



## **Episode 6: Helping People Who Are Spiritually Stalled**

In this episode, we discussed what we know about people who say they've stalled on their spiritual journey and how church leaders can help them get moving again.

### ***Everyone Stalls***

Every congregation has people who report being stalled in their spiritual growth. On average, 10% of the people in the 2,000 churches in the REVEAL database say that their spiritual growth has stalled. More than 90% of the 500,000 people we've surveyed say they stalled at some point in their spiritual journey

### ***Characteristics of People Who Are Stalled***

Three things tended to be true of people who are stalled:

- **Characteristic #1**—they are in the less spiritually mature stages on the Spiritual Continuum. About 50% of the people who have taken the REVEAL survey fall into the two least mature segments (Exploring Christ and Growing in Christ). However, these two stages are over-represented among people who are stalled, comprising 73% of stalled congregants. In total, 52% of stalled congregants fall into the Growing in Christ category.
- **Characteristic #2**—they invest very little time in personal spiritual practices. Even if we make the comparison apples-to-apples—comparing Growing in Christ people who are stalled to Growing in Christ people who are *not* stalled—the ones who are stalled engage less often in prayer, solitude and reflection on Scripture. For example, almost 40% of Growing in Christ people who are *not* stalled spend time daily in prayer, compared with 20% of those who are stalled.
- **Characteristic #3**: Stalled people participate less in church activities and are less satisfied with the church. Again, looking only through the lens of the Growing in Christ segment, those who are stalled participate less often in weekend services, small groups, and serving activities. Those who *do* participate report satisfaction levels that are 30 to 40% lower than those who are not stalled.

### ***What Causes People to Stall***

In the survey, we ask people to pick one of 19 reasons that best describes why they are stalled. The data suggest that there are three categories of reasons that most often cause people to stall.

1. Life circumstances such as a divorce, job loss, serious medical diagnosis, addiction, or mental health struggle has knocked them off their feet.
2. They've become too busy, letting other activities crowd their time and not prioritizing spending time with God in prayer and in His Word.
3. Something isn't right in their connection with their church community. People who are stalled for this reason say that they are having a hard time forming deep relationships with others in their church, or that they've been hurt by other Christians and the pain has derailed their journey. Others say they need more help from their church leaders to keep moving forward in their faith.

### ***How the Church Can Help Stalled People***

When we asked people what most helped them move on from being stalled in the past, 42% said either re-engaging spiritual practices or engaging more with their church. Also, when we look at churches who have taken the survey twice, we see some evidence that stalled numbers decline when reflection on Scripture increases. When churches focus on helping people engage with their faith in some meaningful way in between Sundays, the result is a rising tide that lifts all boats.