

Three Rivers of Deep Spirituality

The 3 Stages of Formation (Jewish Context)

- Stage 1: Bet Sefer (“House of the Book”) ages 5–12
- Stage 2: Bet Talmud / Bet Midrash (“House of Learning”) ages 13–17
- Stage 3: Apprenticeship under a Rabbi 17+.

Jesus never separated Christianity into two tiers: basic believers and radical disciples.

“Christianity without discipleship is always Christianity without Christ.” Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Salvation is not a ticket to heaven; it is a birth into new life.

“Bar-code Christians believe the right things but don’t follow Jesus. The evidence of salvation is transformation.” Bill Hull

In Acts, believers were called people of the Way because following Jesus was their way of life, not just a sinner’s prayer they prayed (Acts 9:2; 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14).

Christianity is not a barcode you scan when you die; it is a yoke you carry while you live.

Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 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. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” Matthew 11:28-30

Every rabbi had a “yoke”; it was his teaching, his understanding of Scripture, and his way of obeying it. Living under a rabbi’s yoke meant living under his teaching and example.

Simple spirituality is deep, and it requires three things: be with Jesus, become like Jesus, and do what He did.

Though one may be overpowered by another, two can withstand him. And a threefold cord is not quickly broken. Ecclesiastes 4:12

Deep Spirituality:

- Upward — Relational
- Inward — Transformational
- Outward — Missional

Each can operate on its own, but lasting spirituality requires all three.

The Holy Spirit sustains all three: **upward**—He reminds us we are God’s children; **inward**—He produces fruit in us; **outward**—He empowers our service.

Each aspect has its benefits, but when it is separated from the others, it leads to disaster.

- **Upward** produces passion, but by itself it becomes selfishness.
- **Inward** produces purity, but by itself it becomes legalism.





- **Outward** produces purpose, but by itself it becomes worldliness.

Serving Jesus should not drain your soul; it should bring rest to your soul.

1. Become a better apprentice. (Be with Jesus)

Jesus did not recruit people into leadership first, but into apprenticeship with Him. God is not as obsessed with your destination as He is intentional about your devotion.

2. Become a better human. (Become like Jesus)

Jesus is not focused only on what you do, but on who you are becoming in the process. People are not a means to an end to build our ministry; they are people God is building through ministry.

“Learn from Me”—not only how to do ministry, but how to become a mature, Christlike person.

3. Become a better servant. (Serve like Jesus)

You do not need a title to pick up a towel. In Luke 22:24, the disciples argued about who would be greatest. In John 13:3–4, Jesus washed the disciples’ feet.

It is easier to do the kind of ministry that makes me feel powerful than the kind of service that makes others feel deeply loved.

“Give me what is mine” (Luke 15:12) was the cry of the prodigal son. “Make me like one of your servants” (Luke 15:18–19) was the cry of the repentant son.

We are not volunteering for an organization; we are serving the cause of Christ. “Whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord...” (Colossians 3:23–24).

We are not serving merely to fill a need; we are discovering our gifts, developing them for Jesus’ glory, and using them for the purpose God has given us. “Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them...” (Romans 12:6).

We do not exist to use people to meet ministry needs; we are here to equip people to fulfill their assignment.

Not every assignment will perfectly match your gift on day one. But healthy ministry should move people toward serving more and more from their gift, not less and less.

8 Ways Serving Can Drain Your Soul

1. Being busy for Jesus but not being with Jesus.
2. Separating serving from spiritual formation.
3. Treating serving as a stepping stone to your “real” calling.
4. Serving to meet a need, not from your gifting.
5. Ignoring your God-given limits and comparing yourself to others.
6. Failing to protect margin—overextending yourself.
7. Not adjusting your rhythm when seasons change.
8. Serving for approval instead of from identity.