



As a Pastor I get frustrated with those who paint a picture of what the perfect Christian should be, (Smith Wigglesworth, the Apostle Paul, and Mother Teresa all rolled into one) and then castigate the congregation for not being it. Yes we need to see the goal and how far we have to go, Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect. Mat 5:48. But done too often, it leads to frustration, disillusion and despair. A goal we cannot reach! Instead, it seems to me what is important is dealing with the next step. If we do, God will take care of the final goal.

being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. Philippians 1:6



What is the next step?

It may be dealing with a sin, be seeking a gift, or becoming active in worship (doing something radical like raising your hands!). It may be going to Bible School, or starting a quiet time. It may be starting to witness, it may be volunteering for a job in Church.



What else could it be?

How are you going to know?



Most of the time, if we take a good hard look at ourselves, the answer is not hard to find. It seems to me the most obvious solution is to ask God. "Lord what are the things we need to be dealing with in my life?"

It may be as simple as obeying what God tells you. You don't need three months coaching, deliverance and anointing with oil, to raise your hands in church or start reading your Bible, you just need to do it!

Other things we may need to study up on or get some help, find a book, ask an elder.

Once you know the object, the method is not so hard to find. Taking the next step leads to the step after that. Is it possible that some of the spiritual blocks (like unfulfilled prophecies or calls) in our lives are there because we have not dealt with the next step?



What is your next step?



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Christian Church

Taking the next step.



We ought always to thank God for you, brothers, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love every one of you has for each other is increasing.
2 Thessalonians 1:3



So you have become a Christian, wonderful. New start, new status, new way of life. Your name is written in the Lambs Book of Life, your eternal future is secured. God is on your side and everything is complete. So what do you do now?



Read Ephesians 2v8

Read Acts 15v11

Read 1 Corinthians 1:18

Read Philippians 1v28

What does 'been saved' mean?

What does 'we are saved' mean?

What does 'being saved' mean?.

What does you 'will be saved' mean?

Salvation is past, present, continuous and future.



Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, 1 Peter 2:2

we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. Ephesians 4:15

Connection with the Head..., from whom the whole body... grows as God causes it to grow. Colossians 2:19

Salvation is not an end, it is a beginning. We have to grow in Christ, in many different areas.



Believer, Disciple, Christian

We use these words synonymously, but each has a slightly different meaning.

A Believer, believes. In Scripture the word implies action, acknowledging that Jesus is Lord is not enough, we have to make a commitment to Him. The devil believes in God, but it does not mean he is saved! James 2v19. We tend to use this word in a passive sense, and of an intellectual process. Yes, I believe in God.

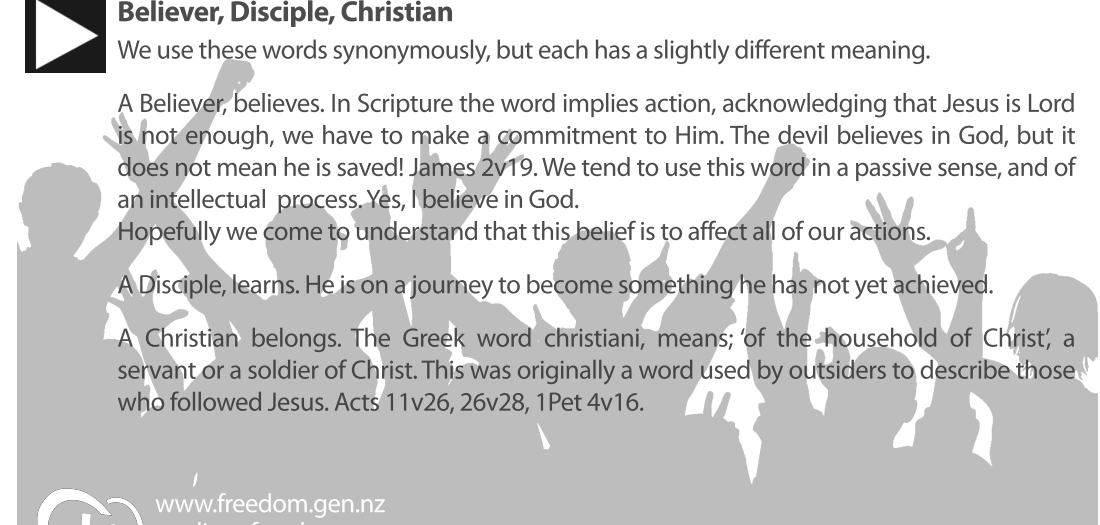
Hopefully we come to understand that this belief is to affect all of our actions.

A Disciple, learns. He is on a journey to become something he has not yet achieved.

A Christian belongs. The Greek word *christiani*, means; 'of the household of Christ', a servant or a soldier of Christ. This was originally a word used by outsiders to describe those who followed Jesus. Acts 11v26, 26v28, 1Pet 4v16.



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What different parts of our faith do these words apply to?

Perhaps the most important word for us is disciple.

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, Matthew 28:19

What things mark a disciple?



Disciple derives from the idea of discipline.

How must a disciple be disciplined?

Who is our teacher?

If we are a disciple what will our attitude to life be?

When do you stop growing as a believer?

What was Paul's attitude?

Philippians 3v12



In what areas of our Christian life do we need to grow?



We need to grow in every area of our Christian walk. To grow in knowledge is of little use if we do not grow in service. To grow in power is no use if you do not grow in love. The challenge that faces us, is to keep growing.



What does it mean to grow in the fruit of the Spirit?

How are you going to do this?

Which fruit do you lack?



What does it mean to grow in purity?

How are you going to do it?

What does it mean to grow in service?

Is this just in Church?



How are you going to grow in knowledge?

This is probably the easiest one. We are surrounded with easy ways to increase our knowledge, no other generation has had this ease of access.

Is the church any better for it?

But is it enough to attend Church and read the Bible?



What does it mean to grow in grace?

What effect is growing in grace going to have on those around you?



What does it mean to grow in faith?

How are you going to do this?

What areas are you deficient in?

What areas are you deficient in?

Where do you need to grow?

This part of the study is not intended to be invasive. You do not need to tell everyone, you do need to be honest with yourself.



Faith,

Love

Fruit of spirit,

Grace

Gifts of spirit,

Service

Knowledge,

Purity

Understanding,

Obedience

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We all need to grow in all these areas, none of us have reached perfection in any one of them. It has often been pointed out that Christ works progressively in our lives. He does not deal with all the things that need to change in our lives at once, If he did we would probably end up in a psychiatric hospital! He works gradually on one or a few things in our lives. Pinpointing the areas in our lives that have to change and working on them. When they are done, He starts to work in a different area.



What happens if you stay still too long?