

# Sacred Pathways

*(Gary Thomas)*

## Summary

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**Sacred Pathways**

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God wants to know the real you. He created you with a specific personality and spiritual temperament. Knowing your spiritual temperament can help you understand how best to relate to God.



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## What is a Sacred Pathway?

### *Definition*

A sacred pathway describes the way we relate to God, how we draw near to Him. Most of us have two or three ways that are most natural for us in relating to God. These form our spiritual temperament.

### *Goal*

The goal is to feed our souls so we can know God more deeply, love Him with every cell of our being, and then express that love by reaching out to others.

*Grace Vision: Help everyone become an outward-focused follower of Jesus.*

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## Where is Your Gethsemane?

The garden of Gethsemane was a sacred space of refuge, refreshment, healing, intimacy, and fellowship. We can use Gethsemane as a metaphor for meeting with God.

When you give God the opportunity to speak into your heart, He motivates you to work for the right reasons. He reminds you how much you need His acceptance, favor, and strength.

Regardless of your spiritual temperament, there is a common denominator in every true expression of faith.

*And you shall love the Lord your God with all your **heart**, with all your **soul**, with all your **mind**, and with all your **strength**.' This is the first commandment. Mark 12:30, NKJV*

The intellectual is not excused from the need to adore God. The contemplative is not excused from harboring wrong beliefs about God. All Christ-followers should exhibit adoration, belief, divine guidance, and service.

We each need a sacred space, a Gethsemane, where we can spend time with God.

## Overview of the Sacred Pathways

<i>Sacred Pathway</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Cautions</i>
Naturalist	When outdoors, the naturalist visualizes scriptural truths, sees God more clearly, and learns to rest. Creation reminds the naturalist of God's beauty, power, and judgment.	Do not use nature to escape from the duties of Christian living. Test everything you "learn" by comparing it to God's Word. God is God, His creation is not.
Sensate	Sensory stimulation helps the sensate feel close to God. For instance, music engages the sensate more than words alone.	Senses can be deceptive. Take care to not confuse sensory stimulation with a true commitment of the will.
Traditionalist	For the traditionalist, religious rituals show reverence to God and convey spiritual truths. Sacrifice is a reminder that we serve Him.	Symbols or rituals have no value of themselves. Acts of service cannot substitute for a relationship with God.
Ascetic	The ascetic gravitates toward solitude, austerity, simplicity, and deep commitment. It takes quiet time alone for the ascetic to feel close to God.	Adopting a simple lifestyle doesn't make God love you more. You must balance your need for solitude with your obligation to reach out to others.
Activist	The activist needs to experience the exhilaration of seeing God come through in miraculous ways.	Take care not to become judgmental of those who are not as passionate on issues. Never forget that God, not you, gives the victory.
Caregiver	For the caregiver, giving care is not a chore, but a form of worship. Work gives joy. The caregiver deeply wants to share God's love with others.	Be careful not to expect your caregiving to create a dependency from others. Be sure your urge to care for others doesn't cause you to neglect your family.
Enthusiast	The enthusiast longs to preserve the mystery of faith. The enthusiast is drawn to celebration.	Test all impulses against the Word of God. Be certain that celebration comes with proper reverence.
Contemplative	The contemplative wants to bathe in the love of God. The goal is to rest in and enjoy the blessed presence of God.	Avoid efforts to "empty" yourself. Instead focus on allowing the Holy Spirit to fill you and move you into action.
Intellectual	The intellectual's heart is most warmed toward God when more deeply understanding something about Him. The intellectual searches for hidden treasure in His Word.	Avoid discussions devoid of love. Remember that knowing what is right is not a substitute for doing what is right. Use your mind to serve the church, not exalt yourself.

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## Tolerance

Every true spiritual path has Jesus Christ at its center. In Christ, there are many ways for us to express our faith.

Note: Tolerance is **not** justification for accepting what the Bible considers abhorrent behavior.

It is challenging to understand and appreciate those whose spiritual pathways are unlike ours. We'll need humility to encourage others to nurture their souls in ways that are most effective for them (as long as they remain true to orthodoxy).

Since any church is full of the various spiritual temperaments, it is not possible to fully meet spiritual needs in a weekly worship service. We must encourage people to supplement corporate worship service with their own regular devotional times in ways that best match their spiritual temperaments.