



SQ21™ Christianity Glossary

Belief System: A worldview that explains the origin of the universe, how to live a good life, and the meaning of life. Everyone participates in a belief system, whether it is a traditional religion, a secular worldview, or something else. Once made conscious, we can choose to adopt a belief system that fosters the growth of our spiritual intelligence.

Blessings: Events or experiences that are unexpected and helpful, gifts from God. Relationships, jobs, material, opportunities, teachers, etc. appear when God determines the timing is right for us and when we are open to receiving these gifts.

Boundaries: Limits, guidelines (as in setting a limit on someone else's behavior toward you). We teach other people what is "not okay" with us by setting limits on how they treat us. One of the key jobs of the Ego is to create and preserve boundaries that keep us healthy. Insufficient Ego development can lead to an inability to set proper boundaries with others.

Centered: Grounded, stable; able to feel pain and joy deeply but not be fundamentally bothered or knocked off balance; equanimous. Living and acting from a place of close relationship with Jesus Christ moment by moment. In sports, an athlete or dancer learns to operate "from their center" so that they are not easily knocked about and do not lose their balance. To "feel Centered" is to have this sensation emotionally and spiritually. Synonyms: stable, anchored, rooted, present.

Conflicting points of view / Conflicting ideas: Two things that seem on the surface to disagree, but are both true; paradox. For example, we read Jesus say, "If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple."* (Luke 14:26) Yet we also know that Jesus also said to "Love your neighbor as yourself."* (Matthew 22:39) The wisest, most complex thinkers can hold both statements as equally true simultaneously.

*New International Version

Effortless Dance: When the dance and the dancer are one; when who we are is what we do. This is the state in which the Ego and Higher Self are working in complete harmony and everything we do is a fulfillment of God's will in our lives. Our actions and words are coming directly from the Holy Spirit. The universal "dance" of creation is dancing itself through us effortlessly. Although we can temporarily Peak Experience this state, it can also be more continuous or permanent.

Ego or Ego self: The sense of being a separate, individual person, the process of making meaning in the world, and the part of us which is self-concerned. The Ego is an integral part of the human being because it helps to fulfill our basic human physical and emotional needs, but it is only a small part of the totality of who we are. When we live primarily from the Ego we often feel and act with selfishness, fear, or anger. In 1 Corinthians 2:14 we are told, “The unspiritual self, just as it is by nature, can't receive the gifts of God's Spirit. There's no capacity for them. They seem like so much silliness.”* Spiritual development includes realizing that we are more than the Ego and replacing harmful Egoic patterns of thought, feeling, and behavior with healthier Egoic patterns that work with the Higher Self. Synonyms: unspiritual self, personal self, personality self, separate self, small self.

*The Message

The Golden Rule: “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you” – this rule appears in some form in all major religious traditions and in many philosophies. In the Bible it is recorded in Matthew 7:12. Sometimes it is stated in the reverse: “Do not do unto others as you would not have them do unto you.”

Higher Power / Loving, intelligent universe: The Holy Trinity: God the Father, the creator, Jesus Christ, the redeemer, and the Holy Spirit, the sustainer. What you consider to be a description of “Higher Power” may not be what others would say, so tolerance for synonyms is important. Synonyms from other religious traditions: Allah, YHWH, Ein Sof, Brahman, Emptiness, Spirit or Great Spirit, the Tao.

Higher Self: The soul or our spiritual self. The part of our selves which would obey Christ when He said, “Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.” (Colossians 3:12-14)* We act from our Higher Self when we are inspired by our vision of God. Synonyms: inner wisdom, authentic self, the light of the Divine within me, Christ consciousness, Buddha-nature, Atman.

*New International Version

Humility: The honest recognition of our own Strengths and Weaknesses and the willingness to stay open-minded, to learn from the opinions of others, and to be guided by the Holy Spirit. Humility is a necessary component in the development of spiritual intelligence. We are all imperfect and cannot make this walk through life all by ourselves. We need help at various times from God and from other people. Asking for help, reflecting on the vastness of the universe, and recognizing that we never stop growing and developing are all ways to strengthen a healthy humility.

Integrity: honesty, truthfulness, authenticity, “I walk my talk.” Emulating Christ as best we can, including by praying to God and integrating the spiritual lessons we learn into our daily lives. Thus, 2 Corinthians 10:5 says that “We demolish arguments and every

pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.”*

*New International Version

Intelligence: The ability to respond skillfully in real situations. A latent aptitude, such as a natural talent for music, does not become “musical intelligence” until you study and practice and develop the skill to actually play music well. Similarly we are all spiritual beings, but we are not all spiritually intelligent until we study and practice and develop our spiritual skills. Christians can develop their spiritual intelligence by reading the bible, praying, doing ministries, giving selflessly, and generally emulating the life of Christ. However, before we can do any of this we have to first recognize the value of entering the spiritual life and make a commitment to God to develop ourselves, for our own salvation and for the good of others.

Intuition: Knowing something and yet not necessarily knowing HOW you know it. Synonyms: hunch, gut feeling, direct knowing, insight, inner wisdom.

Larger Reality / Larger Perspective: Since the human perceptual process is limited, a fully inclusive perspective on what is real includes that which human eyes may not be able to see. With regards to spiritual development, adopting a larger perspective requires learning to see beyond the surface of things through Intuition, spiritual insight, and grace. Our understanding of our selves and the world expands through spiritual practices such as prayer or meditation, and with the help of our community, teachers, and experts.

Law of Consequences: The actions you take always have an impact on you and others, either immediately or in the future. Galatians 6:7: “A man reaps what he sows.”*

Synonyms: moral cause and effect, living in the world of your making, law of divine justice, karma. (See the entry for Spiritual Principles for more information.)

*New International Version

Meanings: Interpretations, purposes, reasons.

Mission: What you are here to contribute to the world. Your mission is based both on your Higher Self, and your Intuition of God’s purpose for your life. Fulfilling your Mission can benefit everyone; as Matthew 5:14 says, “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden.”* Synonyms: life’s work, life purpose, calling, vocation, reason for being.

*New International Version

Mysticism: The pursuit of intimate communion, or identity, with God through spiritual insight. In Christianity the practice of mysticism occurs in multiple denominations as the journey through the Dark Night of the Soul to “The Cloud of Unknowing.” Other religions have their own mystical traditions. For example, in Islam, the Sufi tradition is the mystical branch. In Judaism, one major source of mystical thought and practice is Kabbalah. Eastern religions have well-developed traditions of mystical practice as well.

Mystical states of consciousness can also be developed outside the context of traditional religions. For example, contemplation of nature or various types of secular meditation can have similar results as religious mystical practices.

Non-judgmental: Keeping an open mind and heart; being deeply understanding while maintaining discernment and the ability to take appropriate action as needed. There are ample examples of this in the words of Jesus. In Luke 6:37 we are told, “Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.”* and in John 8:7 Jesus reminds us not to “cast stones” against others. At the highest level of compassion and non-judgment we see that we too might share another person's thoughts, beliefs, emotions and behaviors if we were in his or her situation. This enables wise and compassionate responses.
*New International Version

Objective: Neutral, detached, evaluating something without preconceptions or filters, unbiased.

Peak Experiences: There are many different types of peak experiences, but they are all temporary. Peak experiences feel “different” from everyday perception, often involving a moment of awe and wonder, a sense of selflessness, or a feeling of timelessness. Some people report that colors are much more vivid and that everything – rocks, trees, clouds – seems “alive.” There is often a sense of profound peace and joy, and a sense that “everything is okay.” These may include experiences of the Holy Spirit. There is often a sense of deep compassion for and connection to all living things...a sense of being connected to, a part of, or “at one” with everything. After a peak experience it can be a bit depressing or feel limiting to “snap back” into ordinary experiences.

Religion: A faith tradition, a specific set of teachings, beliefs, rituals, and practices that belong to a group of people. These teachings and practices are designed to help the seeker relate appropriately with a divinity or ultimate reality. They will typically teach about how to live an ethical life; usually there is a founder and sacred text(s). Most of the major religions have subgroups, or denominations. For example, within Christianity Roman Catholics, Greek Orthodox, and Anglicans are just three of the hundreds of denominations. (See the related definitions for Spirituality below, and Belief System above.)

Signals: A sign, things that change to alert me to a situation.

Significant Others: Individuals you are close to whose happiness or sadness quickly affect you such as a spouse, children, relatives, or close friends.

Spirituality: The human need to be in connection with something larger than our Ego self, something sacred and timeless. Spirituality may be expressed through Religion or it may not. Spirituality contributes to a fulfilling life and manifests in two ways: 1. a “vertical” desire to be in relationship with God, and 2. a “horizontal” desire to live a Christian life and be of service to other people, creatures, or the planet.

Spiritual Principles / Spiritual Laws / Universal Truths: Spiritual guidelines, rules, teachings or ideas that explain the right way to live, how human beings can achieve happiness and inner peace, how our inner life shapes our experiences, or how things work in the world. Examples: “As you give to others – so you will receive” or “What you believe is what you will create.” Spiritual Principles are different from the laws of physics in that we cannot – at this time – easily measure them in typical scientific ways. Yet we can experiment with them in our own lives and see if they appear to work as taught. For example: Do moral behaviors create better relationships and more inner peace? Deep Change teaches that there are basically two levels of these: 1. simpler ones like the Golden Rule or various ethical teachings which explain what to DO in the world. 2. more complex ones that explain how to BE in the world, such as “live in the ever-present moment of Now,” or “what I focus on expands.” Synonyms: sage advice, life lessons.

Spiritual Principles - Basic: Deep Change defines a “basic” spiritual principle as one that is outer-world focused. Two examples are the Golden Rule and the Law of Consequences. The Golden Rule occurs in some variation in every major faith tradition and most philosophies: “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” Outer-world focused spiritual principles discuss the consequences of our actions and whether they are ethical or not. Basic principles are usually taught before Complex Principles because they are more concrete and thus easier to understand.

Spiritual Principles - Complex: Deep Change defines “complex” spiritual principles as those that are inner-world focused. For example, in John 15:5 we read: “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”* When Jesus says to “remain in me” he is telling us how we should BE in the world. The value of Complex Principles is generally more difficult to demonstrate than of Basic Principles, so it is important that we validate these principles for ourselves, experimenting in our own experience. The foundation of Complex Spiritual Principles is the effort to understand the inner world and the “rules” that govern the connection between the inner world and outer world.

*New International Version

Spiritual Topics: Discussions of spirituality. For example, explanations or descriptions of the origin, meaning, or purpose of life and all of creation, or of how to be a virtuous human being.

Strengths: The things we have a natural talent for or have learned to do well. An area of comfort, confidence, expertise, or mastery, including in the skills of spiritual intelligence. Part of the spiritual exploration is discovering our particular natural gifts and talents and developing them. Knowing your strengths may help you discern the Mission that God is calling you to accomplish in this world.

Suffering: Mental or emotional distress. Pain in life is inevitable, whether it is physical or psychological, but suffering is somewhat avoidable. Suffering is created by our

resistance to what is. We resist unchangeable facts (like our age) or we resist what is happening around us or to us. We can meet these challenges more effectively by not getting lost in upset (optional suffering). When we do experience pain or suffering we can turn it to good by developing compassion for ourself and others. One helpful reflection on living with Suffering and pain is the Serenity Prayer: “God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference.”

Transcendent Timelessness: The experience of stepping out of our normal perceptions of time and change and into the perception of eternity, or that which never changes. Paradoxically, this may also feel like being totally present in the now. Transcendent Timelessness may be one aspect of a Peak Experience, or it may be more stable. Repeated familiarization with this perception can dramatically alter our sense of ourselves and our relationship to life.

Values: Things, qualities, or principles that are important to me and that influence the decisions and actions I take. Examples: religion, relationship with Christ, family, health, work, success, honesty, humility, piety, generosity, compassion.

Weaknesses: The things we don't do very well, haven't learned how to do yet, or have no natural talent for. We all have skills that are underdeveloped, but we also have the ability to cultivate these skills and improve.

Worldview: This literally means “the way I see the world.” Any worldview is made up of what we believe is “right” or “wrong”, how we think things “should be,” and what we think is true and false. People may agree with all, some, or none of someone else's worldview. Worldviews are shared by communities of people and based partly on geography, religion, age, culture, national citizenship, level of education, life experiences, and biological realities such as how our brains work. Our Worldview profoundly affects our perception of reality. We filter all the data we receive through our senses and through our Worldview so that we can make sense of it. Our filters inherently “leave stuff out” (especially what we don't understand or don't want to see), so each worldview excludes some information. Worldviews also “add stuff” by interpreting and making meaning out of what is being observed. Thus, by leaving out and adding in each of us can reach amazingly different interpretations of the same events. Worldviews, once made conscious, can be adjusted to be as accurate as possible. Synonyms: philosophy of life, belief system, personal filters, lens through which I see the world, my window on the world.

If you have suggestions to improve this SQ21 Christianity Glossary please email cindy@deepchange.com