students on knowledge and also on wisdom and spiritual understanding that is obtained through spiritual revelation through the gift of prophecy and the gift of the word of wisdom, if I was in that situation that you were in I would definitely distinguish between the two

Re: - posted by passerby, on: 2021/4/8 6:21

Although no one can boast of anything, a sort of rating system has been instructed in the bible for example in appointing elders in the church.

It is not clear to me how are we going to incorporate the 'spiritual gifts' for leadership qualifications in the church or for checking spiritual maturity, especially in this generation of unbelief.

But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills. (1 Corinthians 12:7-11)

Re: - posted by brothagary, on: 2021/4/8 8:29

I think generally the gifts of the spirit are different from the manifestations of the spirit, gifts are something we desire and receive keep and develop and manifestation is how God manifests himself when he wills through those with the gifts. Manifestations operate according to god's will for the edification of the body of Christ it's not entirely clear and there's much debate but Paul implies that prophecy can connect us with wisdom and knowledge 2 If I have the gift of prophecy and cannot fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, so I assume the manifestation of the word of knowledge and the word of wisdom work through the gift of prophecy, but it's a highly debatable subject even seen someone with the gift of healing who heals many people one after the other, who receives prophecies and words of secret knowledge while ministering, I'm convinced one can have two or more gifts that you can major in and God's spirit will manifest different manifestation through those gifts, gifts don't get taken back, the gift of prophecy opens us up to revelations, which is why Paul said desire it. but it's not worth arguing about, as long as we seek for God and desire spiritual gifts and manifestations.