

# Inward Spiritual Development

To learn we must remain a student open to new understanding, even when it does not agree with our current understanding.  
Think objectively, search deeply, and experience spiritually.

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# Getting Right With God

Matthew 6:33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

## Defining God

God is love, peace, patience, mercy, forgiveness, compassion, truth, and just. To seek such things with our hearts and minds is to have them within our consciousness. If we do not have God right in our minds we will not be seeking God inwardly, even if we outwardly go through all the regular motions.

One cannot understand this point without some experience in it. If we have never had mercy, have always been impatient, lie every day, or view love as way to suffer or be hurt we may be unable to comprehend God inwardly with our senses. We may have been in training to resist and deny such sensations. We will need to undergo a process to experience them and bring them to life within us.

Just like riding a bike, throwing a football, putting on makeup, or any kind of skill we must experience the sensation within the activity to begin to learn. Fine motor skills need to be practiced in the activity to learn through trial and error how to respond to the physical elements at hand.

The sensation of Grace comes through God's elements that exist in the experiences of love, peace, mercy, forgiveness, compassion, truth, and justice/impartiality.

We must be placing our inward utilities of thoughts, emotions, and spiritual sensations toward God's righteousness. Most of us, at first, may not be in the practice of focusing on God's righteousness and may even be wondering how to do it. Inward Authority offers some direction as to how we can develop this practice into routine.

## God's Righteousness

Matthew 5:20 For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 23:28 Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

It is essential that we learn and understand true righteousness of God. Throughout the Bible people have followed and worshiped righteousness separate from God, yet claiming it is from God.

Matthew 25:46 And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

As worshipers of God we are to serve God by God’s righteousness. We are to know and do God’s will every day.

John 7:24 Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.”

Righteous judgement comes from those who have practiced God’s righteousness and have shaped their senses to understand it. Shaping our senses comes through experience. We ought to share with each other our personal experience with God’s righteousness.

Acts 10:37 But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him.

To work righteousness we ought to understand what it is. It is to serve God correctly. We serve in truth, patience, compassion, forgiveness, mercy, generosity, justice, peace, and love. We ought to grow in this daily with all our heart, all our mind, and all our strength.

Romans 6:18 And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.

If we are no longer sinning, then we are slaves of righteousness. If we are not slaves of righteousness we are missing the mark and sinning. Freedom from sin is to seek God and God’s righteousness. If we seek selfish - ambition and

our own way then we are not seeking God's righteousness. Again, it is about progressing not achieving perfection.

Romans 8:10 And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

Romans 10:3 For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.

Ephesians 6:14 Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness,

1 Timothy 6:11 But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness.

Now we have read some of who God is and have a little understanding of how to pursue God's righteousness, let us do so with all our heart, all our mind, all our strength, and all our soul.

## Resistance & struggle happens

Since we will be doing something new and different our bodies often resist. It's like trying to write with a non-dominate hand. It feels awkward and perhaps even a waste of time. The mind may come up with reasons not to do it. This is a natural response to change and retraining. We must be ready for battle to deny contrary mental messages. The mind will seek to follow what it is trained to do. Retraining will always require some restraint from previous training and then focus on the new training.

Some questions and doubt about this training idea may be present. Let's review the great commandment which Christ emphasizes. "Love God with all your heart, all you mind, all your strength, and all your soul (life)."

(Deuteronomy 6:5, Matthew 22:37, Mark 12:30, Luke 10:27)

In other words, Love God with all your inward authority. To give our all towards anything often requires more focus, diligence, effort, action, and productivity. Those who are unwilling to give their all will be unlikely to maintain the training of God's will. Why else would this 'all' message be repeated and restated? It is necessary and serves a purpose.

## Resist and persist

Giving our all will be required to resist our old ways and persist in new Godly ways. Our automatic responses have been hard wired and ingrained into our normal behavior and exist below our consciousness much of the time. We will need to learn to recognize our choices, actions, and thoughts which prompt our behavior in order for us to create change. This takes a conscious effort requiring a retraining focus. Creating a new habit can take 4 to 6 weeks, but eliminating an old habit does may never happen. Somewhere deep within our nervous system will remain our old ways of behaving.

## Seek first

Seeking first means we bring into our consciousness God's Righteousness in prayer and meditation. We humble ourselves to accept God's gift of grace into our attitude. It's important that we accept we will each fall short of grace from time to time and remember patience. Seeking first is taking an attitude of "no matter what" to pursue it. Just like other trainings, if we fall off the bike, we get back on. We keep getting on until we learn more. Many recovery groups use the phrase, "progress, not perfection." We shall use it as well because it helps. Our goal is to simply aim for progress and check to ensure we are progressing.

"Watch your thoughts, they become words;  
watch your words, they become actions;  
watch your actions, they become habits;  
watch your habits, they become character;  
watch your character, for it becomes your destiny."  
FRANK OUTLAW

Like any other skill we will need frequent repetition in our development. We must apply ourselves daily to seek the kingdom of God and God's righteousness. Each day we ought to pray for it and meditate upon it. We must regularly seek to develop Godly character traits within our minds and hearts.

James 1:14 NKJV But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. 15 Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.

The description above exemplifies how sin is developed. It begins with an idea and then the idea is followed out. When the idea is followed out it is experienced with sensation. Once we gain the sensation then we have learned evil which is sin. Growing it is to do it more and more which can bring spiritual death within our heart, mind, and soul. Since we all sin we all can understand this process. Sin can become so repeated and developed within us it can be our identity.

Paul undergoes this confusion. Remember, Paul wrote this roughly 2000 years ago. Since this writing there has been new technology to explain what he is going through. We may not understand it fully, but we can clear up some of the picture. Evil exist within us all. Some examples of evil are resentment, idolatry, lies, vanity, arrogance, selfish-ambition, and lust. Most of us have pursued evil through repetition and time to where it is automatic. For us to seek and pursue God's Righteousness will require self-restraint. Read Romans 7 and see how it fits.

Romans 7:14 NKJV For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. 15 For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. 16 If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good. 17 But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. 18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. 19 For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. 20 Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. 21 I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. 22 For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

## Those who...

Authors in the Bible use this phrase, "those who," to differentiate between people. Those who... means the people who do what it is the author is describing will get what the author is discussing. It may imply as well that those who don't will not get what the author is discussing.

Matthew 5:4 Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted.

Matthew 5:6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled.

Matthew 5:10 Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Luke 1:50 And His mercy is on those who fear Him From generation to generation.

Authors differentiate between those who take action and those who don't. The ones who do take action receive a reward. Also, authors describe some other consequences for "those who" do evil.

Matthew 13:41 The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness,

Mark 10:24 And the disciples were astonished at His words. But Jesus answered again and said to them, "Children, how hard it is for those who trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God!

James 1:12 Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

There are many parables that describe different consequences for "those who" act with God and those who do not.

Some may say that it was after Jesus died that we were set free. This implies that instructions from Jesus on how to live were no longer valid to us because of crucifixion and/or resurrection. Something seems amiss with this idea.

Romans 1:29-32 being filled with all unrighteousness, [i]sexual immorality, wickedness, [m]covetousness, [n]maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, [o]undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, [p]unforgiving, unmerciful; who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.

1 Timothy 6:9 But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition.

Titus 1:15 To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled.

Hebrews 10:36 For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise:

37 “For yet a little while,

And He[l] who is coming will come and will not [m]tarry.

38 Now the[n] just shall live by faith;

But if anyone draws back,

My soul has no pleasure in him.”

39 But we are not of those who draw back to [o]perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.

Hebrews 12:11 Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

1 Peter 3:12 For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, And His ears are open to their prayers; But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”

Jude 1:5 But I want to remind you, though you once knew this, that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe.

## Humble attitude, confession, and repentance

Worship in the Bible often means to bow down. This may be a new idea to some of us. Since we are to love God (peace, patience, mercy, compassion, forgiveness, truth, justice, love, and generosity) with all our inward authority and worship God, then we are to bow down to these character traits in service and attitude with all our heart, mind, strength, and soul if we are to correctly align ourselves with Biblical descriptions of how best to respond with God. And we are to respond with God, not to God.

John 4:24 “God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”



We “must worship in spirit and truth.” We “must” understand the “spirit” and speak the “truth.”

Matthew 23:12 And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.

Humbling ourselves for God’s purposes is to give ourselves more and more into God’s ways in a progressive manner, yet always imperfectly. We are fallible people, so perfection is not the goal. We are in the process of being perfected while never achieving perfection.

Romans 12:16 Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion.

When our ideas, thoughts, habits, customs, personalities, or attitudes conflict with God’s righteousness we ought to humble ourselves and give into God’s grace. Seeking the kingdom of God involves much correction within ourselves. If we say we seek God yet persist in evil, we may be self-deceived. Self-deception can be so deeply rooted we would not even be able to identify it. We must look long at truth which conflicts with our understanding. We must become trained with our minds self-deceptive tendencies to better understand how to recognize them.

Our own pride can get in the way of doing what is right with God. Our self-seeking methods interfere with “seeking first the kingdom of God.” God must be first within our priorities for us to seek God first.

James 4:6 But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: “God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.”

1 Peter 5:5 Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for “God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.” Pride is valued in many areas of the world, yet with God is not. We find strength in grace which is meek and humble. Our persistence, endurance, and long-suffering in God’s righteousness gives us strength, joy, and grace.

1 Timothy 6:10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

Luke 12:33 Sell what you have and give alms; provide yourselves money bags which do not grow old, a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches nor moth destroys.

Luke 16:13 “No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”

Acts 8:20 But Peter said to him, “Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money!

Much of the world revolves around money and material things. God’s righteousness does not. We ought to learn discernment to ensure our hearts and minds do not sacrifice our spiritual condition for the pursuit of money and material things.

## **Learn from God**

Give a man a fish, feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish, feed him for life.

Time to practice fishing. For us, our fish is righteousness, goodness, and grace. To practice such things we ought to know what they are, but since

they are intangible the only way to gain understanding or information about them is through personal experience. So we ought to make our best attempt, collaborate with others who are experienced, and then repeat over and over to improve our awareness.

## **Developing Senses**

Hebrews 5:14 But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

Proverbs 1:5 NKJV “A wise man will hear and increase learning, And a man of understanding will attain wise counsel”

I was reflecting over the past three decades of my transformation experience and pondered the patient gradual process involved. God always moved within my life at a much slower pace than I desired. The clay was frequently complaining with the potter.

Now that I am much further down the road of transformation I reach out to help others along their journey. At times I get impatient because I can see the same resistance within them that I have felt. Most of us experience this resistance whenever we try to teach someone something that goes against their current understanding. There is struggle to learn that is uncomfortable and who likes to struggle? So the complaints and frustrations interfere with listening and focusing upon the instruction. The frustration I feel with helping someone who is frustrated is my own resistance to God’s teaching. Once again I need to indulge the Serenity Prayer and remind myself to accept the pace of development. I need not only to accept the pace in others, but to accept the pace in myself helping them. After all, God is the one in control, not me. I’m only the steward.

The body has limitations and the brain is part of the body. A deep sea diver needs to ascend slowly to the surface or he may experience painful physical consequences due to pressure. The body is highly adaptive to environments, but it adapts slowly. If we push past the limitations of the body we can create harm and in some cases death.

In my spiritual destruction I had descended deep and in order to get out of the pit I needed to make life altering changes. To change my heart, mind, and

soul required adjustments throughout my inward authority. My attitude, habits, personality, and goals all needed to change. Staying with the process brought confusion, fear, grief, frustration, hope, and faith.

Although I wanted to be free from pain I had to learn to accept discomfort as part of the process toward peace. An attitude of impatience brought more pain and discomfort than humble waiting and trust with God's pace. I was often in disagreement with God's pace. I was told I was putting the cart before the horse. God is the horse that pulls the cart and controls the speed. Whenever I moved away from God or ran ahead, problems developed. Impatience, intolerance, pride, greed and the like brought frustration, loneliness, and emptiness. The pain taught me to keep coming back to God.

Life involves hurt and loss. There is no way around it. Avoidance of feelings through drugs, sex, food, work, exercise, and other forms of medication or distraction techniques only intensify the destruction of the inward condition. God created us for deep intimate relationships. This is how we are to grow and thrive. It's time to learn how to safely live closer to each other for spiritual growth and healing.

Spiritual learning is to adapt to spiritual realities and live by spiritual principles. The moment we stop living by spiritual principles and live by some other ideas is the moment we stop growing spiritually and begin growing destructively.

Matthew 9:13 NKJV "But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.' For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."

Mercy is a spiritual principle to live by and like all spiritual principles it is not black and white. We are not to be merciful in all situations just as God is not merciful in all situations. We will need to figure out where, when, how, and why to be merciful. And like other intangible traits, learning it will be done through trial and error. If we do not evaluate and reflect upon our error, we may not learn from it. Jesus says to go and learn so let's go and learn.

## Good Samaritan

Jesus lays out this great story about helping others. Just like most instructions in the Bible on how to live, God is disclosing a process to learn

intangible spiritual goodness. The requirement to sense this learning is a willingness and readiness of heart and mind.

We must be willing to give and receive love. We must learn to look more at the intangible sensations of the experience than the physical more obvious senses of what we see, hear, smell, and touch. Love, compassion, and peace are realities that move beyond and within our other senses.

Our minds must be open to see what we do not currently see and to let our understanding accept and accommodate new knowledge. We must lower our defensiveness to truth. We must make corrections within our belief more and more to adapt and align with spiritual truth. Spiritual truth will make sense as we act upon it more to see how it works. We must have an objective mindset with unbiased analysis of spiritual realities. Collaboration with others can protect us from our own bias. Two heads work better than one. Yet we must ensure we are collaborating with others who are objective and not stuck in a 'Group Think' or conformist scenario.

Luke 10:37 NKJV And he said, "He who showed mercy on him." Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

We are not to do likewise because it was commanded out of stewardship or due diligence. We are to go and do likewise to discover the intangible experience of God therein. If we disconnect our spiritual experience we will miss the meaning and purpose of the experience. Yet many of us may be inwardly distracted by habitual fear or anger prompting us to cringe, resist, or run making us seem incapable of giving the necessary focus of our hearts to receive the grace. In such cases a process of inward repentance, humbling of self, and willingness to confess sin can be helpful. This process with prayer for direction and consultation with spiritual brothers can help. Letting go of the fear, pride, and anger we used to control our lives and decisions can be a difficult habit to surrender. Surrender itself may arouse fear and/or anger.

## **Yoke with Christ**

Matthew 11:29 NKJV "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."

A yoke is "a wooden bar or frame by which two draft animals (such as oxen) are joined at the heads or necks for working together."

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/yoke>

If we are to do as Jesus says to do than we are to do as Jesus demonstrated. Again, we are learning inward spiritual principles. We are learning mental attitudes and heart sensitivities. We are seeking to develop practices and experiences with spiritual ways and truth. This has less to do with money, clothes, or titles, and more to do with peace, love, truth, justice, mercy, forgiveness, compassion, and patience. Read John 15 and imagine being yoked to Jesus. Jesus is clear as to where he gets direction, from God. Jesus is yoked to God and if we are yoked to Jesus than we are yoked to God.

John 6:45 NKJV “It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall all be taught by God.’ Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me.”

Anyone who is yoked with God is yoked with Jesus. God and Jesus function from the same spiritual principles, truth, and direction. We ought to all be seeking a similar mindset, to be of one mind, a mind moving in the direction of increasing spiritual truth with the same spiritual guidelines. Our experiences and understandings out to be growing similarly in righteousness.

Romans 16:17 NKJV “Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them.”

In a library or classroom we use “inside voices” to limit distractions from learning. We limit distractions because it interferes with the process. Jesus and the disciples were focused upon spending time with spiritual brothers who were seeking to learn the spiritual way of life. The higher the quality of a focused classroom, the better the opportunity to learn. We ought to choose our playgrounds and playthings carefully to ensure our yoke with God is encouraged, strengthened, and protected. We ought to evaluate what we are listening to, who we associate with, and what we are watching. This is an individual process and we ought to be very careful in judging others. We ought to first test ourselves for fear, resentment, or pride, while ensuring our own peace, love, sincerity, mercy, forgiveness, impartiality, truth, and patience.

## **Helping others**

Helping others can teach us a lot about ourselves in our spiritual attitudes, thoughts, and feelings. Are we impatient or inconsiderate? Are we fearful or controlling? Are we patiently being with God as we help others? Is our goal love and peace? We ought to be interacting with others daily to help us grow in God's righteousness. Being with God is not selfish transaction based upon isolation. We ought to be engaging intimately with others regularly.

As we help others we ought to realize we are stewards of God's grace. We are to serve others in righteousness and if it bears no fruit in others we ought to take satisfaction of the fruit within ourselves if we have been truthful, humble, and sincere.

We ought to ensure we do not get stuck trying to fix people. We are stewards of grace that does the fixing. If we are helping someone who is resistant, defiant, argumentative, inflexible, and unwilling we will be only hurting ourselves and what we might be able to do with someone else who is willing. Let's not invest our spiritual energy with obstinance or unwillingness.

1 Corinthians 15:33 NIV Do not be misled: "Bad company corrupts good character."

We must ensure our spiritual qualities are not harmed or reduced as we help others. We ought to keep our focus upon God as we help others. We can invite them to join us on our journey with God and if they show no interest, we then move on to someone else.

Whether family or stranger if we set our hearts and minds insistently to "save" someone we may be putting the cart before the horse and harming our own spiritual growth. God does the saving when one is ready to receive God's grace. We cannot control others. We can be light and salt to help others experience or sense grace, but we cannot get them to choose. We can be stewards of that saving grace if our hearts and minds are right. One character trait of God is impartiality.

Instead of focusing upon the destruction others choose and obsessing about saving them, which we can't, we ought to apply our focus as stewards of grace to those who will receive it. We can help others who are ready to receive and act upon grace. We ought to discern carefully to fish where the fish are biting.

## Choosing thoughts

2 Corinthians 10:5 NIV We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

We ought to thoughts carefully which guide us into action. Choosing our thoughts is a learning process that begins with thought awareness. With much practice of introspection, thought observation, and thought identification, we can begin creating and adding new thought messages that can influence our choices. These can be verses from the Bible or something else, but whatever we replace them with we ought to ensure they align with God's principles and lead us progressively closer into Godly activity.

1 Corinthians 4:6 NKJV "that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other."

We are all part of one spiritual body. Our vanity and self-centeredness could be our most dangerous adversary. Godliness is a state of mind. When we set our thoughts upon ourselves for selfish gain we can sabotage the spiritual experience. We ought to always see how we can be helpful in our application of spiritual principles. As long as we stay long these lines we will be doing good and right.

Romans 13:10 NKJV Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

Love is to care for others along the lines of God's character traits; peace, patience, mercy, forgiveness, truth, justice (fairness/impartiality), and compassion. Love is not prompted by fear, anger, anxiety, worry, expectation, or self-seeking, although such evil character may be present it is not the controlling factor. Love is a gift from God we ought to give to others to help them grow toward God. Sometimes love can be uncomfortable truth. Even letting others fall, fail, and suffer from their own choices, resistance, and disobedience, which may lead them to turn to God (repent).

## Turn and Follow God



Ephesians 4:17-24 NKJV “This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as [f]the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, 18 having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; 19 who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. 20 But you have not so learned Christ, 21 if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: 22 that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, 23 and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, 24 and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.”

“No longer walk as” means we are now walking, thinking, and taking different action in a different direction. Most of us know already our actions begins within our thinking, but our actions are the mode toward real change. If we continue to make the same choices and perform the same actions over time, then we may not be participating in any significant change. There is a common saying, “insanity is doing the same thing over and over expecting different results.”

Book studies are great for knowledge, but remember, 1 corinthians 8:1 “knowledge puffs up.” If our actions around others outside our book study do not change then where is the spiritual value in the book study? What good is it do read the instructions and not carry them out? We must do what the Bible says, evaluate the experience, and learn the spiritual truth within it.

## **Strength with Trust/Faith**

Philippians 4:12 NKJV “I know how to [d]be abased, and I know how to [e]abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. 13 I can do all things through [f]Christ who strengthens me.”

If I trust God and abide in God sincerely with my thoughts, prayers, desires, will, and actions, to be more in alignment with God while making God my highest priority, grace can abound. Receiving grace can depend greatly upon our inward attitude, not decision alone. Decisions can be ranked with intensions and there are many unfulfilled good intensions resulting in emptiness. We can create good and wonderful ideas within our minds and yet

not do them, which ultimately misses the mark (sin). It's good to remember, "the road to hell is paved with good intentions." [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_road\\_to\\_hell\\_is\\_paved\\_with\\_good\\_intentions](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_road_to_hell_is_paved_with_good_intentions)

Next is a list of character traits we ought to learn to avoid. We ought to learn to take captive our thoughts which guide us into spiritually destructive character.

## **Make the list, set the goals, take the actions**

2 Timothy 3 NKJV "But know this, that in the last days [a]perilous times will come: 2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 unloving, [b]unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, 4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! 6 For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, 7 always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."

2 Timothy 3:5 NKJV  
And from such people turn away!

Lovers of themselves	Blasphemers
Lovers of money	Disobedient to parents
Boasters	Unthankful
Proud	Unholy
Unloving	Despisers of good
Unforgiving	Traitors
Slanderers	Headstrong
Without self-control	Haughty
Brutal	Lovers of pleasure

James 4:17 NKJV "Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin."

Once we know God's righteousness and if we then turn away from acting upon it, we choose sin. Our thoughts are continuous all day long. They

prompt, guide, coach, and direct us toward action or inaction. Many thoughts exist below our awareness. In meditation, slowing down toward peace, practice of patience, and inward reflection, we can improve our ability to identify our thoughts and construct new ones. We can improve our thought awareness through regular practice.

We have a hundred thoughts go through us just to pray. We have thoughts to get up, where to pray, to sit, kneel, stand, and how we feel about it. We sense our surroundings; walls, floor, furniture, lighting, etc. We may have fears if someone hears us or do we really want to pray? What do we pray and how do we feel about the prayer? What does God think? All these thoughts can create challenges or encouragement toward us taking the action. Do we pray just say we did it without really meaning it in our heart? What good is it? How will it benefit us? We ought to pay close attention to this mental process to learn about ourselves and then ponder how disciples of God responded.

2 Timothy 3:14 NKJV “But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, 15 and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”

In order to “continue in the things which you have learned” means we ought to have already been doing them. Just what is it that we are doing, teachings of Christ, that we are now going to continue in? Read all of Matthew 6 which provides much direction and many instructions from Christ and then do them. Start with one thing, do it for a while, learn from the experience, continue in it, and then add something new.

## **Setting our minds**

Philippians 4:8 NKJV “Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.”

A controlled focus of thought is necessary to follow this instruction. This guidance is not something to do on occasion, but to do it each day and in everything we do. Remember, it's progressive. All we need to do is a little more this month than we did last month. A slow continued progressive development can bring much good.

In the beginning we will require some prompting to take action. Our minds will follow what they are conditioned to do. Therefore, we will need something beyond our minds for reminders and guidance. Sticky notes, signs of different kinds, and routines can prompt us. It is absolutely necessary to have a concrete plan and follow it to ensure we stay the right course. Our minds are created to engage in self-deception. We all do it daily. We are all biased, unrealistic, impractical, and irrational at times and subject to make poor choices that could lead us into spiritual destruction. We must test ourselves, examine ourselves, and hold ourselves accountable.

Setting our minds in the right direction is action. Buddy systems and regular support groups are great prompts to take righteous action. Prompts and reminders do not bring the action. Prompts and reminder inform us of the goal, but we still must choose and convince ourselves to do it.

Once we are reminded and prompted it is often best to avoid the contemplation process. We ought to stop thinking and take the action we know we ought to do. Our minds are already developed to do what we normally do and will seek to continue doing it. Our thoughts will move to defend against change and develop excuses or rationalizations to avoid the unfamiliar. This could feel like self denial or death to self as we refuse our own ideas for action toward God's.

We will need to move beyond intension and do it. Yet we must be prompted. We cannot leave this part to God, to remind us. God's been reminding us throughout scripture since we were created and in that scripture God has reminded us how we continue over and over to choose to neglect our part in the deal. We have a choice and we are responsible for how we love God. Do we choose to pray, mediate, forgive, have mercy, give compassion, confess, or sit on the couch alone at home watching movies or mainstream media? Are we spiritual couch potatoes or fitness coaches? Are we loving or disconnected? Our spiritual condition begins and ends with our choices.

A popular rock band, Rush, wrote a song called "Free Will" and in it was, "If you choose not to decide you still have made a choice."

Each day we make many choices and most of them are going through motions we have gone through before. To grow spiritually we must insist upon making new spiritual choices that take part in new daily spiritual action.

It's okay to put some things off, but to take no new or continued Godly spiritual action is to choose rebelliousness and disobedience. Essentially we are saying, "I don't need you right now God."

We ought to choose to associate with others who seek God and to put into practice God's character. It is so incredibly important to surround ourselves around others who speak the truth and walk in it. Such people will help us from self-deception that can guide us away from spiritual productivity.

Galatians 6:3 NKJV "If anyone thinks they are something when they are not, they deceive themselves."

Haven't we all thought more of ourselves than we really are? If we haven't, then we would never be disappointed in our activity or lack there of. If do exactly what we believe we would and could do there would be no disappointment. Everything would be going exactly the way we thought. Yet, because we do think more of ourselves, we are deceived. The more disappointed we are the more we may be deceived.

Self deception happens to us all and we ought to be learning how to recognize it. Why else would we seek after spiritual destructive ways? Do we believe living contrary to God's will is great idea? No, we fool ourselves into choosing activities that are spiritually harmful because of self deception. The Inward Authority process provides much direction on how to continue with spiritual action and how to better recognize self-deception. Deeper understanding develops with experience and practice which takes time and commitment. God wants all our heart, all our mind, all our strength, and all our soul to be set with God's ways and purpose.

When we participate in evil we hurt ourselves and the kingdom of God. We are not disappointing God for God is not deceived. God knows. We ought to view each day as an opportunity to add good to our souls beginning with our thoughts and then moving immediately into action. Remember, participating in contemplation can set us up to seek advice from something already set against taking new action. Our minds often times don't want different without some tangible reason it can understand. God is intangible and beyond our understanding.

Matthew 7:23 NKJV "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"

Matthew 13:41 NKJV “The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness,”

1 John 3:10 NKJV In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother.

## **Setting expectations**

If all the news channels declared the end of the world was tomorrow due to some meteor colliding with the earth, most of us would not know what to do or how to react. Some would shut down, cry, and curl up in a ball. We are not prepared for such a thing. Would we go to work the next day?

If God says, “love me with all your inward authority in everything you do every day” how would we react? Well, God has said it, and we have reacted. Now we can choose again what we will do today, tonight, and tomorrow. Will we move beyond what we have already done?

If the news channels declared a way out of death, for everyone to forgive, have mercy, confess their sins, restore relationships with love and peace, and to serve God with all their hearts, minds, strength, and souls, some may actually turn and be saved.

Hebrews 10:39 But we are not of those who draw back to [a]perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.

If we set our minds today to commit to a task tonight and tomorrow we will be more inclined and set to carry it out. This is the power of setting goals. We do what we set our minds out to do.

Romans 8:5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

Isaiah 17:10 Because you have forgotten the God of your salvation, And have not been mindful of the Rock of your stronghold, Therefore you will plant pleasant plants And set out foreign seedlings;

We ought to remember, we practice what our minds are set upon doing. We decide within our minds what we are going to do and such decisions begin with our pondering, contemplating, anticipating, reasoning, and deciding ahead. We ought to ponder, anticipate, and look forward to practicing Godly principles. We must seek out ways to convince ourselves of God's goodness and righteousness. Seeing is believing. We need to see and participate in God's righteousness to witness how it is good.

To look forward to doing something we must believe it is good and right. We may have many misunderstandings within our beliefs which convince us evil is Good when it most certainly is not. Most of us have been in such regular practice of sin, we have within us a belief that it is okay. We justify taking action in it. We make excuses to do it. Even though we know we ought to not do it, we still do it. We have a choice, but we choose evil.

Most of us will need some relearning of Good and evil to help us see the good in God's ways. Learning requires time, effort, regular participation, and practice. It can be uncomfortable to see where we are wrong and to make corrections. As we seek to see the good in obeying God's instructions we ought to also look deep into our choices of evil and what happens there. The more clear we can sense the evil in our choices the less likely we will convince ourselves it is okay or good. We ought to own the spiritual consequence of our choices and hold that within our minds each day.

If we are to learn from God we must improve our alignment with God's most basic and beginning instruction, be willing to give our "all."

Mark 12:30 NKJV "And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This is the first commandment."

## **All heart, mind, strength, & soul**

Deuteronomy 6:6 NKJV "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. 7 You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. 8 You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. 9 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

“It’s not the size of the dog in the fight, it’s the size of the fight in the dog.”  
Mark Twain

Good and evil exists within us. Yet our choices reflect just how much Good and evil will continue to exist within us. As we grow in God’s ways we increase our ability to think and act in a Good direction. Our all improves as we learn, grow, and practice Goodness with our hearts, minds, strength, and life.

Giving our all means we are exerting ourselves, struggling, and suffering to think more, and participate more, and feel more, of God’s righteousness and grace. We are seeking peace and pursuing it. We are training, shaping, and developing our hearts and minds into Godliness.

Matthew 3:8 Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, 9 and do not think to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. 10 And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

Read John 15 (note verse 6) and Ezekiel 18. See how they agree.

Our all is unique to ourselves and cannot be compared to someone else’s. In giving our all others can often see change in us over time. It takes time for fruit to grow, but it does grow if we are truly giving our all to God. We ought to thoroughly examine our own hearts, thoughts, attitudes, and actions to ensure we are right with God each day. We can utilize God’s righteousness; peace, patience, mercy, truth, justice, and love to gently and compassionately help others and ourselves. We “seek first the kingdoms of God and God’s righteousness.”

When our all is applied over time it

- grows us (How much have we grown?)
- challenges us (How much have we been challenged?)
- improves us (Are we getting better, stronger, more aware and confident?)
- hurts us - creates suffering (How much have we struggled or suffered?)
- develops us (How much have we been developed?)
- changes us (How much have we changed?)



Since we are all subject to self-deception we ought to help each other, speak truthfully to each other in love, discuss our growth and let others sense our hearts and hear our thoughts. We ought to bring everything into the light. God wants us to shine on a lamp stand and not hide under a bowl. Our sinful ways ought to be progressively confessed and corrected. Others who are on this journey with us can testify to our growth as they witness it, and we ought to seek out their views. We need truth, truth that encourages, whether comfortable or uncomfortable.

We can ask people who see us over time; our spouse, employer, coworkers, best friends, small groups, and children to learn what fruit they see us growing, how we have improved or not, and if where we are changing. After a 6 months or a year our growth ought to be evident. People we are close to ought to notice the change in us. We ought to be raising the standard of truth, justice, patience, peace, love, mercy, forgiveness, and generosity in our minds, hearts, and choices. If we are giving our all, over time it ought to produce fruit others can see.

It takes time to learn and to develop new character. It's like watering a tree. As we water a tree we don't stand there looking for fruit to grow. Instead we water it, trust that it feeds and nourishes our spiritual condition, and keep focused on how we can continue in God's righteousness. Grace grows as we receive it into our hearts, minds, and souls. If we receive it inwardly then we present it outwardly.

All our soul is our whole life. Giving a little here and there to God does not work. All means everything. Every part of us every day. We grow slowly into perfection, though always imperfect. We continue to raise God's ways within our hearts and minds. We regularly examine ourselves to ensure God is our highest priority.

“we had to fearlessly face the proposition, that either God is everything or else He is nothing. God either is, or He isn't. What was our choice to be?”  
Alcoholics Anonymous pg. 53

## **Educational Variety**

In the Spiritual Appendix of the book Alcoholics Anonymous page 567 it describes how some people have grown spiritually by the means of an “educational variety” “because they develop slowly over a period of time.”

Let’s think about this quote “develop slowly over a period of time.” Didn’t the disciples develop slowly over a period of time? Many characters in the bible grew more with God through their journey slowly over time. Isn’t God about patience and peace? One famous quote from the Bible is “wait on the lord” Psalms 27:14 & 37:9. We ought to be learning, growing, seeking, following, waiting, listening, and developing slowly over time.

We can develop knowledge, understanding, and experience with both Good and evil. We can learn from what we set ourselves to seek out and practice, whether it’s truth or deception, vanity or humility, hurry or patience, self-seeking or compassion, faith or fear, love or hate, forgiveness or resentment, retaliation or mercy, and favoritism or impartiality. One side is with God and the other is not. We have a choice what to pursue every moment of every day. This pursuit teaches us and affects our spiritual condition.

We will understand this transformation experience at the level of our being transformed in it. Most of us will not be ready to follow instructions that go against our nature or our developed ways. Some of us will cling to our nurtured identity and refuse to let go of it. We may like the way we are and be willing to fight to maintain it. This is a normal process. Even practicing alcoholics will drink themselves to death. Change can seem impossible, but we must be willing to let go of our own misunderstanding and see how others have done it.

Willing to go to any length is a condition for sobriety in 12 step programs. To choose God’s ways over our conditioned understanding of how to think and act is required for us to grow spiritually. We ought to replace evil with Good.

Romans 12:21 “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

We ought to respond with Good instead of evil. If we are not seeking how to do things new and different then we will repeat our preconditioned usual ways.

We have evil within us and a lot of it. Some of us can be unwilling to even examine ourselves long enough to see our own faults. It can be

uncomfortable to own our wrongs, perhaps even shameful, but we must see the truth of where we are at and where we can be.

James 1:23-24 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; 24 for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.

Those of us who think we are Good people and without evil are deceived. We all think and behave imperfectly. Growing in God's righteousness is the goal and as long as we are on that road we are doing good.

1 John 1:8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

There is much within our experience, knowledge, and beliefs that exist below our conscious levels. This means we are not aware of it. It is crucial we become humble enough to accept both Good and evil exists within us and take steps to grow our understanding of it. We must apply introspection to learn our thoughts honestly with impartiality and take responsibility for our thought choices.

Regular self examination is essential to truthfully see our guiding thoughts. In the beginning, it may be best to do such soul searching with a mentor or guide to help see past some of our biased nature. There is another training on self-deception and the many ways it comes about. For now we will focus upon how we learn and have learned.

## **Passive learning vs. Active learning**

Most forms of teaching comes by means of Passive Learning

“Passive learning is a method of learning or instruction where students receive information from the instructor and internalize it, and “where the learner receives no feedback from the instructor”

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Passive\\_learning](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Passive_learning)

Passive Learning is done so often most of us seek learning primarily in this manner without realizing it is the weakest form of learning. Many religions teach in this manner and have done so for centuries. Jesus on the other hand

did not teach his disciples this way. Jesus had disciples follow him, live with him, and completely change their lives. He not only gave a parable of the “Good Samaritan” but he gave instruction to “do likewise.” Yet how many of us who have heard that parable have then followed the instruction of doing likewise?

Many of us like what we are familiar with and have come accustomed to, like Passive Learning. We may prefer to sit and listen instead of put new things into practice, but we must understand our learning will be little and shallow following Passive Learning methods. If we desire little and shallow spiritual growth then Passive Learning may be fitting.

In 12 step programs there is the expression “a God of your own understanding.” Let’s face it. We all have our unique way of following God. This means our interpretations of what God wants us to do are different. Each of us has our own path to journey with God. We vary in how we seek God, pray, read scripture, go to church, worship, serve, etc. Everyone claims to follow the same instruction manual and yet do things differently.

Passive learning may be dangerous when it comes to our salvation or spiritual condition. If we rely upon sermons as our way of learning God we can easily misunderstand the message. Misunderstanding God’s message is not something to overlook. This is a teaching on “life and death” Deuteronomy 30:11-20. Our learning must move into active learning for the sake of saving souls.

Imagine going to get a drivers license where all you needed to do was watch a few videos. No tests, just talks. Imagine your dentist, surgeon, firefighter, police officer, or therapist having no tests, internships, or practices. How well would our professionals do their jobs without active learning?

## Active Learning

Active learning is "a method of learning in which students are actively or experientially involved" [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Active\\_learning](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Active_learning)

Passive Learners listen to Jesus and read the Bible while Active Learners do what Jesus and the Bible said to do. Our choices bring the result of what kind of learners we are.

Imagine someone wanting to learn to swim. We show a video, then a lecture, ask them if they understand, and then tell them to go and teach others how to swim. This process does not work well with anything. We do it, but it is the weakest form of teaching we can experience. Now why would we teach the single most important principles in life with the weakest possible form of learning? Probably because we have done it so long it is engrained and we fear doing anything else. We all know something is amiss with the system, but few have the faith to do different. Let's not fear different. Let's test it and see how it works.

Developing deeper spirituality takes new experiential action and learning from it. Most of us will learn a lot about ourselves as we attempt new action. The process of denying our resistance and to conform to new ways is a key spiritual understanding. We can't read ourselves into it. Like swimming, we must experience the process to adapt and adjust.

There will be resistance and self-deception. We must learn how to deal with it as it comes about. There is no side-stepping this situation. We must do what part of us will not want to do. If we are not doing things we don't want to do we may be going in a direction that will bring us evil consequences.

1 Peter 3:17 "For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil."

## **Webb's depth of knowledge**

We can gauge our learning and understanding using DOK. Many educators use DOK to create curriculum. There are four levels in Webb's 'depth of knowledge'. Each level has a brief description of action required for it. The lower the level of investment, the more shallow the depth.

We must keep in mind this system is created for education along tangible things, things we can easily see and measure together. Spiritual development deals with intangible things, things we cannot easily see and measure. So there will be some big differences. We ought to simply see and learn there are different levels of understanding indicated by our levels of cognitive participation and experience.

Level 1 Listen to understand and retain information

“The task does not require any cognitive effort beyond remembering the right response or formula. Copying, computing, defining, and recognizing are typical Level 1 tasks” <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/webbs-depth-knowledge-increase-rigor-gerald-aungst>

Comparatively with our spiritual development this level of investment would be showing up at meetings, attending church reading books, and listening to instruction. This all falls under passive learning.

## Level 2 Define the retained information, know the differences

“must make some decisions about his or her approach. Tasks with more than one mental step, such as comparing, organizing, summarizing, predicting, and estimating,” <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/webbs-depth-knowledge-increase-rigor-gerald-aungst>

At this level we would be sorting out the information we have learned to see how it all works together. This level is contemplating the progressive action or instruction and our readiness to do it. We may be in the convincing process to do the 12 steps or Biblical instruction of giving ourselves to God, confession, repentance, and restitution. We are thinking what that might do for us and if we should do it.

## Level 3 Introspective investigation & personalizing the experience

“must use planning and evidence, and thinking is more abstract. A task with multiple valid responses, where students must justify their choices”

At this level we are to spiritually gather the intangible evidence through new experiences. The intangible evidence will come to us through sensations. Since Good is more grey than black and white we will need a collective understanding of what Good is to improve our sense of when it appears. There is a spirit within us that can help once we have developed a habit of listening to that spirit for direction. Listening for the spirit and obeying it is in the level 3 process. In order to collect spiritual evidence we must practice walking in spiritual principles. We must practice more truth, mercy, patience, peace, compassion, love, generosity, forgiveness, and justice/impartiality. We must objectively see what happens within us and around us as we practice such character traits. We will learn as much as we give ourselves over to the

experience. Learning to swim with a life jacket is one thing, but taking it off teaches us much more. Riding a bike with training wheels teaches us many things, but when we take off the training wheels we learn further and deeper.

We also ought to learn the consequences of our participation with the evil character traits of fear, resentment, self-seeking, and dishonesty. This includes the seven deadly sins of pride/vanity, envy, greed, lust, wrath, gluttony, and sloth. We ought to learn how these guide us and lead us into action so we can begin replacing them with Good.

As objectively as we can we ought to learn about our prompting thought messages. We ought to see what it is we are seeking, choosing, following, and obeying. Over time with practice and evaluation we can begin to sense how our feelings may result from what we pursue. We may also learn how our inward attitudes may impact our relationships with others and have an effect on how they respond to us.

Level 3 can be an eye opening experience if we can continue with it. We ought to feel good about reaching this level and continuing in it for we are improving our ability to grow more spiritually and empowering ourselves into taking corrective action.

#### Level 4 Making corrections for spiritual improvements

“require the most complex cognitive effort. Students synthesize information from multiple sources, often over an extended period of time, or transfer knowledge from one domain to solve problems in another” <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/webbs-depth-knowledge-increase-rigor-gerald-aungst>

Once we have gathered the information of Good and evil, understand through experience what it is, then we can begin making corrections within our prompting thoughts, perceptions, and beliefs. Now, having an informed choice over Good and evil, we can choose more wisely. We can improve our ability to recognize the difference of good and evil and choose Good. We can choose new Godly thoughts over evil ones we may have habitualized.

### **Marry's room**

This is a knowledge argument that those who have learned information about something without any personal real life experience with it can still learn more through experience. Information learned from books, lectures, and videos is limited compared to personal experience. We may learn a lot about bikes through books, stories, and observations, but when we get on one and try to learn how to ride it the experience teaches us even more.

## **Piaget Constructivism assimilation, accommodation, disequilibrium**

Constructivism describes how we construct learning within our minds. When a child sees for the first time a dog, the child has no idea what it is or what to think about it. We might say to the child, “dog, doggie” and repeat it with hope the child can learn it is a “dog.” The child may reach out to touch it and stare at it trying to understand it. Then when the child sees a cat the child might say, “dog, doggie” because like the dog it has four legs, a tale, and covered in hair/fur. Yet when we say, “no, cat, cat, kitty” then the child looks at us in confusion. The child may even insist saying, “dog, doggie.”

Let’s break this down. When the child first learns a new thing like dog, the child creates a new categorical compartment with where to store likewise learnings. Creating a new compartment is called “accommodation” we are accommodating new knowledge. So when the child sees a cat the child instantly places the ‘cat’ in the category dog because it seems to fit. When the child is corrected that it does not fit the child naturally thinks the parent is wrong because to the child, it fits. After the child learns or becomes convinced it does not fit, the mind now needs to create a new compartment to store other cats. The feeling of confusion and creating new compartments is referred to as disequilibrium. This is that awkward feeling of confusion when trying to figure things out, when new learning does not fit with old learning.

In our spiritual conditioning we will acquire new learning and make accommodations as well as go through awkward and uncomfortable experiences of disequilibrium as we sort it all out. It is important to understand this a normal experience within the spiritual development process. We ought to not be intimidated by it. Instead, we ought to embrace it knowing it can improve us more and more.



## **Cognitive Dissonance**

“cognitive dissonance is the mental discomfort (psychological stress) experienced by a person who holds two or more contradictory beliefs, ideas, or values. This discomfort is triggered by a situation in which a person’s belief clashes with new evidence perceived by the person. When confronted with facts that contradict beliefs, ideals, and values, people will try to find a way to resolve the contradiction to reduce their discomfort.”

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cognitive\\_dissonance](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cognitive_dissonance)

As we learn more about ourselves and the errors in our ways we will experience Cognitive Dissonance. It will be uncomfortable, but it is a natural occurring experience for anyone who seeks to make corrections within themselves. Changing habits, thoughts, and beliefs will involve such discomfort.

Avoiding this discomfort and experience is to avoid development and growth. We cannot grow without engaging in cognitive dissonance. As we continue to seek peace and pursue it we can actively engage life in different and more graceful ways.