

## Discovering Your Sacred Pathways to Enjoy God

*\*Sacred Pathways; Discovering Your Soul's Path to God by Gary Thomas*

### Instructions

At the end of each section describing the nine spiritual temperaments will be an exercise to help you determine if this temperament is a dominant one for you. In each section please score a series of statements on a scale of five to one, with five being very true and one being not true at all. Record your answers in the space provided:

### ARE YOU A NATURALIST?

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. I feel closest to God when I'm surrounded by what He has made – the mountains, the forests, or the sea.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 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 prefer to 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. A book called Nature's Sanctuaries: A Picture book would be appealing to me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 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.

The total of all your answers \_\_\_\_\_

### Scoring

**Record your score for Naturalist on page 6.**

The highest number of points possible is obviously thirty; the higher you score, the stronger the dominance of this spiritual temperament in your life. But remember most of us have more than one spiritual temperament. Any score of fifteen or higher indicates a tendency toward this temperament.

## ARE YOU AN ENTHUSIAST?

- \_\_\_\_\_ 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. God is an exciting God, and we should be excited about worshipping Him. I don't understand how some Christians can say the love God, and then act like they're going to a funeral whenever they walk into church.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 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 attending several worship sessions with contemporary music. I expect that God is going to move in some unexpected ways.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. I would enjoy reading the book *The Mystery and Excitement of Walking with God*.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. I spend more money on music and worship CD's than on books.

The total of all your answers \_\_\_\_\_

## ARE YOU AN INTELLECTUAL?

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. I fell 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 have proper doctrine.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. The words concepts and truth are very appealing to me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. I feel close to God when I participate in several hours of uninterrupted study time – 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. A book on church dogmatics would be appealing to me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. I spend more money on books than music.

The total of all your answers \_\_\_\_\_

If God has gifted you with an unusually good mind, remember that he has entrusted it to you in order that you might serve the church – not exalt yourself. Someone with a beautiful voice can still be obnoxious if he sings at inappropriate times; and someone with a superior mind can still be offensive if she doesn't learn the time and place to engage others in proper discourse.

## ARE YOU A TRADITIONALIST?

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. I fell 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. Individualism within the church is a real danger. Christianity is a corporate faith, and most of our worship should have a corporate expression.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 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 could place in my car, home, or office, and developing a Christian calendar for our family to follow are activities that I would enjoy.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. A book titled Symbolism and Liturgy in Personal Worship would be appealing to me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. I would really enjoy developing a personal rule (or ritual) of prayer.

The total of all your answers \_\_\_\_\_

## ARE YOU AN ASCETIC?

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. I fell 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 to God and studying His Word, and fasting for one or more days are all activities I would enjoy.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. I would enjoy reading the book *A Place Apart: Monastic Prayer and Practice for Everyone*.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. I would really enjoy spending time on a night watch, taking a short vow of silence, simplifying my life.

The total of all your answers \_\_\_\_\_

## ARE YOU A SENSATE?

- \_\_\_\_\_ 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 worshipping 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 worshipping through second-rate Christian art or music.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. The words sensuous, colorful, and aromatic are very appealing to me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. A book called *The Beauty of Worship* would be appealing to me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. I would really enjoy using drawing exercises or art to improve my prayer life.

The total of all your answers \_\_\_\_\_

## ARE YOU A CAREGIVER?

- \_\_\_\_\_ 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 beside the bed of someone who is lonely or ill or taking a meal to someone in need. You can count on me to offer a ride or volunteer for helping activities.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. I grow weary of Christians who spend the 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. A book entitled *99 Ways to Help Your Neighbor* would be appealing to me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 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.

The total of all your answers \_\_\_\_\_

## ARE YOU AN ACTIVIST?

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. I feel closest to God when I'm cooperating with Him in standing up for His justice: writing letters to government officials and newspaper editors, picketing at an abortion clinic, urging people to vote, or become familiar with current issues.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. I get very frustrated if I see apathetic Christians who don't become active. I want to drop everything else I'm doing and help the church overcome its apathy.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. The words courageous confrontation and social activism are very appealing to me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Activities like confronting a social evil, attending a meeting to challenge the new curriculum before the local school board, and volunteering on a political campaign are important to me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. The book written by Frank Schaeffer, *A Time for Anger*, would be an important book for me to read.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. I would like to awaken the church from its apathy.

The total of all your answers \_\_\_\_\_

## ARE YOU A CONTEMPLATIVE?

- \_\_\_\_\_ 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 a day to sit in quiet prayer and "hold hands" with God, writing love letters to Him and enjoying His presence.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. I would enjoy reading *The Transforming Friendship*.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. When I think of God, I think of love, friendship, and adoration more than anything else.

The total of all your answers \_\_\_\_\_

## UNDERSTANDING YOUR SACRED PATHWAY

Now that you've looked at each of the nine spiritual temperaments, you're ready to determine your spiritual personality. Remember that you will probably have more than one dominant temperament.

Also, spiritual temperaments can evolve over time. Just as a married couple will express their love for each other differently in their fifties than they did in their twenties, so our love relationship with God undergoes changes as we mature and walk through life.

The evaluations describe where you are right now and what activities you find most helpful as you seek to grow spiritually today. You can then move on to incorporate and learn from other temperaments.

You have already filled in your score for each of the temperaments:

- \_\_\_\_\_ **NATURALIST**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **ENTHUSIAST**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **INTELLECTUAL**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **TRADITIONALIST**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **ASCETIC**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **SENSATE**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **CARE GIVER**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **ACTIVIST**
- \_\_\_\_\_ **CONTEMPLATIVE**