



The Flow

9

Strengthening Faith

“The Fathers”

1 John 2:12-14

Fostering Spiritual Growth in the Church

Paul J. Bucknell

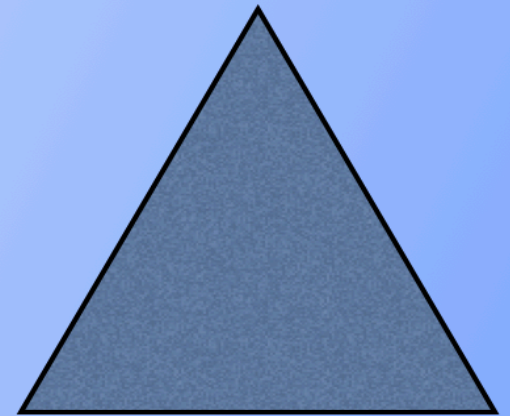
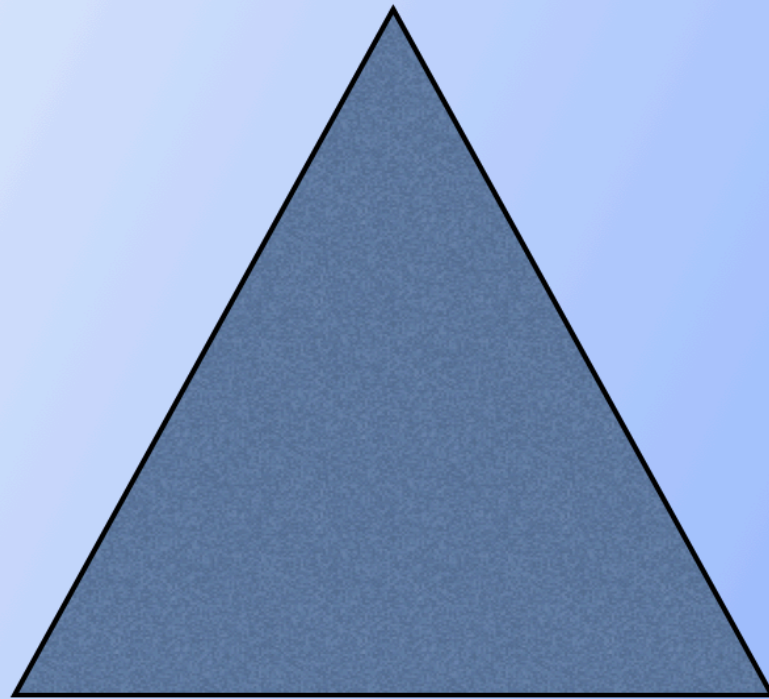
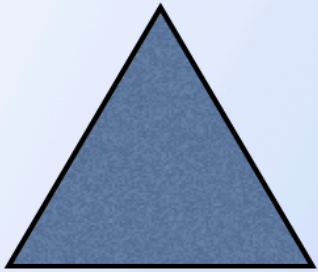
Trying to understand

- What is the design that God has for each believer?
- How does God lead us into deeper intimacy with Him?
- How does serving fit into God's overall purpose for our lives?
- Do believers ever stop growing?



Queue up please

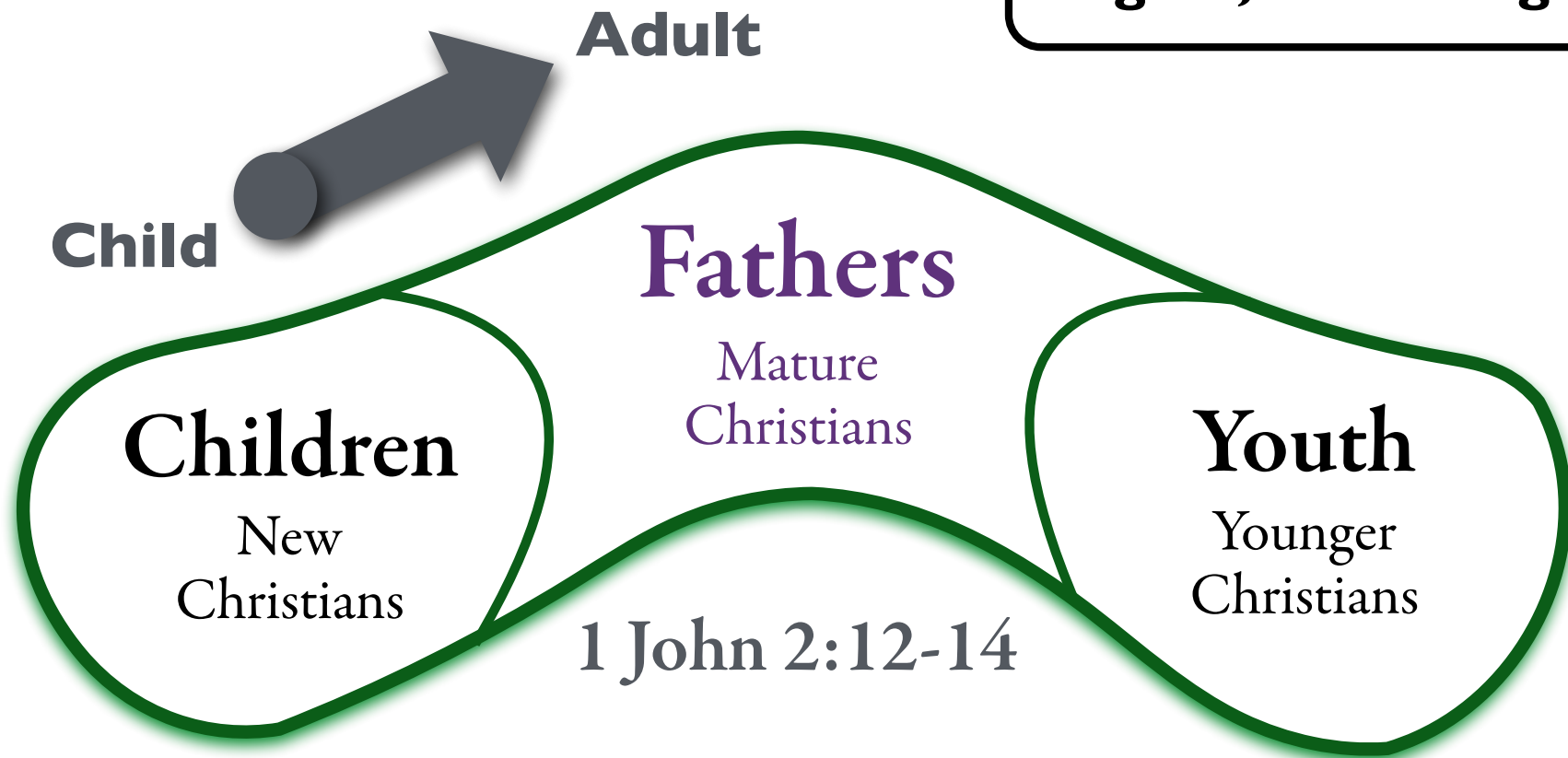
What order were the three groups presented?



Why this order?

Order Please

‘Father’ summarizes the believer’s purpose, goal, and design.



God's goal for every believer is to grow to maturity.
Are we consistent in how we work this out?

The Father's Description

"I am writing to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake. I am writing to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I have written to you, children, because you know the Father. I have written to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one." (1 John 2:12-14)



1 Strengthening of Faith

Reproductive

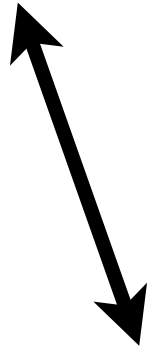
I have written to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning.

“Older women likewise are ... to encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be dishonored” (Titus 2:3-5).

Need

Focus on producing and caring for
spiritual children.

Fathers



children



2 Strengthening of Faith

Intimacy

I have written to you, fathers, because you **know Him** who has been from the beginning.

“But whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life” (John 4:14).

3 Strengthening of Faith

Depth

I have written to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning.

“For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen” (Romans 11:36).

Need

Persistent pursuit to deepen our knowledge of the Lord.

Growth of the Mature Believer

➡ Step closer to God while responsibly caring for others

Fathers

Spiritual insight



Maturing
Christians

G



Fathers are reproducers

O



Fathers are shapers

A



Fathers need to keep growing

L



Fathers grow by knowing God more.

Focus for Mature Believers

'Fathers' become more intimately acquainted with God through trying experiences and a deepening trust in Him, purposely investing their lives to help others grow in Christ.

Understanding the Growth Process

- Seek intimacy with God (John 15:5)
- Dive deeper in His Word
- Wrestle with deep personal struggles
- Persevere when others have given up
- Believe when others doubt
- Be pure in an impure society
- Demonstrate God's love through serving others
- Kindly confront others as needed
- Keep your first love on the Lord
- Manage your time well; don't neglect any responsibility



The challenge to persist in our growth

Path of Discipleship

Strengthening
Faith

Discovering
Love

Establishing
Hope

1



2



3

LITTLE CHILDREN

Strong security
from His love

YOUNG MEN

Great confidence
in His word

FATHERS

Deep intimacy
with God

The Three Stages of Christian Growth

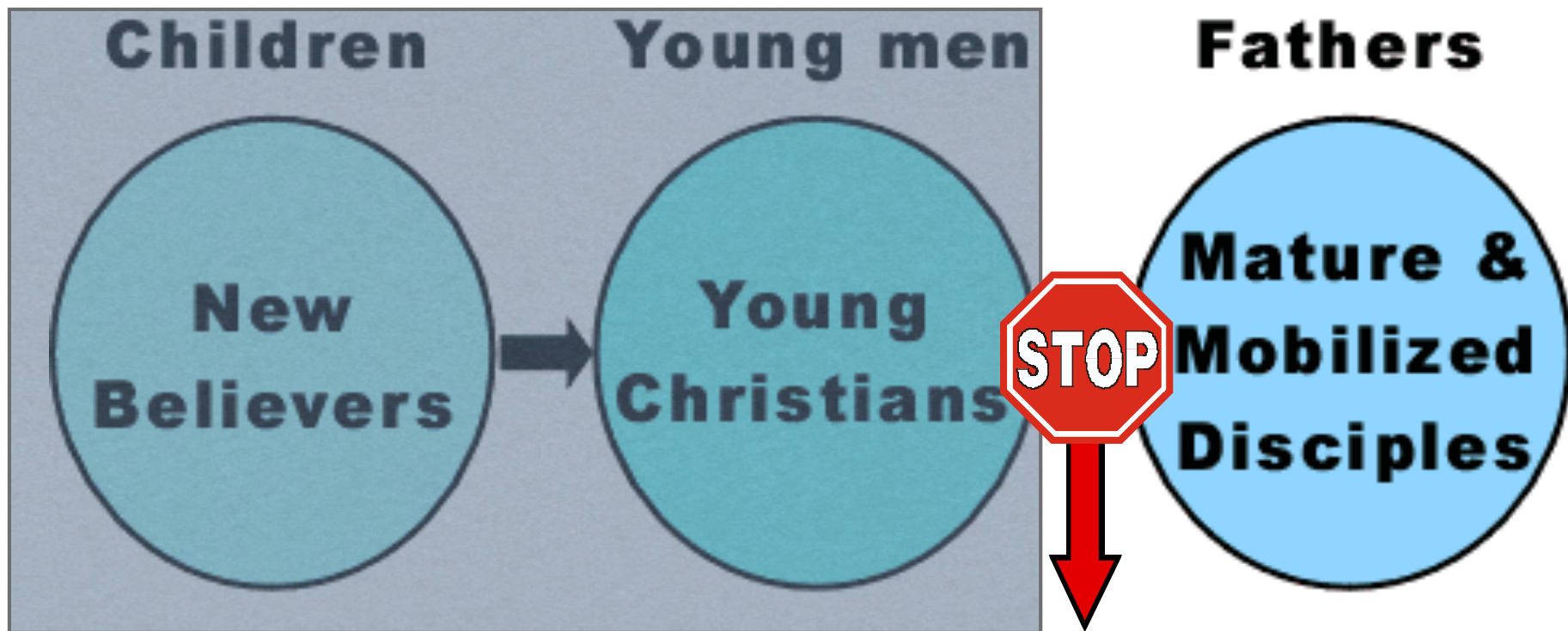
~ An Overview ~

Paul J. Bucknell



Analogy	Child	Young man	Father
General	<p>Spiritual growth corresponds to physical growth in the family. John uses what we know and can see to train us in the areas that we do not know and cannot see.</p> <p>At each stage of growth the Christian will grow in his relationship with God and live out his life of worship through service, but the emphasis will differ. Note: although male terms are used, these truths are equally true for brothers and sisters in the faith.</p>		
Description	New believer	Young believer	Mature believer
Situation	The young child has just believed in Christ and has a new relationship with God.	The young man has been well nurtured but now needs to learn how to grow in his own faith.	The father now is responsible to bring others into the faith and nurture them.
Special needs	Children are unstable, needing security, and therefore can easily stumble by doubting their relationship with God.	Young men must learn how to use their faith and God's Word to overcome temptations.	A father needs to learn how to balance all his responsibilities of caring for others as well as maintaining his growing life.
Focus	Relationship with God The beginner is learning about what the Christian life is and how to live it. Their new faith becomes founded on truth.	Battle with sin Through faith, the young believer overcomes the world, Satan, and the flesh by God's Word.	Living for God's glory The maturing believer develops a deep and strong faith to carry out God's appointed good works for him.
Advantage	The new believer is excited about growing in his or her faith resulting in a good learning spirit and eager absorption of God's Word.	The young believer starts off with a lot of faith and willingly takes those bold steps to become a strong Christian.	The father has seen God's work and understands the power of God's Word, reaching a place where his service can help many.
Danger	Lack of instruction and early care leads the new believer into confusion and a crippled faith. He questions his worth and faith (relationship with God). "I am not good enough."	Without good mentorship, they will not properly interpret their failures and learn from them. This ends in mediocre spiritual lives, doubting God's power, "It doesn't really work."	Fathers can easily rely on their own experiences and resources instead of constantly seeking God. They face sins of self-reliance, religiosity, pride, and bitterness.
Training	The child can learn about the greatness of God's love shown not only in Christ, but also in God's care for him as His child.	The young man's faith can radically grow as he sees the power of God at work in his own life through His Word.	The father's faith needs to grow strong to consistently bring forth new life and nurture those around him while vigilantly guarding his own heart.

The Consequences of Improper Training

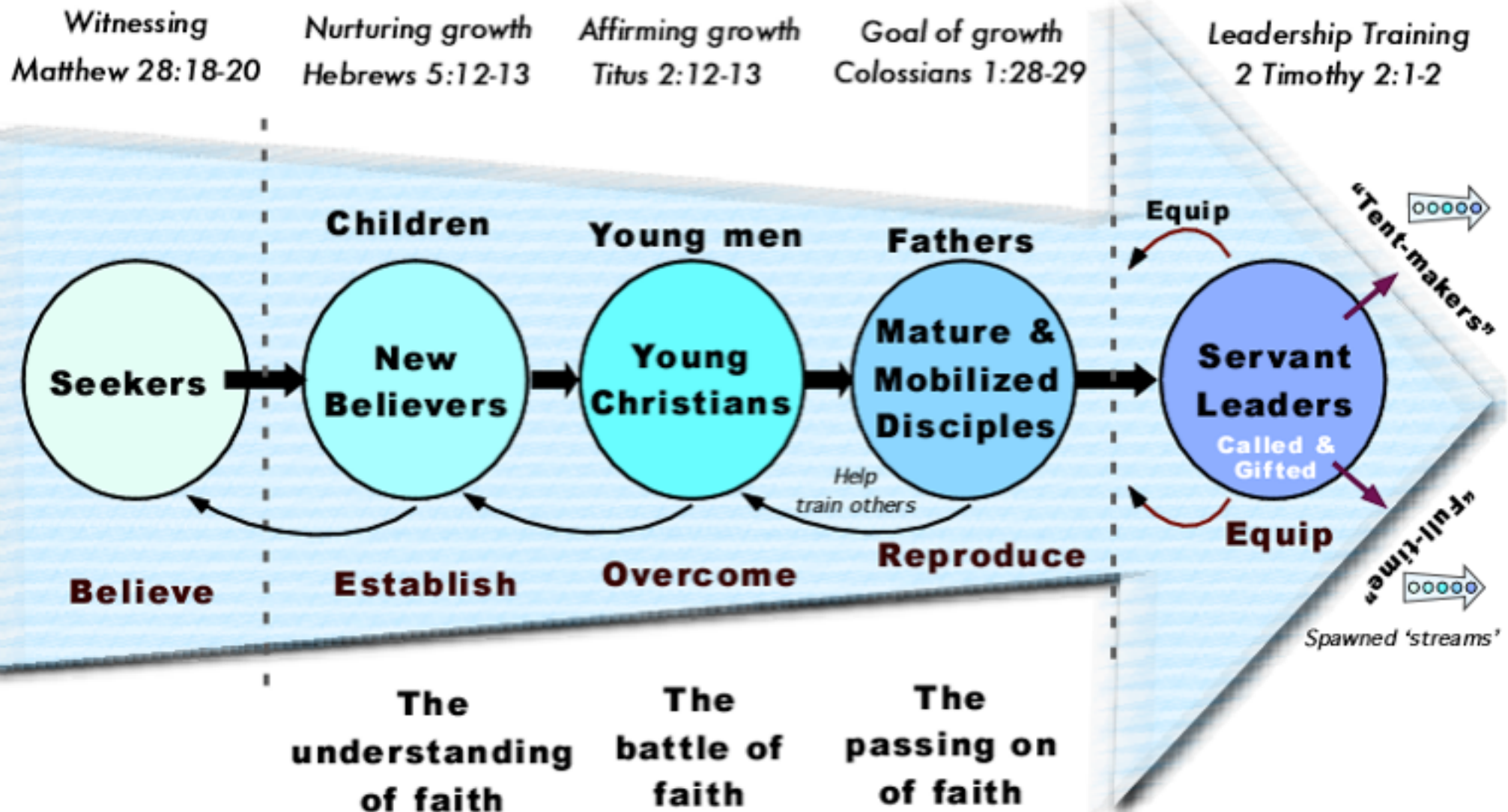


Overburdened
pastor/leaders &
ineffective church

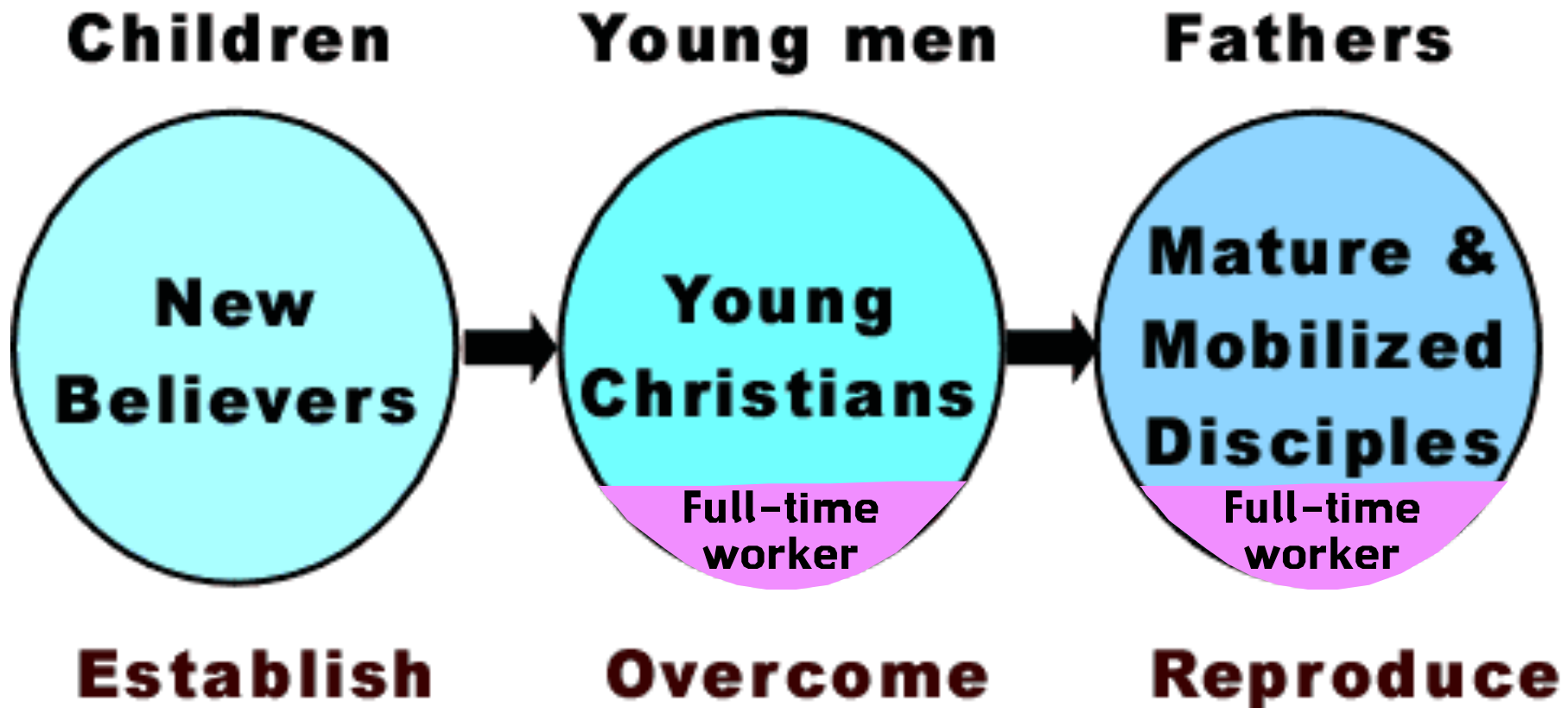
THE FLOW

TRACING CHRISTIAN GROWTH

1 JOHN 2:12-14



WHAT ABOUT FULL-TIME SERVICE?



By showing upcoming Christian leaders the complete process of leadership training, they become more eager to find help to foster growth in all areas of their lives.

Summary of Growth for Fathers

- Every believer is designed to grow into a strong believer who serves others.
- Spiritual growth can always deepen our increasing faith in God's glorious person and ways.
- The believer's intimacy with God is often developed through trying circumstances.



The goal is the same but the focus is different.

Questions to Ponder

- ✦ **Are you still growing as you should in your relationship with God? Explain.**
- ✦ **What is one Christian spiritual discipline that helps shape your life?**
- ✦ **Give an example where you have encouraged another person so that they actively helped others.**

