



AWAKE ARISE ALIGN ADVANCE

Stages of Spiritual Maturity



Solid food is for those who are mature, who through training have the skill to recognize the difference between right and wrong. Hebrews 5:14 NLT

The Bible speaks of those who are spiritually mature by virtue of having been trained. As with any training, there have to be various stages and processes the person being trained goes through in order to arrive at expertise. As we look at spiritual development, let's draw an analogy of a person waking up and starting their day.

Typically, the first thing people do when they wake up from a night's sleep is to open their eyes, so this is usually the first sign of being awake. The next step would then be to get up. When you get up you may still be a little groggy and may stagger a bit when you take your first few steps and then get their bearings right as we often see with young children. Adults typically would stretch a little bit to loosen tension in the muscles after being in the same position for a while. Then you start moving and fully kick off your day, going on to achieve great things. Then the day ends and the process starts again the next day.

Spiritual development is similar to this and the process may be summarised in 4 key stages which we have labelled: Awake, Arise, Align and Advance.

This series we are digging into these stages and we trust that the Holy Spirit will guide us as we commit to the process of continuous spiritual growth.



Day 1 Awake

“For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth),” Ephesians 5:8-9

“Therefore He says: “Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light.”” Ephesians 5:14

There are two different types of sleep – first is the natural, physical sleep that the body uses to refresh. Then there’s where the spirit is asleep – meaning not alert or aware. It’s possible to be physically active but asleep spiritually. Interestingly the Bible connects being asleep spiritually with being in the dark. So being awake speaks to having a level of illumination in your spirit. It’s the extent of illumination we have that determines the extent to which we grow in our spiritual development.

Take heed, watch and pray... Mark 13:33

When we’re asleep in the natural, we’re not aware of what’s going on around us and the same applies to our spiritual lives. If we’re not awake we won’t know who we really are in Christ, the authority we carry and the capacity we have access to through the Holy Spirit. When we have light we can see clearly and are able to see where we need to go and what we need to avoid.

For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known. I Corinthians 13:12

We receive illumination in stages and the Holy Spirit reveals Jesus to us so it is a continuous

Prayer: Father, help me to wake up where I’ve been asleep and illuminate every area of darkness in my life.



Day 2

Arise

“Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you. See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the Lord rises upon you and his glory appears over you. Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.” Isaiah 60:1-3 NIV

The next stage after awakening is arising. It's when we arise that we move from head knowledge to experiencing and walking in the reality of that revelation. For instance when we receive a revelation of who we are in Christ, the manner in which we approach life will change. Our walk with God will change as we seek to make knowing Him our priority.

Arising calls for action on our part as we must arise first before we can shine. Any time we want to change something in our life or in the life of others, we have to arise. When things were not going well in Israel they had to go to war, Deborah arose and went into battle with Barak. When the Jews were scheduled to be slaughtered, Esther arose to meet the king and Haman's plans. When Paul received his calling, he went across the majority of Asia setting up churches. Revelation is wonderful but nothing happens if we don't take action.

“Arise and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause you to hear My words.” Jeremiah 18:2

'And the fire on the altar shall be kept burning on it; it shall not be put out. And the priest shall burn wood on it every morning...' Leviticus 6:12

Once we're awake one of the things we also arise in is taking responsibility for our spiritual journey. We realize that a relationship with God requires our active participation in fellowship and obedience. There's a part we need to play in ensuring that we keep the fire on our altar burning so we don't get cold. Remember there are levels of awakening and as such there will be levels of arising also. We can never get too deep in God or know all there is to know about Him in one lifetime. Nowadays we don't have to burn a physical fire in fellowship with God, but there must be a fire burning on the altar of our hearts which we tend to daily. As we do so we get deeper in fellowship with the Holy Spirit, receive more revelation and more strength to go even longer in our walk with Him and shine more so our lives reflect His glory.

Prayer: Lord help me to arise so my life reflects the reality of who You are and all You have made available to and for me.



Day 3 Align

“Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.” Galatians 5:25

The Bible says we're to keep in step with the Holy Spirit, which speaks to a rhythm that we and the Holy Spirit should have. If we're keeping in step, we're marching to the same beat. Now the Holy Spirit's 'beat' with one person could be different to that of another. So if someone doesn't move in step with us, it doesn't mean there's necessarily something wrong with them, they may just be moving to a different beat. That's why we need to depend on the Holy Spirit for alignment. As we allow Him to align us, He may keep us with those whose rhythms generally match ours at least for that season. However we must also recognise that rhythms change even for us based on what God wants to achieve in that season.

“The mature children of God are those who are moved by the impulses of the Holy Spirit.” Romans 8:14 TPT

“For I know the plans I have for you,” says the Lord. “They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.” Jeremiah 29:11

As we walk with Jesus sometimes we get ahead of ourselves or lag behind, but as believers we're supposed to be moved by the impulses of the Holy Spirit which He uses to transform our thinking, guide us and order our steps. God has a plan for each and every one of us which only the Holy Spirit can guide us into the fullness of. Even if we have a revelation of God's plan and are ready to move in that direction, we won't know the specific steps to take as each new level in God requires a higher level of consecration. Only the Holy Spirit can point this out to us per time.

“The Lord says, “I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over you. Do not be like a senseless horse or mule that needs a bit and bridle to keep it under control.”” Psalms 32:8-9

Alignment is a choice that won't be forced upon us. So we need to decide who we really want to be in charge of the outcome of our lives.

Prayer: Lord please bring me into alignment wherever I may have gone off track. Help me to move according to the Holy Spirit's leading and not my own agenda

Day 4 Advance

“Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.””
Genesis 1:26

As we advance, we grow in grace, illumination, understanding of our rights and benefits and also of our responsibility. We begin to realise that God put us in charge as His representatives here on earth and that there are expectations He has of us.

“The heaven, even the heavens, are the LORD’s; But the earth He has given to the children of men.” Psalms 115:16

“The entire universe is standing on tiptoe, yearning to see the unveiling of God’s glorious sons and daughters!” Romans 8:19 TPT

“You are My battle-ax and weapons of war...” Jeremiah 51:20

We are here for a specific reason and assignment which if carried out according to God’s plan will extend the advancement of His kingdom here on earth. Many times the enemy tries to prevent us from achieving this core objective by bringing all sorts of distractions our way. His sole aim is that we do not advance God’s kingdom so we must be wise to the wiles of the enemy.

“For we [believers will be called to account and] must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be repaid for what has been done in the body, whether good or bad [that is, each will be held responsible for his actions, purposes, goals, motives—the use or misuse of his time, opportunities and abilities].” 2 Corinthians 5:10 AMP

If we don’t know who we are, we won’t know what is expected of us. This denies us the opportunity to partner effectively with the Holy Spirit when He instructs, guides or even chastens us. Even if we have achieved some mileage in our walk with Him, there’s always more in Him and more opportunities He will bring our way to showcase His glory. The earth is waiting, groaning for believers to arise, awake, align and advance.

Prayer: Lord please show me my area of responsibility and help me to partner with the Holy Spirit to advance Your kingdom in that area.

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