

	<p>The Order of St James (UK) Newsletter</p> <p>November 2022</p> <p>www.orderofstjames.info</p>	
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The Laws of Spiritual Motion: Part 2

God is eternal, all powerful and infinite in His love for us.

Nothing can destroy that love God has for us, but because God has given us 'free will' we can choose to deny God access to our lives.

In spite of His great power, He will not use coercion to bring us into His presence. A love that forces itself onto people is not real and genuine love.

So how do we come to understand the true nature and being of God?

In trying to reconcile this within our own lives, we often create an understanding of God that we can live with comfortably, but whatever conclusions we come to, they will fall short of the reality.

God is not bound by the limitations of our understanding of Him or His nature.

We therefore need to step outside of what we think we know and understand in our limited way, and seek the greater truth if we want to grow in wisdom and stature as Christians.

Our knowledge and understanding of God is often based on little more than a few carefully selected biblical texts and what we consider to be the perfect version of ourselves simply because we can handle that.

With that in mind and because we can only see things in terms of self, our understanding of 'sin' and/or 'evil' is often wrongly determined by what affects us personally, immediately and negatively.

Similarly, the same is true of how we often perceive 'good', particularly when circumstances appear to work in our favour.

Based on this understanding then, what we often perceive as 'sin' or 'evil' cannot be accurately be ascribed to the work of the Devil, nor what we perceive as 'good' be ascribed to God. We fail to see events and circumstances unfold over time and reveal their true nature.

Our spiritual understanding of the circumstances we find ourselves in may therefore be based on little more than our own misguided personal subjective emotional responses and limited understanding of the true nature and being of God.

Given this knowledge, one can see that an emotionally based and egocentric faith is not a faith that is God centred. Such a faith is very unstable and is driven by circumstance. It will fail almost as soon as it is tested.

It is to God we should turn, not ourselves.

The true nature of God is not found wholly within us but is expressed through us in biblical truth, the communion of saints (the shared experience of all Christians), and in our communion with God.

If we allow Him, He will only reveal of Himself what we can deal with. We have nothing to fear, simply because He loves us.

But if we are fearful and try to limit and contain God within our lives, then as a consequence we will limit and contain his power to change us from within, and limit His ability to reach out to others through us and minister to them.

+Ian

Stages of faith:

Fowler's Stages of Faith Explained in Plain Language

<https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/youth/wholeness/workshop2/167602.shtml>

I include this as an outline of the possible stages of faith development people generally progress through in their lives.

These stages should not be regarded as 'definitive', but as general indicators that can be helpful when it comes to giving counsel, support and encouragement. There is nothing to say that these are 'absolute' in essence but potential tools to add to our spiritual toolboxes.

I first came across these when reading 'A More Christlike God – A more Beautiful Gospel,' by Bradley Jersak and was immediately interested.

James William Fowler III (1940–2015)

American theologian who was Professor of Theology and Human Development at Emory University. He was director of both the Centre for Research on Faith and Moral Development, and the Centre for Ethics until he retired in 2005. He was a minister in the United Methodist Church.

Fowler is best known for his book *Stages of Faith*, published in 1981, in which he sought to develop the idea of a developmental process in "human faith".

(Source – Wikipedia)

Pre-Stage: Undifferentiated Faith

- Generally children from birth through about 2 years of age.
- Have the potential for faith but lack the ability to act on that potential.
- Through loving care from parents and other adults in their life young children start to build a lived experience of trust, courage, hope and love.
- At this stage, children experience faith as a connection between themselves and their caregiver.

Stage 1: Intuitive-Projective Faith

- Generally pre-school aged children.
- The cognitive development of children of this age is such that they are unable to think abstractly and are generally unable to see the world from anyone else's perspective. As Robert Keeley writes: "These children cannot think like a scientist, consider logical arguments, or think through complex ideas."
- Faith is not a thought-out set of ideas, but instead a set of impressions that are largely gained from their parents or other significant adults in their lives.
- In this way children become involved with the rituals of their religious community by experiencing them and learning from those around them.

Stage 2: Mythic-Literal Faith

- Generally ages 6 to 12.

- Children at this age are able to start to work out the difference between verified facts and things that might be more fantasy or speculation.
- At this age children's source of religious authority starts to expand past parents and trusted adults to others in their community like teachers and friends.
- Like the previous stage, faith is something to be experienced. At this stage it is because children think in concrete and literal ways. Faith becomes the stories told and the rituals practiced.
- Later in this stage children begin to have the capacity to understand that others might have different beliefs than them.

Stage 3: Synthetic-Conventional Faith

- Generally starts about the age of 13 and goes until around 18. However, some people stay at this stage for their entire life.
- Unlike previous stages, people at this stage are able to think abstractly. What were once simple unrelated stories and rituals can now be seen as a more cohesive narrative about values and morals. With abstract thinking comes the ability to see layers of meaning in the stories, rituals and symbols of their faith.
- At this stage people start to have the ability to see things from someone else's perspective. This means that they can also imagine what others think about them and their faith.
- People at this stage claim their faith as their own instead of just being what their family does. However, the faith that is claimed is usually still the faith of their family.

- Issues of religious authority are important to people at this stage. For younger adolescents, that authority still resides mostly with their parents and important adults. For older adolescents and adults in this stage, authority resides with friends and religious community. For all people in this stage, religious authority resides mostly outside of them personally.

Stage 4: Individuative-Reflective Faith

- This stage usually starts in late adolescence (18 to 22 years old). However Robert Keeley points out that “people of many generations experience the kind of dissonance that comes with the real questions of faith that one begins to address at this stage of development.”
- People in this stage start to question their own assumptions around the faith tradition.
- Along with questioning their own assumptions about their faith, people at this stage start to question the authority structures of their faith.
- This is often the time that someone will leave their religious community if the answers to the questions they are asking are not to their liking.
- Greater maturity is gained by rejecting some parts of their faith while affirming other parts. In the end, the person starts to take greater ownership of their own faith journey.

Stage 5: Conjunctive Faith

- People do not usually get to this stage until their early thirties and is often associated with mid-life crisis.

- This stage is when the struggles and questioning of stage four give way to a more comfortable place. Some answers have been found and the person at this stage is comfortable knowing that all the answers might not be easily found.
- In this stage, the strong need for individual self-reflection gives way to a sense of the importance of community in faith development.
- People at this stage are also much more open to other people's faith perspectives. This is not because they are moving away from their faith but because they have a realization that other people's faiths might inform and deepen their own.

Stage 6: Universalizing Faith

- Enlightenment. It is a rare person who reaches this stage of faith.
- James Fowler describes people at this stage as having "a special grace that makes them seem more lucid, more simple, and yet somehow more fully human than the rest of us."
- People at this stage can become important religious teachers because they have the ability to relate to anyone at any stage and from any faith. They are able to relate without condescension but at the same time are able to challenge the assumptions that those of other stages might have.
- People at this stage cherish life but also do not hold on to life too tightly. They put their faith in action, challenging the status quo and working to create justice in the world.
- Robert Keeley points to people like Gandhi and Mother Teresa as examples of people who have reached this stage.

Leadership

Fr Ed Elsey OSJ

Well! What changes have been foisted upon us with the death of our beloved Queen - Long live the King - and in just seven weeks three Prime Ministers and what some are calling chaos and others 'a new challenge' and testing of leadership has featured throughout.

As Diwali is celebrated in the month of Kartika by our Hindu brethren and sisters as the Festival of Lights we as Christians are reminded that only a month or so away we shall be celebrating the coming of our 'Light of the World' as our progenitor and Master termed it [John 8,12] because He is held by us to be the source of the light which 'proceedeth forth from the presence of God to fill the immensity of space'. His light is 'the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world'.

The leadership He demonstrated by directing His disciples into the path of witness, conversion, drawing together of nations, establishment of His church here on earth - and may He never be ashamed of what we have done to *that* over the centuries and still exercising wrongs and prejudices in this our generation and new age] - is our example to follow in His footsteps and practice in our nation.

May the new leadership show this in no uncertain terms. Pray for your leaders, whatever you think of them, and whether or not you chose them or elected them. We are instructed to pray earnestly for them, and world affairs suggest such prayer needs to be unceasing, deep and devout.

Sir John Glubb in his book: 'The Fate of Empires and Search for Survival', writes thus:

However dedicated men may be, the success of their work inevitably depends on the quality of their leaders. I am convinced that the key to leadership lies in the principle: 'He that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.' Leadership should not bring privileges but duties.

No man should ask his subordinates to do more than he does himself. If work begins at eight in the morning, the top man should be there on time. If workers snatch a quick lunch in the cafeteria, the directors should do the same, and not absent themselves for two hours to eat in a restaurant.

"Everyone should enjoy his or her daily work. Enjoyment depends on personal relations.

It is the duty of the seniors to make their subordinates happy by knowing them personally, and by producing a spirit of comradeship and of mutual pride in the work.

Warm personal relationships can be used by senior executives to discuss the progress of the work, their mutual achievements and the difficulties which lie ahead. Such intercourse and exchange of confidences foster a sense of comradeship and team-work.

Glubb, known also as 'Glubb Pasha', wrote this in 1978.

He was Lieutenant-General Sir John Bagot Glubb, KCB, CMG, DSO, OBE, MC, KStJ, KPM, a British soldier, scholar, and author, led and trained Transjordan's Arab Legion between 1939 and 1956 as its commanding general.

During the WW1 he served in France. He became an officer of the Arab Legion in 1930, forming the Desert Patrol – a force consisting exclusively of Bedouin – to curb the raiding problem that plagued the southern part of the country.

Within a few years he had persuaded the Bedouin to abandon their habit of raiding neighbouring tribes. King Hussein of Jordan gave the eulogy at his funeral.

His leadership was considered to have inspired his men and kept a lid on a potentially hostile and dangerous theatre of conflict.

Of course military training and prestige was different in those days. Ukraine's problems call for differing skills and responses. But leadership still heads up, in all walks of life, an opportunity for that team-work and sharing which we now hope to see operating in a new government for a new national and international arena.

IN DEPTH SERMON DISCUSSING JOHN 10:7-16 +David

When Jesus spoke the words of our Gospel to His listeners, He was using a familiar image. First, they lived in a largely agricultural area, where sheep herding was very common. Everyone knew about shepherds. Secondly, Jesus was speaking to Pharisees and others who were familiar with the Scriptures, and so they could not have missed the obvious reference to the prophecy of Ezekiel 34,

For thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out. As a shepherd cares for his herd in the day when he is among his scattered sheep, so I will care for My sheep and will deliver them from all the places to which they were scattered on a cloudy and gloomy day. . . . I will feed My flock and I will lead them to rest," declares the Lord GOD.

"I will seek the lost, bring back the scattered, bind up the broken, and strengthen the sick; but the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them with judgment. . . .

"Therefore, I will deliver My flock, and they will no longer be a prey . . .

Then I will set over them one shepherd, My servant David, and he will feed them; he will feed them himself and be their shepherd. And I, the LORD, will be their God."

Today is Misericordias Domini Sunday. Misericordias Domini means, "the tender-hearted mercies of God".

It is also known as "Good Shepherd Sunday" because of the words of Jesus in our Gospel. We need to consider the tender hearted mercies of God under the theme, The Good Shepherd.

Jesus was talking to people other than just the disciples. He had just stated that those who had come before Him were thieves and robbers.

He wasn't talking about everybody before Him, just those who presented themselves as the Messiah, or as the new answer to the ancient questions which had been haunting Israel for centuries.

Those questions might include, 'When is he coming?', or 'What do we do now?', or 'Why do we have all these laws?', or 'Why has God abandoned us, seeing as how we are no longer a free nation?'

False Messiahs and religious counterfeits had blossomed abundantly in the decades before Jesus came. That is part of the strategy of the devil. You know, if you cannot stop Him, you can make people wary and skeptical about saviours in general. That is why there is such a plethora of religions and denominations today!

The good thing is, according to Jesus, that the Sheep did not hear those false shepherds. That was a good thing because those others - among whom some of the Pharisees belonged, came only to steal and kill and destroy. They had no promise. They had no life to give, and they knew it. They came to take advantage - personal advantage - and had no care for the people they served.

Their problem with Jesus was that He saw them and their motivations all too clearly, and they did not want the sanctimonious public image they had worked so hard to create destroyed. But the sheep of the flock of the good Shepherd do not hear the others - they do not take them seriously, or believe them, or follow them.

The dangers of false teachers and bad theology still exist. Yes it is sad to admit even today! The wolves are still out there. Their purpose is still the same, to steal the sheep, or destroy the flock, or kill the sheep.

Such wolves exist in the form of those who insist that we are all Christians, without specifying what the limits of that declaration is. It is just that we have different focuses, different emphases.

Sometimes the wolves take the form of those who want to be open to new ideas, new methods, and new ways of approaching worship, or doctrine. There is a different spirit abroad in much of the church - and the world around us certainly wants us to be open and accepting of just about anything. After all, we are all headed for the same place, and we all want to end up in the same ultimate destination, don't we?

But Jesus tells us that He is the good Shepherd. His identity is confirmed by the cross - that He laid down His life for the sheep. Others, who come to take advantage, will not lay down their lives, but will flee in times of danger, and leave the sheep to the wolves.

The word, "Wolves", refers to any of the dangers confronting the people of God. They can be financial. They can be social. They can be false doctrines.

They can be anything or anybody that comes to threaten the people of God by hiding the truth of the gospel from them.

The sheep of the good Shepherd live in perfect safety because He will never let them go. He lays down His life for the sheep and leads them and guides them and protects them. His Father is also watching and guiding. But the thing that is so striking here is that the sheep of the good Shepherd know Him and follow Him. In fact, just a few verses after the gospel lesson ends, the Jews challenge Jesus to tell them plainly if He is the Christ - the Saviour. Jesus says, "I told you, and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father's name, these bear witness of Me. But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand."

The reason that people do not follow the good Shepherd is that they are not of His flock. If they were, they would hear His voice and follow Him. The Pharisees could not follow Jesus because they were not His - they did not believe. They did not believe because they were not His.

No evidence, nor argument will turn those who do not belong to Him around. On the other hand, if you are His you can hear His voice - and when you listen and follow the voice of your Saviour, no one, no strange teaching, nothing can snatch you out of His hand.

Jesus told the people He was speaking that He had sheep that were not of that fold. He was speaking of us, Gentiles, who were chosen from the foundation of the world to be a part of His flock. We have been joined to the flock of God which has existed from the very beginning. We are among those who enter through the Door - which Jesus says is Himself. We enter in to share in the abundant life of which He speaks.

You can hear a lot of misinformation about that "abundant life" if you listen to enough preachers. They talk about how God wants people to be healthy and wealthy and happy. Of course, He does - but not necessarily in this world and during this part of our lives. Sometimes His will is for hardship, sickness, economic difficulties. We serve Him and He blesses us often in the hard things and hard times. Of course, we know from St. Paul that He works through us in our troubles and weaknesses. He says, "My strength is made perfect in weakness." That just means that when we are weak, God's power does all the work, and we are clearly not the power behind all that He does through us. When we are healthy and wealthy, we often forget that He is the One working all that we do rightly, and we begin to imagine that we are something special. So He keeps us humble, and works through us, while providing that abundant life - eternal life he mentioned after our text, and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish.

This text doesn't tell you to do anything. It tells you that Jesus has. There is no command here, just the comforting message that He has you in His sight and under His care. He is the One who does whatever He needs to do to keep you safe in His presence. He doesn't go all the way to dying for you, He starts with that, on the cross. He forgives you all of your sins. Before you could ask, He paid for you and forgave you. He feeds you with His Word and promises. He comforts you with the news that you are His and He is yours, and nothing can change that. Just listen to His voice - which you can hear - and trust Him and walk with Him.

He will feed you His heavenly food - His body and blood - to strengthen you and cleanse you and comfort you. He will guide your steps. He will show you the way to walk - a way which is narrow, not heavily travelled, and not always pleasant. He will keep you because He loves you - and because He is the good Shepherd.

We live in different times. The world around us is rich, and has more to tempt us than ever before. There are more distractions. There are more voices telling us that we should listen to them and follow them. There are voices in the world telling us that there is a better way, a new way - and those voices inside of us that always question how we can be so sure that this is right when everyone else is clearly going another way, and seem to be so prosperous and effective and well-received in doing so. So many invitations to doubt. So many invitations to sin. So many pressures, both big and niggling-small, to get us to compromise, be reasonable, join in and grab from the abundance of the world around us with both hands.

It has always been something like this for the people of God, and yet we live in different times. We need to listen to the message of the good Shepherd. He has us. We are secure. Those who are not with us are truly against us. They are not with us because they are not hearing the voice of the Shepherd. We should love them. We should pray for them. We should invite them in - but the door of the sheep-fold is Jesus: Not the latest program for church growth, not the newest fad in worship, nor any of the trappings of success. We have our entire hope in Jesus. He gives everlasting life, and eternal protection, and true security because it does not start with us or depend on us, but it comes from Him and depends on Him. He is the good Shepherd.

AMEN

Who Were the Herodians?

The Herodians were a class of Jews in the time of Christ, who were partisans of Herod, either of a political or religious sort, or both.

It appears that when the ecclesiastical authorities of Judea held a council against the Saviour, they associated with themselves the Herodians, and sent an embassy to Jesus designing to trap him in his speech.

As tetrarch of Galilee, Herod Antipas was the ruler of the province which was Jesus' home, and the Jews doubtless argued that Herod would be pleased if they could convict Jesus of being a rival claimant to the crown.

The Pharisees were a Jewish sect who held rigidly aloof from other sects, claimed to be free from every kind of impurity and united to keep the Mosaic laws, to which they gave the closest study. They were frequently denounced by our Saviour for their self-righteousness and their assumption of superior piety.

The Sadducees were another sect, originally a religious body, but which had developed into a body of freethinkers. They rejected the oral law and the prophets, but believed in the Pentateuch; they denied the resurrection and they held different views from other Jews on various other important points while claiming to be the most aristocratic and conservative of all the bodies.

What Is Known of the Early Life of the Author of the Epistle of James?

Nothing authoritative. He was probably brought up with Jesus and the other children in the Nazareth home. It is believed that he did not become a follower of Christ until after the resurrection. Christ seems to have appeared specially to him, and as Paul mentions the fact (I Cor. 15:7) we may presume it was generally known, though it is not related in any of the Gospels. James was a strict Jew before becoming a Christian, and was highly esteemed among the Jews for his piety. It looks as though he never quite shook off his Jewish ideas (Gal. 2:12) and his epistle shows that he could not cordially endorse Paul's way of stating the Gospel.



**St Leonard's Chapel,
Hazlewood Castle,
Yorkshire,
LS24 9NJ**



OSJ (UK) Services, 2022.

Unless otherwise stated:

Services usually take place on the FIRST and THIRD Sundays of each month at 6.00 p.m.

Services take the form of a short and very gentle communion service, lasting 20-30 minutes.

Regular services will restart when repainting and repairs have been completed but the chapel remains open for private prayer.

2nd January, 2022	16th January, 2022
6th February, 2022	20th February, 2022
6th March, 2022	20th March, 2022
3rd April, 2022	17th April, 2022
1st May, 2022	15th May, 2022
5th June, 2022	19th June, 2022
3rd July, 2022	17th July, 2022
7th August, 2022	21st August, 2022
4th September, 2022	18th September, 2022
2nd October, 2022	16th October, 2022
6th November, 2022	20th November, 2022
4th December, 2022	18th December, 2022

We use a non-alcoholic communion wine so children may take part. There is no requirement to be baptised or confirmed, only to treat with due respect. All are very welcome and all may receive regardless of tradition or denominational background.

Additional Services:

Remembrance Sunday:	7th November 10.35 a.m.	TBC
Midnight Mass:	24th December 11.20 p.m.	TBC