**Stages of Development**

We never outgrow our younger stages. They are included with us and then we bring them forward in greater maturity.

**Stage - 1Infant – 0-3 years** – receiving that gaze, glad to be with you, being attached through the committed care of a caregiver and learning how to return to joy and peace. My body is well and I am soothed even when I experience unpleasant emotions. An infant might get to be a little over a year...they might do something displeasing to the mother and for a moment she might flash across her face displeasure and the infant might see that. The infant might feel some distress. What a child learns is I can return to joy as my caregiver returns to glad to be with me and we return to quiet together. The infant develops agility to move back from distress to glad to be with you and quiet together. Their only job is to receive.

**Stage 2- Child – ages 3-4 to middle teenage years**

This stage is about learning how to take care of myself, what I think, feel, what I need and how to express that appropriately in relationship. Learning what my gifts and talents are and that I can do hard things. What satisfies me?

**Stage 3 - Young Adult state**

Begin to have the task of learning about our false self or shadow self. The liabilities in our character or the deformations or the places that we are immature. As adults, we are learning to protect ourselves and other people from those liabilities. We are taking accountability and responsibility in relationship. We are learning how to be reciprocal. Taking care of ourselves and others at the same time to negotiate my needs and the needs of whom I am in reciprocal relationship.

**Stage 4 - Parent stage**

Still have the need to receive glad to be with you, to receive quiet together to learn how to come back to joy and peace. We still have the needs of the child to know that we can do hard things and put words to our needs and desires. To take care of ourselves. We still have adult who is able to be in reciprocal adult relationships. Then the parent who is able to love whether spiritual or biological children for their own sake without demanding anything in return.

**Stage 5 - Elder stage**

He/she has been so formed by God that they have graduated from the parent stage where their responsible to take care primarily of their own children where they are entrusted with their care to where they can take care of an entire community sacrificially and can be that one greater than those in younger stages of maturity to express unconditional glad to be with you and wise rhythming of quiet together and glad to be with you so that the entire community is brought to higher levels of maturity from the strength and wisdom and sanctification and character formation being formed in the image of Christ. Also, an elder is able to interrupt cycles of violence in their community because they have learned from attaching to God to love enemies. Therefore, they have a profound effect on the entire community as they bring people forward.

[www.lifemodelworks.org](http://www.lifemodelworks.org)

**Exercise:**

1 Name three unhealthy practices, activities, or reaches that you have used for self-comfort apart from God.

**2.** Where are you receiving comfort and care that is coming from God, where you are actively opening your heart and soul to receive secure attachment from God?