

Discover Your Soul's
Path to God



SACRED PATHWAYS

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STUDY GUIDE

A Study Guide for Sacred Pathways

by Gary Thomas

“This study has been prepared by Adalee Lewis and is offered for your benefit. It has not been written by Gary Thomas, nor have the suggested books been compiled by him. It is a labor of love offered by a reader to those groups who might appreciate a headstart in their own effort to study Sacred Pathways in a group format.”

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Chapter One

Naturalists

Loving God Out Of Doors

DESCRIPTION

“Where we worship can have a profound impact on the quality of our worship. The naturalist seeks to leave the formal architecture and the padded pews to enter an entirely new “cathedral”, a place that God himself has built: the out-of-doors.” (36)

“...the Bible is meant to be read outside...The phrase “river of life” seems quaint when the words are projected up on a wall; but its power is nearly overwhelming when you stand by a swiftly flowing river.”

“God is made known to us ‘by the creation, preservation, and government of the universe; which is before our eyes as a most elegant book, wherein all creatures great and small, are as so many characters leading us to see clearly the invisible things of God.’ (40, from the Reformed tradition’s Belgic confession)

“...the mending and binding so necessary to heal our stress filled lives may flow through creation. For the spiritually oppressed or the socially injured, a pleasing or quiet natural environment can help provide a spiritual release. Resting by a clear, free-running river or sitting on a sunny slope in blooming desert grassland can bring peace and joy into very clouded souls.” (42, from Susan Power Bratton)

“Earth’s crammed with heaven and every common bush afire with God. But only he who sees takes off his shoes and the rest sit around it and pick blackberries.” (44, from Elizabeth Barrett Browning)

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

1. Take your Bible outside and read it; meditate while feasting your eyes and spirit on natural beauty
2. Rest
3. Work your way through one of Dr. Pamela Reeve’s books
4. Worship as the dawn breaks
5. Go for a walk

WELL KNOWN NATURALISTS

St. Francis of Assisi, Jonathan Edwards, Bernard of Clairvaux, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, Susan Power Bratton, Pamela Reeve

SCRIPTURES TO PONDER

Psa. 29; 23; 84; Isa. 41:17-19; Mark 6:31-32; Jn. 4:35;

SONGS TO ENHANCE WORSHIP

All Creatures of Our God and King
Fairest Lord Jesus/Beautiful Savior
For the Beauty of the Earth
Great is Thy Faithfulness
How Great Thou Art
I Wonder as I Wander
I've Got a River of Life
Jesus Shall Reign Wher'er the Sun
Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee
Like a River Glorious
Praise the Lord from the Heavens
The Tree Song
The Trees of the Field

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Where and when do you feel closest to God?
2. How is worship different for you when you are inside listening to speakers, etc. and outside enjoying nature.
3. What could you do (where could you go) that would help you worship more deeply on a regular basis?

4. How do you balance the need for natural beauty and quiet with the command to be in community? What kinds of community activities are satisfying to you spiritually and emotionally?

RESOURCES

Edwards, Jonathan. "The Language and Lessons of Nature"

Muench, David, Marc Muench, Francis of Assisi. *Canticle of the Earth: The Words of Francis of Assisi Celebrated in the Photography of David Muench*. (2002). Sorin Books ISBN: 1893732452

St. Francis of Assisi, Frank Missant Shambhala, *Canticle of the Sun*. 2002. ISBN: 1570629803.

Heaven on Earth: The Inspirational Writings of Saint Francis of Assisi. (1973) ISBN: 0875293220

Song of creation. (2003). Laughing Elephant. ISBN: 1883211344

Dr. Pamela Reeve, *Parables of the forest; Parables of the Sea*.

Chapter Two

Sensates

Loving God With the Senses

DESCRIPTION

“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.” These Christians delight in sensuous onslaught. “The five senses are God’s most effective inroad to their hearts.” (23,24)

“Truth must be embodied to be realized. It must be incorporated to be understood. No religious movement has ever been forceful or popular without a rich corporeality: an image, a rite, a creed, a feeling, a feast, or vision or a sacrament has always been used to embody its truth.” (55, quoted from Von Ogden Vogt.)

“Biblical accounts of the glory of God in the heavens are elaborate affairs, and rarely quiet.” (52)

“Because some very helpful activities in the history of the church (i.e. walking the stations of the cross, using incense, and other such activities) have occasionally become polluted or separated from a vibrant faith, some Christians have thrown most of them away. We have cut too far, however, amputation the arm because we fear an infection in the fingers.” (58, 59)

“Using our bodies to glorify God is much better response than denying the role of the body in worship.” (67, from Vogt)

CAUTIONS

A sensate needs to use discernment when listening to beautiful music, looking at beautiful art, participating in sensually fulfilling worship. Not all that is beautiful is of God.

Don’t deprive yourself of corporate worship just because the building or music or form of the service isn’t beautiful to you.

WELL KNOWN SENSATES

Madeleine L'Engle; Mozart; Handel;

SCRIPTURE TO PONDER

Rev. 8:24; Deut. 6:5; Ezra 1:1-3; 1:26,27; 3:12,13; 43:3; Psa. 45:1; Mal. 1:11; Luke 7:36-38; Rev. 1:10, 13-17; Rev. 4.

taste: Psa. 34:8; I Pet. 2:3

touch: I Sam. 10:26; Mt. 14:36; Lk. 5:12-13; 24:39

look: Lk. 24:39; Jn. 1:36; 4:35; 19:37; Rev. 5:6; I Sam 16:7

hear: Deut. 30:20; Psa. 96; 147; 140; 150; Isa. 3:9; John 10:27; Jas 1:19

smell: Psa. 141:2; 2 Cor. 2:16; Eph 5:2

speak Psa. 34:1; ;119: 171; Isa 6:15

SONGS

All Hail King Jesus
 As We Seek Your Face
 Blow, Oh Cleansing Wind
 Christ The Lord Is Risen Today
 Come and See (Graham Kendrick)
 Crown Him With Many Crowns
 High and Exalted
 Holy, Holy, Holy
 How Beautiful
 I See the Lord
 I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light
 I Will Come and Bow Down
 Jesus, You Are My Life
 Let It Fill the Room
 Let Your Glory Fall
 May the Fragrance
 Purify My Heart (Refiner's Fire)
 Open My Eyes, Lord
 Open the Eyes of My Heart, Lord
 See the Conqu'ror Mounts in Triumph
 The Light of the World Is Jesus

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

1. Listen to worship-producing music
2. Absorb worship-producing art
3. Sing scripture
4. Create a worship space for yourself: light a candle, set out meaningful articles, e.g., a cross.
5. Use a “pocket piece”
6. Enter into a scripture passage. Be one of the characters. Experience the passage.
7. Vary prayer posture: stand, sit, kneel, lie prostrate

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. How do you feel when you are worshipping in a plain, unadorned church? How does it affect your ability to focus on God?
2. Have you been in a service that incorporated incense? an orchestra or pipe organ? ritual dance? signing? processions of banners or crosses? other? How is your worship experience enhanced or hindered by these sensory additions to the worship service?
3. Have you yourself participated in dance or some other physical expression during a worship service? How did it affect your whole worship experience?
4. How does having something to touch, smell, look at or listen to affect your personal worship time?
5. How do you react to the statement, “we must take care that our worship of God doesn’t become worship of the worship experience alone”?

RESOURCES

Whitfield and Stoddart, Hearing, Taste and Smell. Pathways of Perception.
Nouwen, Henri J., Return of the Prodigal Son.

Chapter Three

TRADITIONALISTS

Loving God Through Ritual and Symbol

DESCRIPTION

“Traditionalists are fed by what are 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....Traditionalists have a need for ritual and structure.” (24)

“Many of the religious obligations I had felt ‘delivered from’ in my own youth, I later discovered as potential avenues of spiritual growth. Instead of feeling delivered, I felt cheated, as if I had been taught to live the Christian life without being given something very helpful to assist me.” (93)

“Rituals provide structure for our faith. Once we learn to use them, traditionalists can also incorporate the use of symbols, which provide meaning.” (81)

“Some people react to the word, religion, like a child reacts to the work, bedtime. They rightly fear a form of faith that has no substance, so they stress Christianity is a relationship, not a religion. However, in the context of a true faith, religious practices and rituals can be a powerful force for good - a friend, not an enemy, of a rich and growing relationship with God.” (70)

“There are three elements of the traditionalist pathway: ritual (or liturgical pattern); symbol (or significant image); sacrifice.” (73)

“Imbued with a vibrant faith, the repetition of ritual is a powerful force for good. Without present attention, however, ritual becomes an empty exercise that floods our souls with insincerity.” (91)

CAUTIONS

Do not let the form of your worship become an idol. If any other way to worship seems “wrong”, you may want to explore just why this is.

WELL KNOWN TRADITIONALISTS

Kathleen Norris; Walt Wangerin; Clement of Alexandria; Bonhoeffer

SCRIPTURES TO PONDER

Gen. 12:7,8; Ex. 25:40; 40:12-15; Lev. 10:8-11; Num. 15:37-40; 21:4-9; Josh. 1:8; 2 Kings 18:4; Ezra 8:32, 35; Neh. 8:3; Jer. 7:4-7; Amos 5:21-24; Mt. 23:27; Lk. 4:16; Acts 3:1; 10; 16:13; 21:26; Rom. 3:25; 8:3; Col. 2; 16-17; I Tim. 4:1-5

SONGS TO ENHANCE WORSHIP

All Glory, Laud and Honor
 Come, Ye Disconsolate
 Glory Be to Jesus
 God Works His Purposes in Us
 He Was Wounded For Our Transgressions
 I Am Not My Own
 I Want to Walk As A Child of the Light
 I Worship You, O Lord
 Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise
 In the Bleak Mid-Winter
 Jesus, the Very Thought of You
 Now Greet the Swiftly Changing Year
 Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven
 Thou Who Wast Rich (You Who Were Rich)
 We Rest on Thee, Our Shield and Our Defende

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

1. 1. Contemplate the three elements of the traditionalist pathway.
2. Read Scripture aloud.
3. Select a Psalm to say every morning and one for each evening; Practice liturgical prayer (see Book of Common Prayer)
4. Set a regular time and place to meet with the Lord each day.
5. Follow the Church calendar and celebrate significant days, e.g. Pentecost, Advent
6. 8. Develop meaningful rituals; Make plentiful use of symbols or ritualized gestures
7. Find areas of sacrifice

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. In what ways did men and women in the Bible and in church history use ritual to embody spiritual truth?
2. What rituals, symbols, etc. would you like to incorporate into your life? How do you think they would affect your personal worship time? What would you like them to do for you?
3. What rituals are necessary for you to be able to worship easily?
4. What happens to your ability to worship when you are fellowshiping in a church of a denomination that has little formal liturgy?

RESOURCES

Bethge, Eberhard (1972). *Letters and Papers from Prison*. New York: MacMillan
Heath, Sidney (1909). *The Romance of Symbolism*. London: Francis Griffiths.
Jungmann, Joseph (1978). *Prayer Through the Centuries*, trans. by John Coyne.
New York: Paulist.
Nelson, Gertrude Mueller (1986). *To Dance with God: Family Ritual and
Community Celebration*. New York; Paulist.
Norris, Kathleen. *Amazing Grace Cloister Walk*.
Underhill, Evelyn (1936). *Worship*. New York: Harper and Row.
Wangerin, Walter (1992). *Reliving the Passion*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.
Book of Common Prayer

Chapter Four

ASCETICS

Loving God in Solitude and Simplicity

DESCRIPTION

“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.

Ascetics live a fundamentally internal existence. Even when they are part of a group of people, they might seem to be isolated from the others. ...uncomfortable in an environment that keeps them from ‘listening to the quiet’.” (25)

“It is in these dark, intense, lonely times that ascetics’ souls awaken.” (97)

“Ascetics live strict lives of self-denial so that they would be free to contemplate God.” (102)

“True ascetics are strict with themselves but treat others with supernatural gentleness.” (103)

“...modern ascetics...don’t have time to find a desert to express our faith; inner detachment allows us to find a lonely desert in the midst of the busiest city.” (100)

“He (St. Francis) devoured fasting as a man devours food. He plunged after poverty as men have dug madly for gold.” (100)

CAUTIONS

An ascetic will need to be intentional in seeking out other Christians with whom to fellowship. We need feedback from our brothers and sisters to be able to see ourselves clearly.

WELL KNOWN ASCETICS

Michael Card, John the Baptist, Daniel, Jerome, St. Francis of Assisi

SCRIPTURES TO PONDER

Num. 6; Isa. 64:6; Dan. 9:3; Joel 1:13-14; 2:12; Zech. 7:1-10; Mt. 4:1; 6:5-6, 16-17; 14:13, 22-23; Mt. 26:36-39; Mk. 1:35; 6:30-32; 14:32-36; Lk. 22:39-46; Jn. 17

SONGS TO ENHANCE WORSHIP

Ah, Holy Jesus
 Be Still
 Cause Me To Come
 Give Ear to My Words (Psa. 5)
 Glory To the Lamb
 He is Lord
 Hide Me in Your Holiness
 Holy and Anointed One
 Holy Spirit, You are Welcome in This Place
 I Am Not My Own
 I Worship You, Almighty God
 Joy of My Desire
 King of My Life
 Lord, Have Mercy on Us
 Lord, I Thirst For You
 More Precious Than Silver
 No Higher Calling
 Purify My Heart (Nelson)
 Reign in Me (Bowater)
 Sanctuary
 Seekers of Your Heart
 Speak, Lord, in the Stillness
 When I Look Into Your Holiness
 With My Whole Heart
 You Are My All in All

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

1. Worship in the quiet of the night; Rise in the early morning for prayer and worship
2. Practice silence - attend a silent retreat, participate in a silent meal
3. Fast; do physical labor as an act of worship
4. Practice obedience - ask God to reveal any rebellious attitudes
5. Simplify your life - clean a closet, have a yard sale, cull your books and papers
6. Look for ways and places to include others in your life.
7. Make it a point to worship regularly in a fellowship of believers.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What does “solitude” mean to you? Can you find this even when you are with a group of people? Explain how you do that.
2. What does “austerity” mean to you? How do you incorporate it into your life?
3. What does “discipline” look like in your life? In what ways does it satisfy you? Where would you like to experience more of it?
4. What are ways you connect with those around you? How satisfying are those connections? Would you like to improve/increase them? Why or why not? How might you change your interactions to make them more satisfactory?

RESOURCES

Brother Lawrence, *Practicing the Presence of God*.
Duffey, Felix (1950). *Psychiatry and Asceticism*. London: B. Herder.
Foster, Richard. *Freedom of Simplicity; Celebration of Discipline*.
Merton, Thomas. *Basic Principles of Monastic Spirituality*. ISBN: 087243222x
Nouwen, Henri J. M. *The Way of the Heart: Desert Spirituality and Contemporary Ministry*. Harper. San Francisco. (1991). ISBN: 0060663308
Solitude.
Pennington, M. Basil (1983). *A Place Apart: Monastic Prayer and Practice for Everyone*. New York: Doubleday.
Rousseau, Philip (1978). *Ascetics, Authority, and the Church: In the Age of Jerome and Cassian*. London: Oxford University Press.

Chapter Five

ACTIVIST

Loving God Through Confrontation

DESCRIPTION

“Activists serve a God of justice, ...their favorite Scripture is often the account of Jesus cleansing the temple. They define worship as standing against evil and calling sinners to repentance.

Activists may adopt either social or evangelistic causes, but they find their home in the rough-and-tumble world of confrontation. They are energized more by interaction with others, even in conflict, than by being alone or in small groups.” (26)

“Activists...are spiritually nourished through the battle.” (121)

“The true activist lives for God and for His love alone.” (124)

CAUTIONS

Activists tend to see the world and its issues in ‘black and white’

“...There is only one kind of person who can fight the Lord’s battles in anywhere near a proper way, and that is the person who by nature is unbelligerant; at least it looks that way. The world must observe that, when we must differ with each other as true Christians, we do it not because we love the smell of the bullfight, but because we must for Christ’s sake.” (121)

“The church has frequently had an uneasy relationship with activists and prophets. We fondly remember those who have died, but often loathe those who are still living.” (132)

The ‘shadow-side’ to this temperament shows itself in acerbic tactlessness, running roughshod over others, not waiting for God or seeking discernment.

WELL KNOWN ACTIVISTS

Franky Schaeffer, Elizabeth Fry, Lord Shaftesbury, William Wilberforce, John Wesley, Tim and Beverly LaHaye, Charles Colson, Elijah, Peter, Habakkuk; Josh McDowell; Rush Limbaugh; James Dobson; Martin Luther King Jr.; Franklin Graham

SCRIPTURES TO PONDER

Psa. 7; 68; 10; Pr. 24:11-12; Ezek. 33:1-20;

SONGS TO ENHANCE WORSHIP

Be Thou My Vision
 Blow, Oh Cleansing Wind
 Come To Rest
 Declare His Glory
 Eternal Father, Whose Strong Arm
 Faithful Men
 Faithful One
 Give Me an Undivided Heart
 He Who Began a Good Work in You
 If You But Trust in God to Guide You
 It's Not By Might
 My Life is in You, Lord
 O, Breath of God
 Take My Life
 Trust His Heart
 We Are An Offering
 We Choose the Fear of the Lord

SUGGESTIONS

1. Consider God's faithfulness in the light of so much undone in the world. Consider His great patience. He is working even when we see no evidence of it. Don't give up.
2. Ponder John 4:34
3. Seek to develop tact, gentleness, persuasiveness, true love for others. Seek a mentor.
4. Invest energy in: producing and transmitting literature; social reform; "marches"; prayer walks; food pantries; crisis pregnancy center. Be creative.
5. Thoroughly research any activity before joining it. Ask God for wisdom first. Seek counsel, confirmation and accountability.
6. Be careful that intervention doesn't become accusation. Understand the difference between, "That's wrong!" and "I don't like that."
7. Remember that everything you say must be truth. But you don't have to say it just because it is true.
8. Consider carefully the outcomes you desire from your efforts.
9. Develop your ability for self-examination and contemplation of God.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What issues make God angry?
2. Think of the last social or Christian cause you were involved in. Did it draw you closer to God? In what ways? Was there anything about it that pulled you or others away from God? Explain.
3. How do your activities fit into your worship of God?
4. How do you feel when you are working for a cause and other Christians don't seem interested in it, or, even when they are interested, don't do anything to help? Are you able to resolve these feelings? How do you do this? What other things might you do?
5. Is your current church involvement one in which you can use your activism? What would you like to see different? What would you like to try?
6. How does your desire to motivate and change affect your relationships with other people? Are there changes you would like to see in your interpersonal interactions, you're your approachability? What might these look like?

RESOURCES

Merton, Thomas. *Contemplation in a World of Action*. (1999). Univ of Notre Dame Press.

Schaeffer, Fancis. *The Mark of the Christian; Bad News for Modern Man*.

Schaeffer, Franky, Francis A. Schaeffer. *A Time for Anger: The Myth of Neutrality*. (1982). Good News Pub.. ISBN: 0891072632.

Schaeffer, Franky. *Bad News for Modern Man*. (1984). Thomas Nelson. ISBN: 0840799047.

Is Capitalism Christian? Toward a Christian Perspective on Economics. Good News Pub. (1985) ISBN: 0891073620

The Matthew Video - "Jesus and the Religious Leaders - the woes", Mt. 23

Chapter Six

ACTIVIST

Loving God by Loving Others

DESCRIPTION

“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 (consider) the devotional lives of contemplatives and enthusiasts (to be) selfish. ...caring for others...recharges a caregiver’s batteries.” (27)

“Mother Teresa ...looked behind the eyes of the poor, the sick, and the needy, and said she saw the image of God. She learned to love God by loving others.” (135)

“For caregivers, giving care isn’t a chore but a form of worship. Martyrs need not apply.”(135)

“Some Christians will have a particular gift and calling for (caregiving). These acts of mercy are a very practical way for them to show their love for God, but also to grow in their love for God. Caregivers may hear God more clearly when they change an adult’s diaper than when they sit quietly in prayer.” (149)

“Caregiving is not a license to judge others who serve God in different ways...all Christians are called to care for others...there are different ways this obligation can be fulfilled... it is not for us to judge the validity of someone else’s worship.” (146)

CAUTIONS

“Caregiving as a temperament means we express our love to God by reaching out to others; it’s the picture of a heart overflowing with love and spilling out onto those around us. Caregiving as a disease is actually an act of taking; it’s an act of deception, loving others so that they will love or need us in return.” (147)

“Activists and caregivers may have more in common that you might think... both can work together - one to help solve the underlying problem, the other to give comfort until the problem is addressed.” (147)

WELL KNOWN CAREGIVERS

Henri Nouwen, Mother Teresa, Mordecai,

SCRIPTURES TO PONDER

Esther. 2:11; 4:1; 4:13-14; 8:7-8; Ezek. 16:49; Story of the Good Samaritan; I John 3:14,17; Phil. 2:4; Heb. 6:10; Jas. 1:27; I Pet. 4:9-10; Mt. 25:35-36; Jas. 1:27

SONGS TO ENHANCE WORSHIP

All My Wounds Cry
 Blest Are They
 Come, Ye Disconsolate
 Faithful Men
 Faithful One
 For This I Have Jesus
 Give Thanks
 He Gives Us More Grace
 In His Time
 It Is Well With My Soul
 It's Not By Might
 Lord, Speak to Me that I May Speak
 I've Got a River of Life
 Meekness and Majesty
 Oh, Master, Let Me Walk With Thee
 Only In God Is My Soul At Rest
 Precious Lord, Take My Hand
 Rock Of Ages
 The Servant King
 The Servant Song
 Trust His Heart
 We Are An Offering
 You Are My All In All

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

1. "Adopt" someone - a prisoner, neighborhood child or elderly person; Open your home to students, neighborhood kids
2. Help a friend through a crisis, counsel at a crisis pregnancy center
3. Work in the inner city, e.g. Mission Year (Bart Campolo)
4. Help someone battling substance abuse
5. Volunteer on a rescue squad, work in a soup kitchen

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What are some of the ways in which you have served others? What motivated you to help them?
2. What “return” (positive or negative) do you receive when you help others? These can be spiritual, emotional, etc.
3. How do you feel about people who are not actively ministering to the poor, sick, etc.?
4. Do you ever minister to others out of your own need? Or because you feel you have to? Or don’t know how to say, “No”? Contrast that experience with a time when you freely helped someone out of a desire to minister to him/her.
5. Think about your relationships. Do you have relationships with people who do not “need” you? If not, how might you begin to develop friendships outside your circle of ministry?

RESOURCES

Mother Teresa, Becky Benenate, Joseph Durepos. *No Greater Love*. (2003) Group West. ISBN: 1577312015

Nouwen, Henri J. M. *Can You Drink the Cup?* (1996). Ave Maria Press. ISBN: 0877935815

Sjogren, Steve (1993). *Conspiracy of Kindness*. Ann Arbor: Servant.

Wuthnow, Robert (1991). *Acts of Compassion*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Chapter Seven

ENTHUSIASTS

Loving God with Mystery and Celebration

DESCRIPTION

“Excitement and mystery in worship is the spiritual lifeblood of enthusiasts. ...enthusiasts are inspired by joyful celebration... cheerleaders for God and the Christian life. Let them clap their hands, shout ‘Amen!’ and dance in their excitement, that’s all they ask. ...They don’t want to just know concepts, but to experience them, to feel them, and to be moved by them.”(28)

“Enthusiasts enjoy a celebratory form of worship as well as many of the more supernatural forms of faith. ...like to let go and experience God on the precipice of excitement and awe.” (152)

CAUTIONS

“The necessity of maturity will probably lead virtually every enthusiast through (the) canyon of unanswered prayer, where expectancy runs dry and the only mystery seems to be where God is hiding.” (162)

“In the midst of a celebration it’s easy to forget how fearful and awesome God is. Without reverence, however, celebration degenerates into shallow triviality.” (165)

“Just because we feel good during a time of worship doesn’t mean we have offered up our will in an appropriate manner...just because we feel down or ‘flat’ doesn’t mean we aren’t effectively worshiping God.” (170)

“Enthusiasts by temperament are particularly fed by such experience (and) long to preserve the mystery of faith. Accepting the mystery of faith has both its strengths and its dangers, for while there is much mystery and supernatural activity in Scripture, there are also strong warnings against improper manifestations of what is popularly called ‘spirituality’.” (154)

WELL KNOWN ENTHUSIASTS

Ann Kiemel Anderson, King David, Graham Kendrick; Zig Ziglar; Barbara Johnson; James Robertson; Swindoll; hayford;

SCRIPTURES TO PONDER

I Chron. 13:8; 15:16; 16; II Chron. 29:26; Luke 19:37-40; Acts 16:25; Eph. 5:18-19; Acts 3:7; I Cor. 14:40; Acts 8:9-24;

SONGS TO ENHANCE WORSHIP

Graham Kendrick songs
 Celebrate Jesus,
 Great is the Lord
 Hail, Jesus, You're Our King
 He Has Made Me Glad
 I will Bless the Lord
 In the Presence of Your People
 Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee
 Light the Fire
 Lord, I Lift Your Name On High
 Majesty
 More Love, More Power
 My Life is in You, Lord
 O Lord, You're Beautiful
 Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven
 Rejoice! The Lord is King!
 Shout to the Lord
 The Lord Reigns,
 We Bring the Sacrifice of Praise
 We Rejoice in the Grace of God
 With My Whole Heart

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

1. Keep track of your dreams. Write down any that seem significant. The meanings should be fairly obvious to you. Talk with someone about them.
2. Spend time just listening to God. Write down what you hear Him saying.
3. Cultivate the mystery of expectancy: ask God to bring someone in your path to whom you can minister; Start a conversation with a stranger.
4. Spend time with children: lead music at children's church; act out Bible stories for them.
5. Use your imagination to put yourself into the scene when you are reading Bible passages. Try to understand how the participants were feeling, thinking, acting.
6. Use your imagination to consider how you might act on the teaching of the Scriptures, e.g., the Beatitudes; teachings about forgiveness; tithing.
7. Be part of a strong church that holds its members accountable. Ask for a prayer partner or a mentor.
8. Take a course; learn an evangelistic method to give you a witness structure.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Think about unanswered prayer in your life. To what do you attribute this? How do you respond when God says, “Wait.”
2. What are you expecting/wanting from God right now. Talk with Him about it. What does He tell you?
3. In what ways does God speak to you in your daily life? What forms does it take? What does He say? How do you react?
4. How do most like to celebrate God? What are some other ways you might like to experiment with?
5. How do you feel when others around you don’t sing at all or sing softly throughout a song service, don’t raise their hands or move at all during worship?
6. What changes would you like to see in the worship services at your church that would make worship a more satisfying experience for you?

RESOURCES

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Chapter Eight

CONTEMPLATIVES

Loving God Through Adoration

DESCRIPTION

“Contemplatives refer to God as their lover, and images of a loving Father and Bridegroom predominate their view of God. ...The focus is not necessarily on serving God, doing His will, accomplishing great things in His name, or even obeying God. Rather, these Christians seek to love God with the purest, deepest, and brightest love imaginable.” (28)

“...holding hands with God. ...we gaze lovingly at our heavenly Father and have our heart’s delight satisfied.

...(Contemplatives) want nothing more than some privacy and quiet to gaze upon the face of their heavenly Lover and give all of themselves to God.” (181)

CAUTIONS

“Healthy contemplatives will understand that rich human relationships are a way to enjoy God’s love, just as is solitary and intimate prayer. ...God can reveal Himself to us just as much in a conversation with a fellow believer as He can when we are on our knees in prayer.” (189)

“Some forms of contemplation wander from the folds of orthodox Christianity... we should beware of any meditation that calls our ego to somehow be absorbed into God rather than talking about relating to God.”(189)

“Contemplatives must move beyond mere meditation...to an alignment of our will and obedience into conformity with Christ.” (190)

WELL KNOWN CONTEMPLATIVES

Mary of Bethany, Dr. James Houston (professor at Regent College, Vancouver, B.C.); St. Teresa of Avila; Thomas Merton; Thomas Aquinas; Augustine, Julian of Norwich, King David

SCRIPTURES TO PONDER

Psa. 63; 116; 73; Song of Songs; Isa. 41; 49; 59; 61; Jer. 2:2; Mt. 26: 6-13; Luke 10:38-42; John 14-17

SONGS TO ENHANCE WORSHIP

Abba Father Open the Eyes of My Heart
 Faithful One Power of Your Love
 Here I Am to Worship Purify My Heart
 How Beautiful Reveal Your Father Heart To Us
 I Love You, Lord Seekers of Your Heart
 Joy of My Desire Trust His Heart
 Knowing You What Wondrous Love is This?
 Lord, I Thirst For You When I Look into Your Holiness
 More Love To Thee, Oh Christ With My Whole Heart

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

1. Make use of the Jesus prayer (Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner) or some other prayer (Make haste to help me.) Purpose: to practice the presence of God, reminding yourself that Jesus is Lord, you are a sinner, you need His mercy.
2. Practice secret acts of devotion - something you do for someone else without letting anyone else know about it.
3. Carry a pocket piece - something tactile to remind you Who you serve, e.g. a small cross.
4. Dancing Prayer - allowing God to lead and follow Him wherever He takes you. Allow Him to speak and place requests before you.
4. Centering Prayer - Choose a word and focus on it (Jesus, God, peace, etc.) repeating it until it becomes a part of you. This is not “new age”; it is a way to close oneself in with God, away from distractions. You are resting in God’s presence.
5. Prayer of the Heart - “focuses on emotional attachment to, or adoration or, God. ...Its aim is to love God, to have our hearts enlarged so that God owns more and more of us.” (187)
6. Meditative Prayer - this is prayerful reflection of a biblical text or theme, use of something you can see, taste, touch, hear or smell. (Lecto Divina; placing yourself in the passage)

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. When do you feel most loved by God? In what tangible ways does He show His love to you?

2. What is most important to you in your relationship with God?

3. Do you ever lose the sense of God's presence? What happens to you then - in your emotions? In your spirit? What do you do to restore that sense?

4. What is your favorite way to picture God? Are there any images of God that you find difficult to contemplate? Why do you think that is? As God to show you something about that.

5. What words come to mind when you think of God? Make a list of all the words and phrases you can think of to express your praise to Him.

6. How do you usually approach God? Do you ever feel fear? What might that be about? Talk with the Father about it and write down His response.

7. In what ways is it difficult for you to share your experiences with God with other people?

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Chapter Eight

INTELLECTUALS

Loving God with the Mind

DESCRIPTION

“Intellectuals...are likely to be studying...doctrines like Calvinism, infant baptism, ordination of women, and predestination. These Christians live in the world of concepts.

“When intellectuals’ minds are awakened, when they understand something new about God or His ways with His children, then their adoration is unleashed. (They) may feel closest to God when they first understand something new about Him. (20)

...an intellectual can spend long seasons contemplating a challenging verse or concept.” (194)

“Intellectuals remind us of the high calling of loving God with our mind. ...The Bible is emphatic that our mind is one of the key elements that we can use to love God.” (194)

“The Levites were released from other duties so they could function in the one duty of studying and teaching - loving God with the mind.” (196)

“The sermon...does not follow or precede worship - it is worship.” (196)

“Scripture tells us our first search, our primary calling, is to get wisdom and understanding.” (197)

“There comes a point when we stop teaching and start arguing. It’s a fine line, but we need to make sure we don’t cross it.” (209)

WELL KNOWN INTELLECTUALS

Dr. J. I. Packer; Dr. R. C. Sproul; C. S. Lewis; Dorothy Sayers, Charles Williams, J.R.R. Tolkien; Elizabeth Elliot; Calvin; Plantinga; Eugene Peterson; Colson; Gary Thomas; Bonhoeffer.

SCRIPTURES TO PONDER

Deut. 33:10; I Ki. 4:29-34; Psa. 49; Pr. 1:5-7; 2:3-4; 4:7; Mt. 22:37; I Cor. 13:2-3; I Tim. 1:3-7; 6:4,5; II Tim. 2:23-25; Titus 3:9-11; Luke 2: 46-47, 52; James 3:1

SONGS TO ENHANCE WORSHIP

Be Thou My Vision
 Crown Him with Many Crowns
 Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise
 He Was Wounded For Our Transgressions
 Holy, Holy, Holy
 How Firm a Foundation
 I Will Delight in the Law of the Lord
 Teach Me Your Way

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

1. Study the basic disciplines of theological training
2. Invest in biblical study: reading through Scripture; meticulous study of portions of Scripture;
3. Read books that help understand what Scripture says - books on theology; books on church history.
4. Do a year-long in-depth study of one topic
5. Listen to theology tapes/CDs while driving - Mars Hill tapes are very good.
6. Study the seven basic topics in systematic theology: God, humankind, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the Church, eschatology, and revelation.
7. Study Christian ethics
8. Gain understanding of both internal and external apologetics.
9. Study the creeds

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. How thankful are you for your intellectual capacity? How do you express this and to whom?

2. In what ways have you applied your intellectual understanding of the Gospel to the service of others? In what other ways could you do so?

3. What are some of the most exciting discoveries you have made about God recently? How have they influenced your worship times?

4. What most annoys you about other styles of worship? Ask God for His perspective on this? What does He say to you?

5. How do you react to the statement, “worship is God revealing Himself to You, not You discovering God”?

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