

Journey Markers: Core Beliefs

Read the following statements that reflect core beliefs in the life of a Christ-follower. Under each statement you'll find five corresponding sentences describing different phases we all go through. Mark the corresponding sentence that best reflects where you are on the journey.

My understanding of the Bible is...

- I believe that the Bible says a lot of beneficial things. I see value in reading it and determining whether or not it can be beneficial to me in my day to day life.
- I depend on the Bible as a way for God to communicate to me, giving me direction and insight. I allow the Bible to direct both my thinking and my actions every day.
- I am curious about the Bible and am interested in learning more about its teachings. I'm unsure yet how much it should be regarded as an authority.
- I used to make sure that the Bible led my actions and beliefs but recently I've found myself questioning it more and more.
- I believe that the Bible is the inspired word of God and I respect what it says about how I should live my life.

My understanding of God is...

- I believe that God is the Creator of everything. I'm beginning to understand that He is also personally interested in and involved in my day to day life because He loves me.
- God created everything and has been weaving together the story of how much He loves all of His creation. I experience daily that He knows everything about me, the good and bad, and chooses to love me and be involved in my daily life anyway.
- I used to feel closer to God than I have recently. I've been questioning whether or not God can make a difference in my life.
- I believe that God was involved in creation and that He is still taking care of the big things in history. I'm exploring what that means for my life.
- I am curious about a Creator of everything and am interested in seeing how this idea measures up against both science and history.

My understanding of Jesus is...

- I used to believe that Jesus loved me and forgave me but I just don't feel so sure anymore.
- I believe that Jesus was a real person in history who was very influential, loving, and kind.
- I am curious about Jesus and think that the stories about him can teach me a lot.
- I know that accepting Jesus' death in my place gives me a restored relationship with God and others because of the new life that is growing in me every day.
- I believe that Jesus was the Son of God who died on a cross and rose from the dead. I have forgiveness of my sins through what He did on the cross.

My understanding of the Holy Spirit is...

- I believe that the Holy Spirit has chosen to live within me and is changing me from the inside out.
- I believe that the Holy Spirit is a part of God.
- I am aware of the Holy Spirit's presence in my life. I have a habit of listening to His guidance in my life and choosing to resist sin so that He is not grieved within me.
- I am unsure about who or what the Holy Spirit is and how that makes any difference in my life.
- It seems that I used to listen to and obey the Holy Spirit more than I have recently.

My understanding of humanity is...

- I believe God is committed to restoring our relationship with Him through what Jesus did on the cross even though humanity has chosen to walk away from Him. God loves each person and wants them to be restored regardless of who they are or what they have done.
- I believe that people are sinful. However, God still loves people and wants to have a relationship with them through Jesus.
- I used to believe that people have worth in God's eyes but I've found myself questioning that more recently.
- I think that people are mainly messed up and I wonder how God puts up with it.
- I think that most people are basically good and are probably loved by God if He created them.

My understanding of salvation is...

- I believe that good people will get to spend eternity in heaven. I want to be a good person.
- I am aware daily that I am saved by the complete work of Jesus on the cross and in my life, not by anything that I can, have, or will ever do. I trust completely in Jesus to save me and make me more like Himself every day.
- I believe that my relationship with God is broken by my own sin. I am considering what the Bible says about salvation because I want to go to heaven.
- I used to have a closer relationship with Jesus than I do right now but recently I feel like I've stumbled.
- I understand that my relationship with God is restored only through having a personal, life-changing relationship with Jesus. I know that I'm not saved through anything that I do but I sometimes find myself slipping into a pattern of trying to just do enough good things.

My understanding of the church is...

- I believe that God wants to use the church to help other people know about himself and to meet needs.
- I believe that the church is a place in which Christians gather together to worship God.
- I am confident that the church is God's first and only means of leading people in a life-changing relationship with Jesus.
- I am beginning to understand that the church is more about the people than the building.
- I used to believe in and value the church but recently I've questioned it.

My understanding of Christian compassion is...

- Because I believe that the needs of others are of vital importance to God, I put other above myself and consistently sacrifice to meet those needs.
- I believe the hurt and hopelessness in the world is the result of sin. It breaks the heart of God and breaks my heart, too.
- I believe God is concerned about needs around the world.
- I see so much hurt and hopelessness in the world around me. I'm curious how God can allow it and what I could do about it.
- I used to believe God was more compassionate than I have recently.

My understanding of stewardship is...

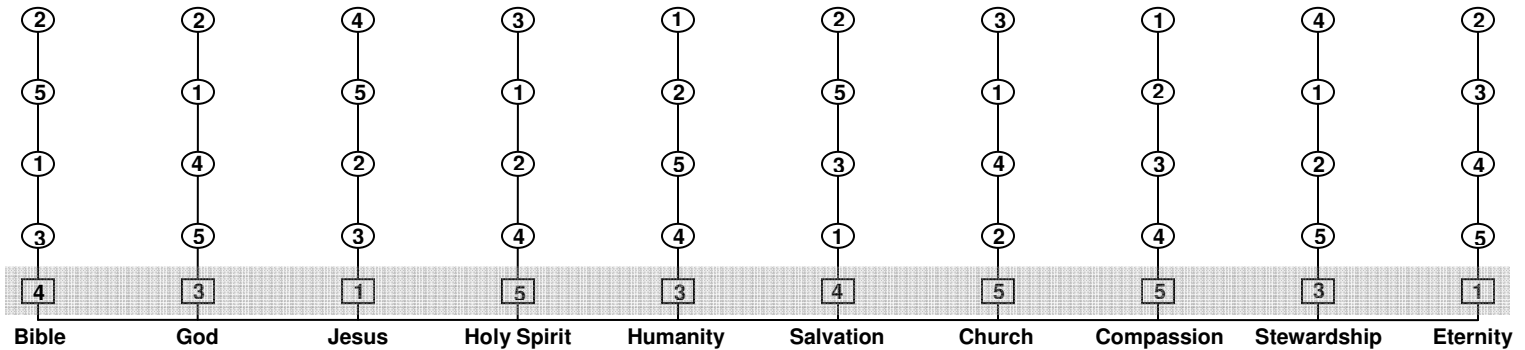
- I believe that God expects me to give 10% of my finances back to Him and to also be generous with all the resources He gives to me, including my time.
- I believe that it is important to give a little something back to God and the church.
- I used to trust God with my resources more than I do right now.
- I know that how I manage my resources (time, finances, possessions, etc.) directly demonstrates how much I trust God. I give resources generously and regularly above 10% to demonstrate my faith and obedience to God.
- I've worked very hard for what I have. I am curious if God has expectations of how I use what I've earned.

My understanding of eternity is...

- My belief in heaven and hell used to be stronger and make more of a difference than it does right now.
- I know that heaven and hell are eternal realities and I live each day in a way that demonstrates that belief.
- I believe that both heaven and hell are a real and literal place. Jesus will return to judge people based upon whether or not they have accepted His grace.
- I believe in heaven and hell. Good people go to heaven and bad people go to hell.
- I am curious about what happens when I die.

Assessment Results: Core Beliefs

Now that you've completed the assessment on your core beliefs you may transfer your answers onto the graph below. For example, if you selected the first response under the *Bible* statement you would find the number *1* on the *Bible* line and fill in that bubble. Continue with each line below until you've completed the entire section. You may then choose to connect your dots to reveal areas of progress in your journey (reflected by higher dots) and areas in which you may want to seek ways to grow (reflected by lower dots). Boxes in the shaded area designate a marker in which you seem to be stalled (see the next page for more information).



Journey Markers: Core Beliefs

The Bible

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

2 Timothy 3:16-17, "All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work."

God

I believe God is much bigger than me but still cares and is involved in my daily life

Psalms 121:1-2, "I look up to the mountains--does my help come from there? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth!"

Jesus

I believe Jesus Christ is the only Son of God and that He died for our sins then rose from the dead to give us life.

John 14:6, "Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me."

Holy Spirit

I believe the Holy Spirit, who is within every Christ-follower, changes us to become more like Jesus and empowers us to accomplish God's purposes.

John 14:16, 26, "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever...but the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you."

Humanity

I believe every person has worth and is loved by God but still needs Jesus to save them from their sins.

John 3:16, "For God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life."

Salvation

I believe a person can have their relationship with God made right again through Jesus.

Acts 4:12, "There is salvation in no one else! God has given no other name under heaven by which we must be saved."

Church

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Ephesians 4:15-16, "Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love."

Compassion

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Psalms 82:3-4, "Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless; maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed. Rescue the weak and needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked."

Stewardship

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

1 Timothy 6:17-19, "Teach those who are rich in this world not to be proud and not to trust in their money, which is so unreliable. Their trust should be in God, who richly gives us all we need for our enjoyment. Tell them to use their money to do good. They should be rich in good works and generous to those in need, always being ready to share with others. By doing this they will be storing up their treasure as a good foundation for the future so that they may experience true life."

Eternity

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and establish His eternal kingdom.

John 5:28-29, "Don't be so surprised! Indeed, the time is coming when all the dead in their graves will hear the voice of God's Son, and they will rise again. Those who have done good will rise to experience eternal life, and those who have continued in evil will rise to experience judgment."

More Information about the Journey Assessment...

As you move along on a journey it is helpful to have mile markers that indicate how far you have come and how much farther you have to go. This is true as you make the life journey of following Christ. How do you know if you are making progress or not? Where can you go to find some encouragement along the way?

We call this evaluation tool ***The Journey Assessment***. As you've worked through this you've hopefully been able to see your progress in becoming a Christ-like person. The 30 **markers** are divided into groups of 10. The first ten deal with the truths or **Beliefs** of the Christian faith; the second 10 list Christ-like **Virtues**; and the final 10 are **Practices** or habits that are characteristic of Christ-followers. Each marker is followed by 5 self-evaluation statements. You've sized yourself up and decided which of these 5 progressions best describe where you are in relation to each marker. The 5 progression statements reflect the following mindsets:

- **I am Centered – Jesus has complete influence in this area of my life**
- **I am Close – I'm following Jesus in this area of my life more closely every day**
- **I am Growing – I have taken the plunge and I am moving ahead**
- **I am Exploring – I'm still on the fringe and making up my mind about this one**
- **I am Stalled – I was growing in this area but lately I seem to have run out of gas**

Hopefully you've been totally open with yourself as you've worked through this assessment. Answering with what you think are the right or expected values will not have been helpful to you. Brutal honesty will have produced the most productive assessment of yourself. You may find that you are at different stages of growth in different facets of life. You may be *exploring* in the area of giving, but *close* or *centered* in your willingness to serve. Don't be concerned with back and forth in the number values – that is to be expected.

Now that you have your results make a plan to discuss the outcomes with trusted friends who are serious about growing in a relationship with Christ. Look at your present progress and determine what needs to happen in order to keep moving forward in areas of life. Give your friends the same encouragement they give you as together you plot your course in allowing the reality of Christ to flow through your life.

We **strongly** suggest that you evaluate your assessment with other people. If you are presently in a Lifegroup (and we can help you find one if you are not), leaders will be facilitating discussions related to this ***Journey Assessment***. Even if your group is not participating in ***The Journey*** curriculum you can still ask your leader if your group could take and discuss this assessment.

The Journey Markers have been adapted by Parkside Christian Church from original material from Pantego Bible Church. The recent *Reveal* research completed by the Willow Creek Association has informed our compilation of the 5 progression statements under each Journey Marker.