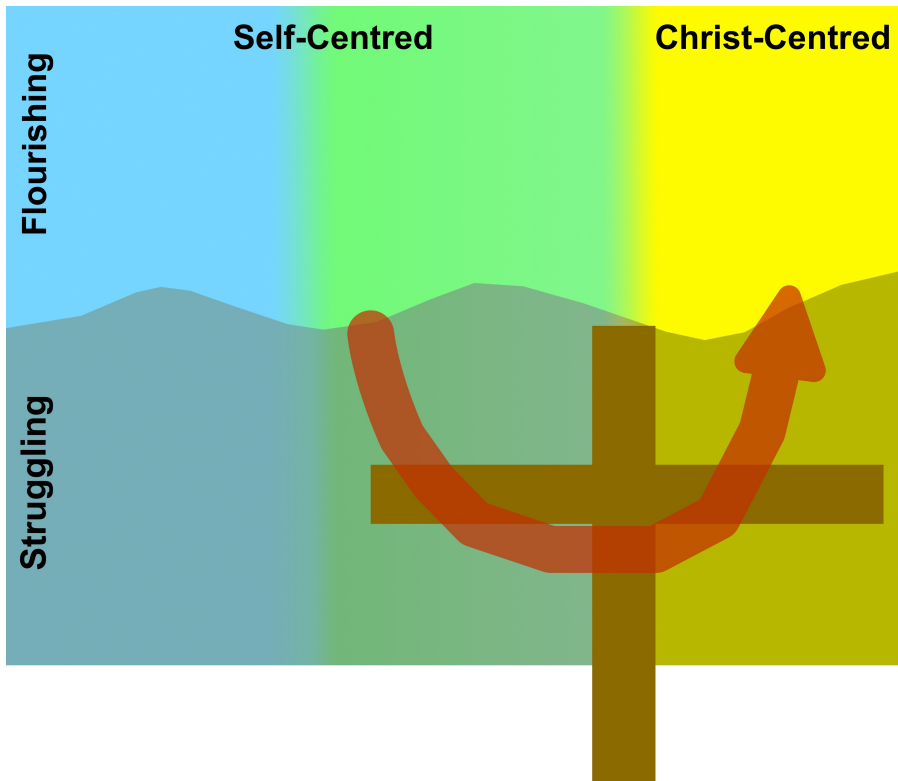


# A Pictorial Aid to Discipleship



From the work of Dr. John Warlow





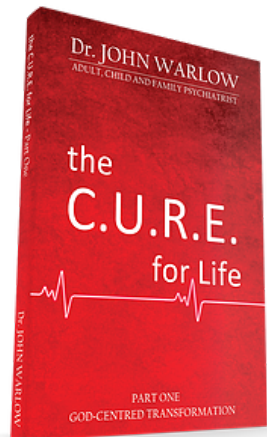
# Introduction

Christianity is at the same time extremely simple yet extremely complex. Embraceable by a child, yet incomprehensible to a professor. It takes a moment to become a Christian, and a lifetime to even begin to master it.

Sometimes a diagrammatical approach can help give your faith a simple structure that allows it to be straightforward yet profound. The following diagram enables that. Developed over many years by Dr John Warlow, a family and child Psychiatrist, it is presented here by myself, as a simple aid to discipleship for Redcliffe Uniting Church. John refers to it as 'the Square'. My version is more a rectangle.

I have given it my own spin. For a more thorough study you can purchase John's book, "The C.U.R.E. for life" from; [livingwholeness.org](http://livingwholeness.org) or visit here; [creekroad.org.au/the-square-the-cross/](http://creekroad.org.au/the-square-the-cross/)

It gives you a map to understand where your faith life might be. This then allows you to determine where you want to be, and a path to get there!

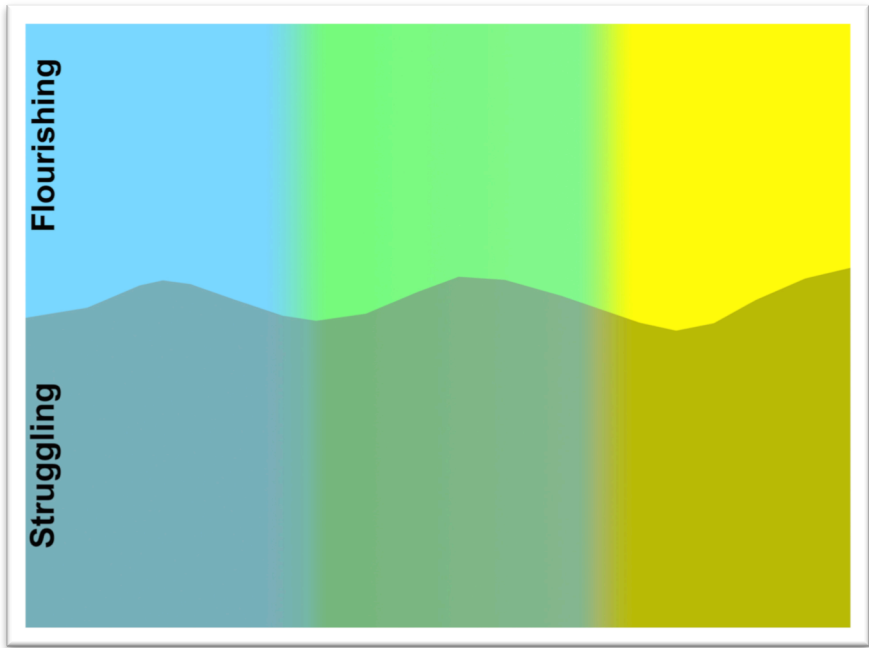


The diagram is NOT the gospel. It is a simplified diagram of part of it. If it is helpful, use it. If it is unhelpful, distracting or divisive, discard it.

Paul Clark

## Step 1.

Ignore the colour for the moment.



The above rectangle represents how we can be living our lives.

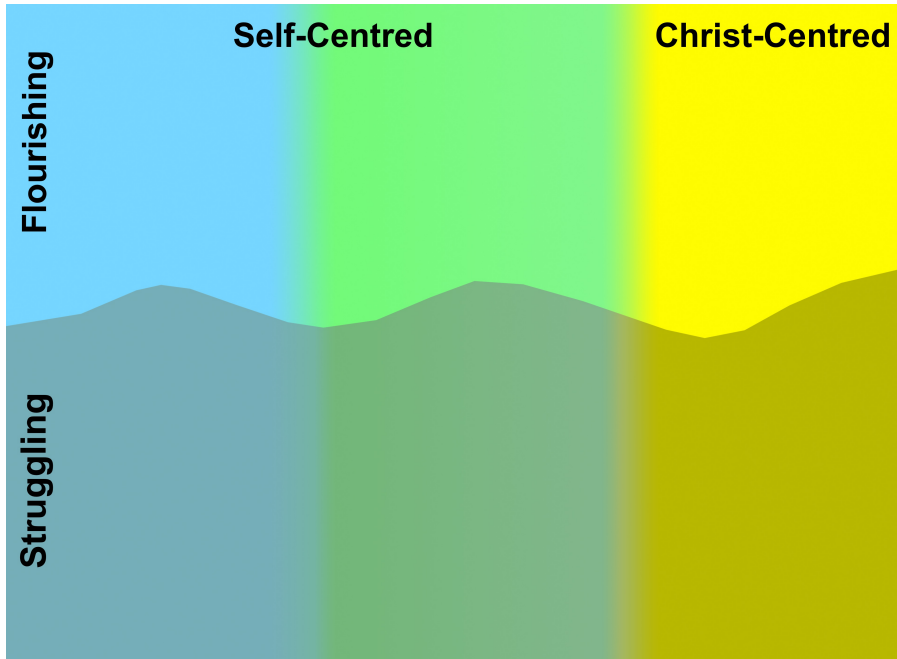
Firstly, we can be **Flourishing** above the 'water line'. Everything is good, life is fine. Money in the bank, friends to love.

Other times we're **Struggling**, just treading water or perhaps drowning, in bills, relationship conflict, trauma, disease.

Sometimes life is a mix; my job is a struggle, but relationships are good.

*Q. Where would you place yourself at this moment?*

## Step 2.



From a Christian point of view, we can also be **Self-centred** [blue/green area] living our life for our self.

Or we can be **Christ-centred** [yellow area] – Loving God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, and loving our neighbour *as* we love our self.

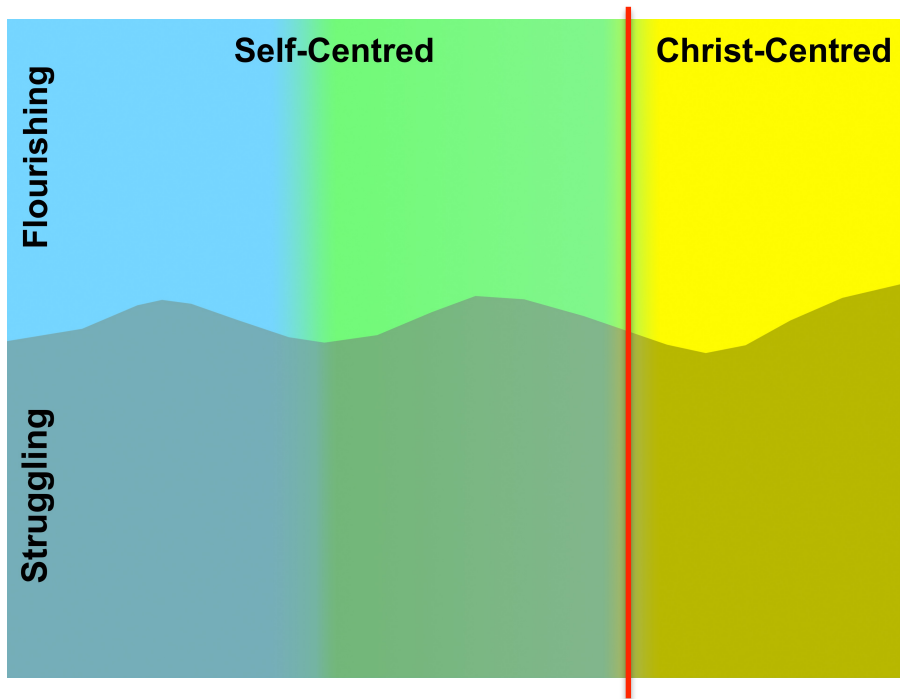
The Bible calls this yellow part by various names. ‘Born again’, ‘saved’, ‘Christian’, ‘living by the Spirit’, ‘moved from death to life.’

**Notice** that you can be living a self-centred life and flourishing – doing well. Many people are! The psalms talk about people who don’t serve the Lord, who might even be evil, yet prosper. Many other people feel the cost of living a self-centred life, struggling to do well.

As a Christian [yellow] you can also be struggling or flourishing!  
Indeed Jesus said, 'In this world you will have trouble.' We can be struggling because of our faith, or simply because we live in a broken world [ie a friend dies, we lose our job, relationships fail.]

Christianity is NOT protection against suffering. It is not a lucky charm from calamity. Christianity expects times of suffering. It offers hope in the suffering as we cling to God.

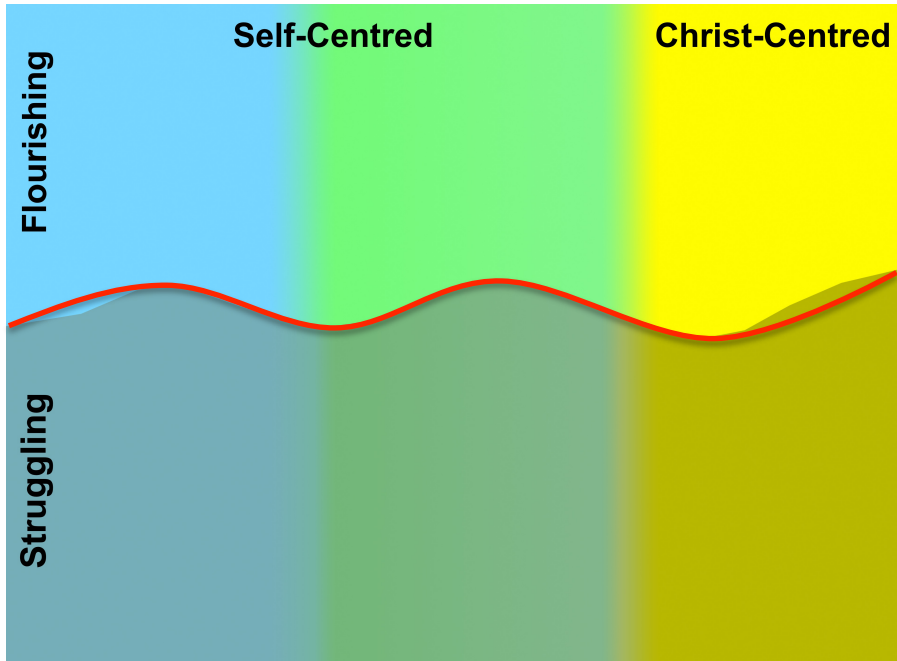
Indeed, the Bible's main concern is the below line...



Have we crossed from death to life?

The Bible *does* care if we suffer, but it knows, as long as we are in Christ, even in our suffering, the only way is up.

The World, meanwhile, is only concerned about this line...



Are we flourishing! If we are, we're a success. If not, we need help, or we get ignored. The world doesn't care about the Christ-centred line. Indeed, it doesn't even believe in it.

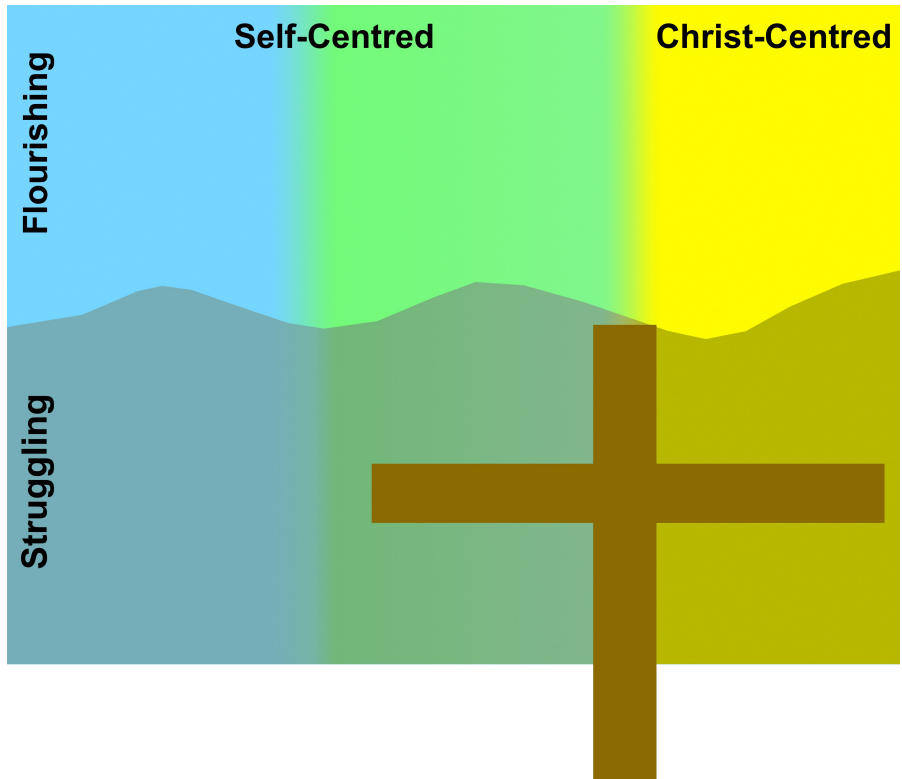
The only goal of the West is to 'gain the whole world.' But we know that's an unwise way to live. *'What if we gain the whole world, but lose our soul?'* Mark 8:36.

*Q. Where are you on this chart now?*

*Q. How does one move from Self-centred to Christ-centred?*

### Step 3.

This is where the **Cross** comes in.



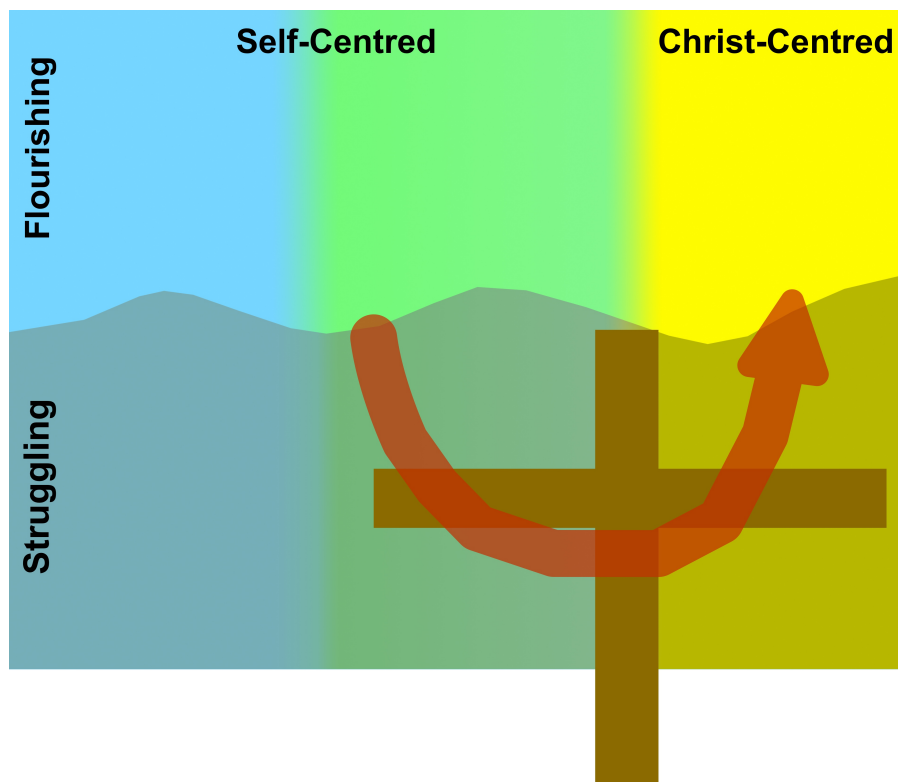
The **Cross** is below the waterline, as by definition the cross is the way of suffering. The cross is how we *cross* from death to life.

We think we can cross from blue/green to yellow in our own efforts. If we are good enough, if we do the right rituals, or if we believe the right things. This was the mistake of the Old Testament. Time and time again we tried to save ourselves, but we just can't do it. So God sent his son to make a way for us.

There is one simple movement for us to cross from death to life. It is central to a life of faith...

## Step 4

The Red Curve.



It looks like a U-turn because that's what it is. Also known as repentance or confession, we move from self-centred to Christ-centred when we repent, turn back to God. Swallow our pride and accept Christ into our lives.

We are forgiven, filled with the Holy Spirit and come into the family of God. There is no other way to abundant life but to turn to God. Anyone who has done it, knows it involves tears, humility – struggle – but it is a birth to new life!

*Q. Have you turned?*

## Step 5

You might have been wondering, what are the colours for?

Unfortunately, too often we have made the turn. We have accepted Christ, we have become Christians, but we live in our own strength. We move from the **yellow** to the **green** area.

Now, in the **green** we are still Christian, we are still saved, but we aren't living the full Christian life. We are living a 'carnal Christian' life. God doesn't reject us just because we do something wrong, or are slack. That's the point of grace and the new covenant – our salvation isn't based on our efforts but Christ's. But the **green** area is a dangerous place to live. There is a current flowing from right to left. *Wide is the road that leads to destruction!* Matt 7:13

If we stay in the **green** it's easy to drift. Stop going to church. Stop reading our bible. Stop praying.

How do we get back to the **yellow**?

Turn. Confess. *Humble yourself before the Lord and He will lift you up.* [James 4:10]

That's why many churches have a weekly confession. We leave church in the **yellow**. During the week we drift! We need to move from the **green** back to the **yellow**!

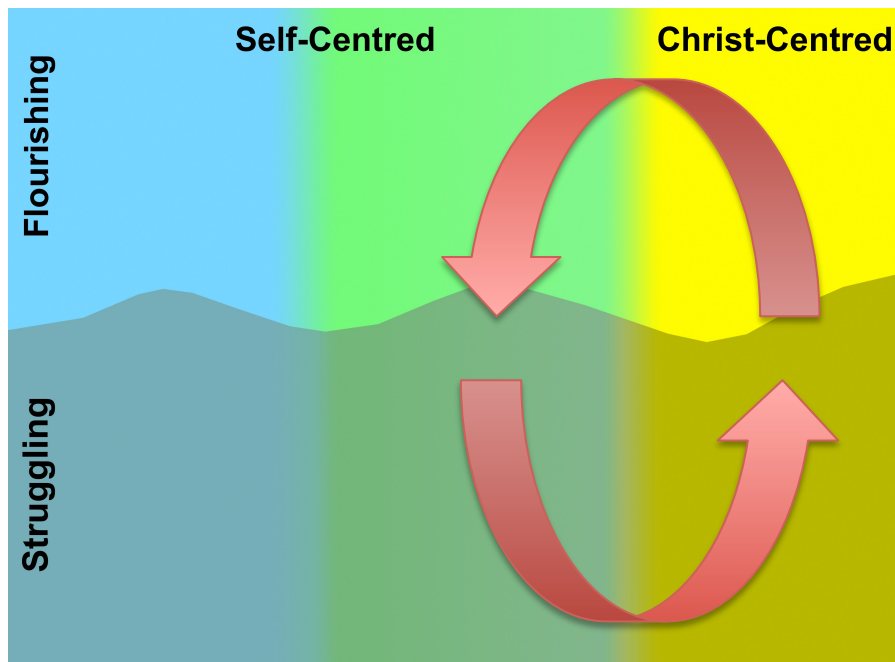
*Q. Now, where is your faith life?*

*Q. Where would you like it to be?*

## Application

This diagram has many applications.

For example, the story of Israel fits this map. Israel were slaves in Egypt. Struggling in the green. God heard them, He sent Moses to rescue them. They turned to God and moved into the dark yellow. But God brought them out of Egypt, eventually into the Promised land [bright yellow!].



Then they grew fat, complacent. They began to forget about the Lord, drifting into the bright green. *"We don't need the Lord, we are doing so well!"*

But their rejection saw them begin to struggle. Be taken over by other countries and taken into captivity [dark green]. So they turned back to God, and God began to restore them, and brought them back into Israel. Where they were glorified, but grew fat – repeat, repeat!

*Q. Where is Australian society on this map?*

*Q. Where is the Australian church, or the Chinese church?*

## **Further thoughts**

*Q. How do we stay in the yellow area?*

This is what **discipleship** is about. Reading our Bible. Prayer. Serving. Worship. Bible Study. Obedience. Meeting together. These things keep us in the yellow area. They don't save us, or move us from green to yellow, only repentance does that. But discipleship keeps us in the yellow, and helps us move from the struggle to flourishing.

**Salvation** is moving from blue to yellow. **Sanctification** is moving from green to yellow, and staying in the yellow longer and longer.

It is interesting to note that **suffering** is a consequence of disobedience, or simply of a broken world. But suffering actually draws us back to God. There is a flow from left to right when we struggle, but right to left when we flourish.

At the same time, when we struggle and believe we don't deserve it because we are God's [as if God is a lucky charm], we drift from yellow to green in our suffering.

Sometimes in our suffering we are in the green area, and we look to everything but God to restore us. When we struggle our rock and fortress must be God [dark yellow] then, even if death comes, we will be redeemed.

There is much more to say about this diagram.

Human efforts can take us up or down, but they can't cross us from death to life. Circumstance can take us up and down, but it can't save.

You can study the lives of many in the Bible to see how their lives track in this map, and see how some books of the Bible are written for different quadrants.

But the best thing to do is consider these questions for yourself...

*Q. Where are you?*

*Q. Where would you like to be?*

*Q. How will you get there?*





Redcliffe Uniting Church  
*At the heart of the Peninsula*

