

Spiritual Pathways

Notes from Worship Fair October 18, 2018

Contemplative Pathway with Jamie Keenan = connecting to God in silence

Things contemplatives do: spend time alone, reflect, pray, journal

Strengths: ok being alone, able to make choices through your own understanding, able to hear from God and faithfully, confidently follow where He is leading you

Cautions: spending too much time alone and not fellowshiping with others, hiding your emotions, feeling like you don't have something valuable to say

Avoid cautions by... staying connected with others, serving, praying boldly

Recommended Books (all available on Amazon):

- [Pressing Pause: 100 Quiet Moments for Moms to meet with Jesus](#) by Karen Ehman & Ruth Schwenk
- [My Prayer Journal: A 3 Month Guide to Prayer, Praise and Thanks](#) by Lettering Design Co.
- [The Weekly Prayer Project: A Challenge to Journal, Pray, Reflect, and Connect with God](#) by Scarlet Hiltibidal

Relational Pathway with Faith Malone

Relational worshipers tend to be collectors of groups. Whether that be community groups, Bible studies, accountability partners, MomLife, workout groups etc. If there's an available group, they're in it!

Strengths: As relational worshipers, we can truly honor God in our relationships - lifting Him up *together* and keeping our focus on Him and the amazing things He does in our lives daily.

- There is a natural accountability and motivation that happens when you are involved in a group. For example, when in a Bible study, there is usually a deadline to read a certain chapter in a study book or Bible. We are more motivated to complete that chapter or study by the deadline because of the group, when we might otherwise get caught up in the 50 other things on our to-do list and let those things fall to the wayside.
- Personal growth also happens in a group setting. It comes in many different forms. Sometimes it comes from being exposed to other perspectives that we might not have thought about or

have been exposed to in the past. Encouragement to branch out of our comfort zone in order to grow is often a byproduct of healthy groups.

Cautions: We can often get distracted and shift our focus from God's plan for our time. Instead of encouraging one another, we can end up complaining, bickering, and going to a very negative place.

Stretch: Find an accountability partner and mentor. It is important to specifically give permission for them to correct you. It isn't always easy to ask for that but it can be even harder to be the one correcting, especially without specific permission.

- You can use this worship style to honor God in any group setting. Even if the group isn't specifically God focused. For example; In a workout group you can still bring glory to God by your actions. Use your time in any group, in the most positive way you can. Choose positivity over negativity and worship God with your actions.

Creation Pathway with Bethany Johnson

Picture the beautiful landscapes you've enjoyed (whether grand or simple)... think about vacations, explorations, different seasons, gardening, or even a walk with your dog in the neighborhood ...

The Creation Pathway connects best and responds to God's love *through* his creation.

Words from Bethany: *"It comes naturally for me to get outside, no matter where I am . I mostly go for walks with my dog and can use the time alone to "popcorn" pray for those God puts on my mind or use the time as a gratitude walk. I do enjoy getting together with girlfriends or my family to take hikes in the area (Dunbar Cave, Rotary Park, the Greenway). Around the house/yard, I have a small garden, flower pots, just working in the yard... While traveling, I like to go for walks as well, wherever we may be.*

Our recent trip to the beach was very short because we had to evacuate. Even while there, we were limited to beach time because of the Red Tide (which affects your breathing, coughing, eyes and nasal passageways). However, the two mornings I got up to walk on the beach and observe the remnants of the Red Tide (dead fish and eels), I was amazed & responded in awe of the VARIETY of types of eels and fish that were in the sea (& I saw dead, not alive, next to me- ha!) We had to evacuate to a friend's house in the country outside of Birmingham because of the hurricane. This friend had a small herd of goats and we got out several times to feed and play with them. From the beach to the country...God is everywhere."

Strength: great to do with families and kids. A great place to teach them about God and they usually have their own unique perspective, too! You can get in creation ANYWHERE!

Caution: it can be isolating and lonely if you tend to be introverted. I like finding friends who enjoy this worship style and have had mentor/mentee relationships where we got out for hikes/walks together. I have another friend who we talk about gardening/plants often to help keep me from becoming too isolated.

Stretch: go on a purposeful walk or hike. Do it alone or do it with family or a girlfriend(s). Take a moment to enjoy creation. Pay attention to all your senses. If you're with others, talk about what you're smelling, seeing, feeling, hearing... speak some prayers of praise and gratitude while you are out.

Worship Pathway with Lorneth Peters

Learn the difference between praise and worship to gain a deeper understanding of why we worship. Those who do not have worship as a top pathway are still worshipping God, just maybe in a nontraditional manner. Spending time in nature and spending time building relationships with other Godly individuals are all forms of worship because they can draw us closer to God.

Strengths: Freedom, transparency and closeness to God

→ Worship directly or indirectly affects all of our spiritual pathways.

Cautions: We mostly worship God during our tough seasons and tend to worship less when life is going well. Choose to be an intentional worshipper in every season.

→ Look out for the void that comes after an intense season of worship. Be careful not to fill that void with food, other people and being too busy. Remember that God's presence is still present even when it is not felt.

Stretch: Worship without music. Find other ways to worship God, without always listening to praise and worship music. Enjoy the silence and allow God to speak to you in the silence.

Serving Pathway with Katie Stedelin

"I serve because the Bible says that we should be the hands and feet of Jesus. I find it recharging, fulfilling, ever changing and it helps me to feel plugged-in to the body of Christ."

Strengths: Servers get things done. They are motivated; they are compassionate. They don't have to be asked twice to help (and sometimes they don't even have to be asked at all - they are able to anticipate needs before they are verbalized).

Cautions:

- Judging those who do not serve. People will tell you why they can't serve and often servers will try to see those as excuses. Remember that everyone connects differently to God and be respectful of how they do so.
- Giving so much to others that you have nothing left for family. *"I was notorious for giving so much to others that I was irritable and short tempered with my family. They weren't getting the best of me and they are the ones who deserve the best of me!"*
- Finding your worth in serving. Be joyful in serving! However, if you find that your value is in serving, check yourself - that can make you feel overextended, taken advantage of and can lead you to feelings of pride and/or bitterness. Know that it is okay to say no to things. The church will still function, the PTO will still meet...
- Finding God only through serving - often servers will feel disconnected from God when they don't have a designated roll in an activity.

Stretch:

- Tell people you'd like to pray about it before saying yes. Ask yourself, "Am I doing this to check off the spiritual checklist or is this something that God is stirring in me?"
- Volunteer at church! Even ONE hour a month is meaningful. There are so many ways to get plugged-in at church: be a door greeter, hand out info cards, rock a babies, lead a small group, help put together materials for kids, work with students, lead a small group (for kids through adults)!
- Compassion International: for \$26 a month you can change the life of a child. Provide food, clothing, education for less than a month's worth of lattes!
- Serving is universal throughout all pathways. Creation your connection? Volunteer to pick up trash at a park. Contemplative? Reach out and pray for a friend! Relational? Provide a meal to a new family. Worship? Invite a friend to Sunday's service. Activist? Help out with Manna Café or Hope Pregnancy Center. Intellectual? Read the book [The Best Yes](#) by Lisa TerKeurst.

Activist Pathway with Starr Cliff

Strengths: We get to put our minds and hearts and time toward something we feel really *matters*. We can take a small, small measure of control in what seems like an increasingly out of control world. We MOVE TOWARD the place of need, fear, conflict. We get a excited not just by our own service, but out of seeing other people mobilized into serving God

It's feeling like you are contributing to bringing heaven to earth, like Jesus praying "Let it be on earth as it is in heaven." Helping bring restoration and rightness to the wrongs that the fall and sin has brought.

We know in Heaven there will be no racism, power-struggle, injustice, or need; we work to make earth look like heaven in this way in some small measure.

Cautions: “I get frustrated at other people’s apathy.” Watch for this in yourself! Let’s assume the best of people. Just because they aren’t loud with their activism doesn’t mean they aren’t compassionate or concerned.

- There’s also a need to somewhat *stay in our lane* and worry with what God has given US to do. We can impact more people by our LOVING EXAMPLE than by our words and frustrations and a self-righteous “How can you not care?!?” attitude.
- Always be aware and watch for burn out. You must be fueled by time with Jesus, so work to grow your contemplative muscle in order to be filled up and made strong.
- Also, Jesus said to let our good works be done in secret, and yet we know from other places in Scripture we are also to “spur one another on to good works.” So there’s that constant balance of humility, while also encouraging others to speak on the behalf of the oppressed and underserved.

Stretch: Read books written by those in different socio-economic and racial spheres than your own. Google an article on The Gospel Coalition entitled [7 Books on the White-Black Racial Divide You Should Read](#) as a great place to start. [Just Mercy](#) by Bryan Stevenson is a good book.

- Follow the social media accounts of those on the front lines of activism.
- Listen to podcasts bringing awareness to social causes. One example is Love Thy Neighbor - www.lovetheynighbor.org/podcast.
- Get to know people working directly with people in need of advocates. Ask questions of the staff and volunteers of local organizations about why they give their time and energy to these causes. You may be inspired by their answers!

Many of us are moved toward activism fueled by our anger at injustice. This is a good thing! We must be cautious, however, to intentionally work to channel anger in a righteous, God-honoring way, faithfully working toward the Kingdom goal of restoration and renewal. “*Will your anger propel you to be a healer, a restorer, a rescuer, and a reconciler? Or will your anger leave a legacy of fear, hurt, disappointment, and division?*” (Paul David Tripp)

Intellectual Pathway with Christy Crosby

You connect to God best when learning about Him. The road to your heart is through your head – you hear God best as you learn; you come to life when you’re deeply immersed in great books, podcasts, deep study and learning.

INTELLECTUAL **Connecting to God by Learning**

DO YOU WANT TO GROW IN THIS AREA?

<p>Bible Study Resources: www.biblestudytools.com www.biblegateway.com www.shereadstruth.com</p>	<p>Podcasts: DON'T MOM ALONE INSPIRED TO ACTION RISEN MOTHERHOOD THAT SOUNDS FUN</p>
<p>Books: REMEMBER GOD by Annie F. Downs THE FURIOUS LONGING OF GOD by Brennan Manning UNINVITED - Lysa Terkeurst DITCH YOUR BAGGAGE - Nancy Alcorn EMOTIONALLY HEALTHY SPIRITUALITY - Peter Scazzero</p>	

ARE YOU INTELLECTUAL & NEED TO STRETCH IN OTHER AREAS?

<p>Contemplative Prayer Books: EVERY MOMENT HOLY CANYON ROAD PRAYER</p>	<p>Worship Artists: Bethel Music Elevation Worship</p>
<p>Creation: Read my book/bible outside Listen to a podcast while on a walk</p>	<p>Relational: Start a book/bible study Start a dinner club</p>

Strengths:

- You are a deep thinker who craves knowledge.
- Study of Scripture and learning comes naturally to you.

Cautions:

- Guard yourself against becoming all head and no heart. You have to slow down and process information so that it can move from your head to your heart. Contemplate and internalize what you are learning so that you can begin to live out of this new found knowledge instead of immediately jumping to gain more knowledge.
- Don't confuse being smart with being spiritually mature. The best indicator of spiritual health and maturity is LOVE, not intelligence. You can quickly be misunderstood and mischaracterized as a know it all if you aren't careful when sharing your knowledge.

Stretch:

- Grow in Contemplative through prayer, solitude and worship music. Take time to contemplate thoughts and meditate on words to fully let them sink into your heart.

→ Spend more time on smaller chunks of scripture rather than just rushing through to check off that box. Dig into where the verses took place in the overall Bible timeline, where in the world did these verses actually happen and what does this mean to me now. Use online bible study tools to help.

Simple ways to grow in the Intellectual Pathway:

- Dig deeper into Bible Study by using maps, concordances, commentaries to gain a deeper knowledge and understanding
- Carve out time for more learning through books, podcasts, audiobooks, deeper Bible Study etc...
- Get the YouVersion app, She Reads Truth App or If Gathering (for the Bible Reading Plans), the Kindle app (for books) or Audible app (audiobooks) on your phone and go there instead of scrolling social media. You'll be amazed at how much time you have to learn if you aren't mindlessly scrolling.