

Naturalists

Intellectuals

Sensates

Contemplatives

**SACRED
PATHWAYS:**
9 Ways to Connect
With God

Traditionalists

Enthusiasts

Ascetics

Caregivers

Activists

Wednesday Night Community

Wednesday Night Community

Sacred Pathways: Nine Ways to Connect with God

Overview of the Nine Sacred Pathways

Naturalists: Loving God Outdoors

Naturalists would prefer to leave any building, however beautiful or austere, to pray to God beside a river. Leave the books behind, forget the demonstrations—just let them take a walk through the woods, mountains, or open meadows.

Sensates: Loving God with the Senses

Sensate Christians want to be lost in the awe, beauty, and splendor of God. They are drawn particularly to the liturgical, the majestic, the grand. When these Christians worship, they want to be filled with sights, sounds and smells that overwhelm them. Incense, intricate architecture, classical music, and formal language send their hearts soaring.

Traditionalists: Loving God through Rituals and Symbols

Traditionalists are fed by what is often termed the historic dimensions of faith: rituals, symbols, sacraments, and sacrifice. These Christians tend to have a disciplined life of faith. Some may be seen by others as legalists, defining their faith largely by matters of conduct. Frequently, they enjoy regular attendance at church services, tithing, keeping the Sabbath, and so on.

Ascetics: Loving God in Solitude and Simplicity

Ascetics want nothing more than to be left alone in prayer. Take away the liturgy, the trappings of religion, the noise of the outside world. Let there be nothing to distract them—no pictures, no loud music—and leave them alone to pray in silence and simplicity.

Activists: Loving God through Confrontation

Activists serve a God of justice, and their favorite Scripture is often the story of Jesus' cleansing of the temple. They define worship as standing against evil and calling sinners to repentance. These Christians often view the church as a place to recharge their batteries so they can go back into the world to wage war against injustice.

Caregivers: Loving God by Loving Others

Caregivers serve God by serving others. They often claim to see Christ in the poor and needy, and their faith is built up by interacting with other people. Such Christians may view the devotional lives of contemplatives and enthusiasts as selfish. Whereas caring for others might wear many of us down, this activity recharges a caregiver's batteries.

Enthusiasts: Loving God with Mystery and Celebration

Excitement and mystery in worship is the spiritual lifeblood of enthusiasts. As sensates want to be surrounded by beauty and intellectuals love to grapple with concepts, enthusiasts are inspired by joyful celebration. These Christians are cheerleaders for God and the Christian life. Let them clap their hands, shout "Amen!" _and dance in their excitement—that's all they ask.

Contemplatives: Loving God through Adoration

Contemplatives refer to God as their lover, and images of a loving Father and Bridegroom best capture their view of God. Their favorite Bible passages may come from the Song of Songs, as they enter the "divine romance." _The focus is not necessarily on serving God, doing his will, accomplishing great things in his name, or even obeying him. Rather, these Christians seek to love God with the purest, deepest, and brightest love imaginable.

Intellectuals: Loving God with the Mind

Intellectuals need their minds to be stirred before their hearts come truly alive. They are likely to be studying (and, in some instances, arguing either for or against) topics such as Calvinism, infant baptism, ordination of women, and predestination. These Christians live in the world of concepts.

What is the composite picture of your soul's path to God?

ASSESSMENT INSTRUCTIONS: Score the following statements on a scale of 0 to 5, with 0 being not true at all and 5 being very true. Record your answer in the space provided.

The highest number of points possible per pathway is 30. The higher your score, the stronger the dominance of this spiritual temperament is in your life. But remember, most of us have more than one spiritual temperament. Any score of 15 or higher indicates a tendency toward this temperament. Please take a moment to register this score in a notebook or journal. Once you have reviewed all the spiritual temperaments and noted all your scores on the same page in a journal or notebook, you will have a composite picture of your soul's path to God.

NATURALISTS:

Loving God Outdoors

_____ 1. I feel closest to God when I'm surrounded by what he has made—the mountains, the forests, or the ocean.

_____ 2. I feel cut off if I have to spend too much time indoors, just listening to speakers or singing songs. Nothing makes me feel closer to God than being outside.

_____ 3. I would rather worship God by spending an hour beside a small brook than by participating in a group service.

_____ 4. If I could escape to a garden to pray on a cold day, walk through a meadow on a warm day, and take a trip by myself to the mountains on another day, I would be very happy.

_____ 5. Again, on a scale of 0 to 5, how much does the statement describing the heart's cry of the naturalist resonate with you in comparison with the others?

- **Naturalist: let me be outdoors.**
- Sensate: let me experience.
- Traditionalist: let me remember.
- Ascetic: let me be alone.
- Activist: let me conquer.
- Caregiver: let me care.
- Enthusiast: let me celebrate.
- Contemplative: let me feel.
- Intellectual: let me think

_____ 6. Seeing God's beauty in nature is more moving to me than understanding new concepts, participating in a formal religious service, or participating in social causes.

Total of all your answers: _____

SENSATES:

Loving God with the Senses

_____ 1. I feel closest to God when I'm in a church that allows my senses to come alive—when I can see, smell, hear and almost taste his majesty.

_____ 2. I enjoy attending a “high church” _service with incense and formal Communion or Eucharist.

_____ 3. I'd have a difficult time worshiping in a church building that is plain and lacks a sense of awe or majesty. Beauty is very important to me, and I have a difficult time worshiping through second-rate Christian art or music.

_____ 4. Again, on a scale of 0 to 5, how much does the statement describing the heart's cry of the sensate resonate with you in comparison with the others?

- *Naturalist: let me be outdoors.*
- **Sensate: let me experience.**
- *Traditionalist: let me remember.*
- *Ascetic: let me be alone.*
- *Activist: let me conquer.*
- *Caregiver: let me care.*
- *Enthusiast: let me celebrate.*
- *Contemplative: let me feel.*
- *Intellectual: let me think*

_____ 5. I'm naturally drawn to museums and concerts more than I'm inclined to take a walk in the woods, work in a soup kitchen, or read a book by myself.

_____ 6. I would really enjoy using drawing exercises, icons, or classical music playing in the background to improve my prayer life.

Total of all your answers: _____

TRADITIONALISTS:

Loving God through Ritual and Symbol

_____ 1. I feel closest to God when I'm participating in a familiar form of worship that has memories dating back to my childhood. Rituals and traditions move me more than anything else.

_____ 2. I begin to feel closest to God when I lay something on the altar, sacrificing it for him.

_____ 3. The words tradition and history are very appealing to me.

_____ 4. Participating in a formal liturgy or "prayer book" _service, developing symbols that I can place in my car, home, or office, and developing a Christian calendar for our family to follow are activities I would enjoy.

_____ 5. Again, on a scale of 0 to 5, how much does the statement describing the heart's cry of the traditionalist resonate with you in comparison with the others?

- *Naturalist: let me be outdoors.*
- *Sensate: let me experience.*
- ***Traditionalist: let me remember.***
- *Ascetic: let me be alone.*
- *Activist: let me conquer.*
- *Caregiver: let me care.*
- *Enthusiast: let me celebrate.*
- *Contemplative: let me feel.*
- *Intellectual: let me think*

_____ 6. I would really enjoy developing a personal rule (or ritual) of prayer.

Total of all your answers: _____

ASCETICS:

Loving God in Solitude

_____ 1. I feel closest to God when I am alone and there is nothing to distract me from focusing on his presence.

_____ 2. I would describe my faith as more “internal” than “external.”

_____ 3. The words silence, solitude, and discipline are very appealing to me.

_____ 4. Taking an overnight retreat by myself at a monastery where I could spend large amounts of time alone in a small room, praying, studying God’s Word, and fasting for one or more days are all activities I would enjoy.

_____ 5. Again, on a scale of 0 to 5, how much does the statement describing the heart’s cry of the ascetic resonate with you in comparison with the others?

- *Naturalist: let me be outdoors.*
- *Sensate: let me experience.*
- *Traditionalist: let me remember.*
- ***Ascetic: let me be alone.***
- *Activist: let me conquer.*
- *Caregiver: let me care.*
- *Enthusiast: let me celebrate.*
- *Contemplative: let me feel.*
- *Intellectual: let me think*

_____ 6. I believe I would particularly benefit from acts such as a night watch, taking a short vow of silence, or simplifying my life.

Total of all your answers: _____

CAREGIVERS:

Loving God by Loving Others

_____ 1. I feel closest to God when I see him in the needy, the poor, the sick, and the imprisoned. I feel God's presence most strongly when I am sitting quietly by the bed of someone who is lonely or ill or when I am taking a meal to someone in need. You can count on me to offer a ride or to volunteer for helping activities.

_____ 2. I grow weary of Christians who spend their time singing songs while a sick neighbor goes without a hot meal or a family in need doesn't get help fixing their car.

_____ 3. The words service and compassion are very appealing to me.

_____ 4. I sense God's power when I am counseling a friend who has lost a job, preparing meals for or fixing the car of a family in need, or spending a week at an orphanage in Mexico.

_____ 5. Again, on a scale of 0 to 5, how much does the statement describing the heart's cry of the caregiver resonate with you in comparison with the others?

- *Naturalist: let me be outdoors.*
- *Sensate: let me experience.*
- *Traditionalist: let me remember.*
- *Ascetic: let me be alone.*
- *Activist: let me conquer.*
- ***Caregiver: let me care.***
- *Enthusiast: let me celebrate.*
- *Contemplative: let me feel.*
- *Intellectual: let me think*

_____ 6. I would rather nurse someone to health or help someone repair their house than teach an adult Sunday school class, go on a prayer and fasting retreat, or take a lonely walk in the woods.

Total of all your answers: _____

ENTHUSIASTS:

Loving God with Mystery and Celebration

_____ 1. I feel closest to God when my heart is sent soaring and I feel like I want to burst, worship God all day long, and shout out his name. Celebrating God and his love is my favorite form of worship.

_____ 2. I feel most energized when I take a spiritual risk on behalf of God or see God move in a supernatural way. Tradition and ritual put me to sleep; I serve a supernatural God and am excited to see him move in unexpected ways.

_____ 3. The words celebration and joy are very appealing to me.

_____ 4. I would enjoy attending a workshop on learning to worship through dance or a worship session with contemporary music. I expect that God is going to move in some unexpected ways.

_____ 5. Again, on a scale of 0 to 5, how much does the statement describing the heart's cry of the enthusiast resonate with you in comparison with the others?

- *Naturalist: let me be outdoors.*
- *Sensate: let me experience.*
- *Traditionalist: let me remember.*
- *Ascetic: let me be alone.*
- *Activist: let me conquer.*
- *Caregiver: let me care.*
- ***Enthusiast: let me celebrate.***
- *Contemplative: let me feel.*
- *Intellectual: let me think*

_____ 6. I spend more money on music and worship downloads than on books.

Total of all your answers: _____

CONTEMPLATIVES:

Loving God through Adoration

_____ 1. I feel closest to God when my emotions are awakened, when God quietly touches my heart, tells me that he loves me, and makes me feel like I'm his closest friend. I would rather be alone with God contemplating his love than participating in a formal liturgy or being distracted by a walk outside.

_____ 2. The most difficult times in my faith are when I can't feel God's presence within me.

_____ 3. The words lover, intimacy, and heart are very appealing to me.

_____ 4. I really enjoy having thirty minutes of uninterrupted time each day to sit in quiet prayer and "hold hands" _with God, writing love letters to him, and enjoying his presence.

_____ 5. Again, on a scale of 0 to 5, how much does the statement describing the heart's cry of the contemplative resonate with you in comparison with the others?

- *Naturalist: let me be outdoors.*
- *Sensate: let me experience.*
- *Traditionalist: let me remember.*
- *Ascetic: let me be alone.*
- *Activist: let me conquer.*
- *Caregiver: let me care.*
- *Enthusiast: let me celebrate.*
- ***Contemplative: let me feel.***
- *Intellectual: let me think*

_____ 6. When I think of God, I think of love, friendship, and adoration more than anything else.

Total of all your answers: _____

INTELLECTUALS:

Loving God with the Mind

_____ 1. I feel closest to God when I learn something new about him that I didn't understand before. My mind needs to be stimulated. It's very important to me that I know exactly what I believe.

_____ 2. I get frustrated when the church focuses too much on feelings and spiritual experience. Of far more importance is the need to understand the Christian faith and to have proper doctrine.

_____ 3. The words concepts and truth are very appealing to me.

_____ 4. I feel close to God when I participate in a time of uninterrupted study—reading God's Word or good Christian books and then perhaps having an opportunity to teach or participate in a discussion with a small group.

_____ 5. Again, on a scale of 0 to 5, how much does the statement describing the heart's cry of the intellectual resonate with you in comparison with the others?

- *Naturalist: let me be outdoors.*
- *Sensate: let me experience.*
- *Traditionalist: let me remember.*
- *Ascetic: let me be alone.*
- *Activist: let me conquer.*
- *Caregiver: let me care.*
- *Enthusiast: let me celebrate.*
- *Contemplative: let me feel.*
- ***Intellectual: let me think***

_____ 6. I spend more money on books than music.

Total of all your answers: _____