



## “Finding Your Spiritual Pathway” - September 29, 2019

### OPEN

Thank you to everyone who remembered us in prayer over the last three weeks as we traveled to Paris, Switzerland, and Greece. We had lots of great Christian fellowship. We crossed the Bodensee (Lake Constance) to see a friend at Bodenseehof Bible School (connected with Capernwray). On the other side of the lake we saw Constance, where the great Czech reformer, Jan Hus, was martyred in 1415. We worshiped in German two weeks ago and last Sunday we celebrated communion with brothers and sisters in Thessaloniki.

### DIG

What a privilege to connect with God’s people across space and even time, by seeing historic Christian sites. All this talk about travelling can leave us *elated*. On the other hand, we might simply feel *exhausted*.

That is why I want to chat today about finding our unique *spiritual pathway*. Are you tired as you trudge along in your Christian journey? Do you feel a lack of joy, freedom, progress, or encouragement? One reason might be that you have not discovered or have not embraced your own spiritual pathway.

Gary Thomas defines a spiritual (or sacred) pathway as “the way we relate to God, how we draw near to him.” How do you related to God?

### [A] Corinthian Conundrum

Have you ever heard the command: “Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s spiritual walk”? Are you envious of the way that some people seem to walk more closely with God? Was this not the crisis in ancient Corinth? Immature Christians were in conflict with one another because of what was a falsely perceived pecking-order of spirituality. We could call it the *Corinthian Conundrum*.

One specific example involves communion. Consider what Paul shared in I Corinthians 11:17-22. In this text we see a vivid description of selfishness and pride. Tragically, there existed a competitive approach to the Christian journey, rather than a correct understanding that God has created one Body, though it has many members.

From I Corinthians 12:12-14 we learn this. You see, to grow in our own spiritual self-awareness not only contributes to our own progress in Christ...it also contributes to us all having a unified, meaningful engagement with God.

### [B] Spiritual Pathways

The following descriptions are from Gary Thomas’ book, ***Sacred Pathways: Discover Your Soul’s Path To God*** (Zondervan, 1996). From his website we read, “Gary Thomas insists that it’s better to discover the path God designed you to take – a path marked by growth and fulfillment, based on your unique temperament. In ***Sacred Pathways***, he strips away the frustration of a one-size-fits-all spirituality and guides you toward a style of relating to God that frees you to be you.” Consider the following pathways, and Biblical examples.

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|--|-------------------------|
| 1. <b>NATURALISTS</b> - loving God out of doors                  | <i>John the Baptist</i> |
| 2. <b>SENSATES</b> - loving God with the senses                  | <i>Psalms</i>           |
| 3. <b>TRADITIONALISTS</b> - loving God through ritual and symbol | <i>Aaron</i>            |
| 4. <b>ASCETICS</b> - loving God in solitude and simplicity       | <i>Moses</i>            |
| 5. <b>ACTIVISTS</b> - loving God through confrontation           | <i>Elijah, Moses</i>    |
| 6. <b>CAREGIVERS</b> - loving God by loving others               | <i>Barnabus</i>         |
| 7. <b>ENTHUSIASTS</b> - loving God with mystery and celebration  | <i>David</i>            |
| 8. <b>CONTEMPLATIVES</b> - loving God through adoration          | <i>Anna, Simeon</i>     |
| 9. <b>INTELLECTUALS</b> - loving God with the mind               | <i>Paul</i>             |

What do you think your spiritual pathway is? How have you explored it?

### [C] Unifying Factor

Now, all this diversity in our spiritual pathways is great. But what is the factor which unifies us in our relationship with Jesus? It is clear from I Corinthians 11:23-28 that it is Jesus Himself who unites us. The way we relate to God as individuals does not mean there are “many roads to Rome” in terms of receiving salvation in Christ. Perhaps a picture of bicycle wheel will help. We all connect at the hub which is Jesus – that’s our point of coming together. And at the same time, as various spokes heading out from Him at the center, we are going to be different expressions of walking in relationship with Him.

### REFLECT

I encourage you to visit [www.garythomas.com](http://www.garythomas.com) where you will find lots of great audio and print resources to help you grow in your journey with Jesus.

The way we relate to God will be predominant, but it doesn’t mean we cannot enter into other ways. ***Sacred Pathways*** is designed to help a person in four ways. I invite you to use these as a reflection checklist.

- ✓ Have you embraced the unique way that you interact with God?
- ✓ Do you relish your personal time reading the Bible?
- ✓ Are you enjoying deeper community by supporting how others relate to God?
- ✓ Do you feel obliged to meet with God or are they spiritual moments that you savor?