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Sacred Pathways

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PART 1



THE JOURNEY
OF THE SOUL

Chapter 1



LOVING GOD



Valuable lessons about spirituality can come at the strangest times. An ear-popping flight from Washington, D.C., to Seattle, Washington, taught me a lesson I'll not soon forget. Just before I was about to embark on the trip, I came down with a severe head cold. My sinuses act up when I fly, even if I'm feeling well, so I knew I needed to get some help. Since I had just moved to Virginia, I hadn't bothered to find a doctor, so a coworker recommended an outpatient care clinic.

The clinic turned out to be the medical equivalent of a 7-Eleven. I had serious reservations about the qualifications of the personnel, but I didn't have time to go anywhere else, so I did my best to explain my dilemma to the doctor, waited for his prescription, and left.

When I got home, my wife asked me, "What did the doctor say?"

"I don't know," I responded. "I couldn't understand him."

Her eyebrows shot up. "Well, what did he prescribe?"

"I don't know. I can't read the writing."

"What kind of clinic was this?"

"I don't want to know," I said. "I have to leave town tomorrow."

The flight the next day was one of the most miserable flights of my life. It takes about five hours to fly from Washington, D.C., to Seattle, but I was certain that my then thirty-year-old body had

turned forty-five by the time I landed. My head felt like it weighed about fifty pounds.

I dutifully took the medication as it was prescribed and expected my ears to clear a bit by the next day, but they didn't. I wouldn't even be able to speak clearly if I didn't get some help, so after a day or two, I stopped in a Portland, Oregon, clinic, hoping to obtain more relief. The new doctor put me at ease. I could understand what he was talking about, and he seemed to know what he was doing. When he learned what had been prescribed for me in Virginia, his jaw dropped. "I don't know what that doctor was thinking, but I can't imagine any doctor who graduated from a United States medical school in the past thirty years prescribing penicillin for your ailment. Apparently this doctor knows just one or two medicines and is prescribing the same one for virtually everything."

This experience taught me the folly of using one medicine to treat every malady. It took some time, however, for the spiritual analogy to become clear. Over and over again we give Christians the same spiritual prescription: "You want to grow as a Christian? All you have to do is develop a quiet time and come to church every weekend."

Sometime in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the "quiet time" became a staple of most discipleship and church training programs. Usually consisting of thirty to sixty minutes, the quiet time was most commonly composed of a short period of personal worship, followed by some intercessory prayer (using a prayer notebook or intercessory prayer list), Bible study (according to a set method), and then a concluding prayer, followed by a commitment to share what we learned with at least one other person that day. This is something that's easily taught and, for some circles, easy to hold people accountable to: "How many times this past week have you had your quiet time?" Anything less than seven was a wrong answer.

With perhaps good intentions (who would oppose regular personal worship, prayer, and Bible study?), we reduced the devotional

life to rote exercise. A. W. Tozer warned us about this: “The whole transaction of religious conversion has been made mechanical and spiritless. We have almost forgotten that God is a person and, as such, can be cultivated as any person can.”¹ The casualties of “mechanized religion” are many. It’s one thing to witness spiritually empty people outside the church; it’s even sadder to see Christians *inside* the church who suffer this same spiritual emptiness.

Ultimately, it’s a matter of spiritual nutrition. Many Christians have found the traditional quiet time to be somewhat helpful in starting up a life of devotion but rather restrictive and inadequate to build an ongoing, life-giving relationship with God. Since the quiet time is all that was taught, many have simply let the quiet time lapse without finding a substitute, having never been taught any other way to “feed” themselves spiritually. They thus live on a starvation diet and then are surprised that they always seem so “hungry.”

Others have labored on but admit that the routine of their devotions has made them seem more like an obligation than a delight. This is because helpful, even delightful, routines can grow stale over time. There are certain foods I really like—but I don’t want to eat them *every day*. I have certain running routes and workouts that I earnestly look forward to, but I wouldn’t want to run the same route, at the same speed, the same length, every time I run.

Just getting out of our routines can often generate new enthusiasm. One of the most refreshing things that happened to my marriage some years ago was breaking my wrist. It was a serious break, requiring surgery, and it thrust Lisa and me out of our routine. We did most everything together, in part because I needed so much help. Since my exercise was limited to walking, we took near-daily walks. We shopped together. We answered email together (initially, I couldn’t type). For a while, Lisa even helped me get dressed. (OK, *you* try tying your shoe with one hand!) Being out of our routine, Lisa and I discovered a deeper and newer love. The romance was

always there; it had just been buried under the accretions of always doing the same thing.

I've found that many people face the same dilemma in their walk with God. Their love for God has not dimmed; they've just fallen into a soul-numbing rut. Their devotions seem like nothing more than shadows of what they've been doing for years. They've been involved in the same ministry for so long they could practically do it in their sleep. It seems as if nobody in their small groups has had an original thought for three years. They finally wake up one morning and ask, "Is this really all there is to knowing God?"

Quiet Time Collides with Reality

Several years after I graduated from college, I realized my spiritual life had to adapt to a new schedule. I was leaving the house between 5:00 and 5:30 a.m. and getting back home around 5:30 p.m. That left an hour to have dinner with my family, an hour to spend some time with my children, half an hour to get the kids in bed, and about another hour to pay the bills, take out the garbage, catch up on my wife's day, and take phone calls. If we had an evening meeting, everything was crunched even tighter.

To have a sixty-minute quiet time, which had been a cherished staple of my spiritual diet, I would have had to get up at 4:00 a.m.! I was able to fit in some daily Bible reading before I left the house and a time of prayer during my morning commute, but I felt I was cheating. Vacations and weekends offered the opportunity to resume this discipline, but the workweek demanded something else.

This struggle to find a new "spiritual prescription" became a great blessing because I began to find new ways to nurture my soul. Perhaps the primary lesson I learned was that certain parts of me are never touched by a standardized quiet time. My discipline of quiet times was (and is) helpful; however, I came to realize it was not sufficient. Other parts of my spiritual being lay dormant.

I also began to realize other people shared my frustration. For some people, the formulaic quiet time seems too cerebral. Others simply grow bored sitting at a desk alone in a room just reading and thinking. And why should everybody be expected to love God the same way, anyway? We would think it absurd to insist that newly evangelized Christians in Moravia create an identical worship service to Presbyterians in Boston or Baptists in Georgia. Yet we prescribe the same type of spirituality for both the farmer in Iowa and the lawyer in Washington, D.C.

Beware of Narrowing Your Approach to God

Expecting all Christians to have a certain type of quiet time can wreak havoc in a church or small group. Excited about meaningful (to us) approaches to the Christian life, we sometimes assume that if others do not experience the same thing, something must be wrong with their faith. Please don't be intimidated by others' expectations. God wants to know the real you, not a caricature of what somebody else wants you to be. He created you with a certain personality and a certain spiritual temperament. God wants your worship, according to the way he made you. Your worship may differ somewhat from the worship of the person who brought you to Christ or the person who leads your Bible study or church.

I must admit, there is a limit to the individual approach to spirituality. It is neither wise nor scriptural to pursue God apart from the community of faith. Our individual expressions of faith must be joined to corporate worship with the body of Christ. Fortunately, over its nearly two thousand years of history, the church has provided us with rich and varied traditions of loving God.

Jesus accepted the worship of Peter's mother-in-law as she served him, but he refused to force Mary, the sister of Martha, to also worship in that way. Mary was allowed to express her worship in the silence of adoration, not in the hustle and bustle of active service.

Good spiritual directors understand that people have different spiritual temperaments, that what feeds one doesn't feed all. Giving the same spiritual prescription to every struggling Christian is no less irresponsible than a doctor prescribing penicillin to combat every illness.

As I read the classics of the Christian faith and shared my journey with others, I discovered various ways in which people find intimacy with God: by studying church history or theology, by singing or reading hymns, by dancing, by walking in the woods. Each practice awakened different people to a new sense of spiritual vitality, and something was touched in them that had never been touched before.

This discovery put me on the path of searching out various "spiritual temperaments" as a way to explain how we each love God differently. Our spiritual temperament should be distinguished from our personality temperament, about which so much has been written. Knowing our personal temperaments, whether we are sanguine or melancholy, for instance, will tell us how we relate to others or how we can choose a suitable spouse or vocation. But it doesn't necessarily tell us how we relate to God. The focus on spiritual temperaments is an attempt to help us understand how we best relate to God so we can develop new ways of drawing near to him. My search was most influenced by biblical figures, who lived out these temperaments on the pages of Scripture, and second by historical movements within the Christian church.

One God, Many Relationships

Scripture tells us that the same God is present from Genesis through Revelation—though people worshiped that one God in many ways: Abraham had a religious bent, building altars everywhere he went. Moses and Elijah revealed an activist's streak in their various confrontations with forces of evil and in their conversations with God. David celebrated God with an enthusiastic style

of worship, while his son Solomon expressed his love for God by offering generous sacrifices. Ezekiel and John described loud and colorful images of God, stunning in sensuous brilliance. Mordecai demonstrated his love for God by caring for others, beginning with the orphaned Esther. Mary of Bethany is the classic contemplative, sitting at Jesus' feet.

These and other biblical figures of the Old and New Testaments confirmed to me that within the Christian faith there are many different and acceptable ways of demonstrating our love for God. Our temperaments will cause us to be more comfortable in some of these expressions than others—and that is perfectly acceptable to God. In fact, by worshiping God according to the way he made us, we are affirming his work as Creator.

Historic Movements within the Church

The second area I researched as I sought to label these spiritual temperaments was the church's historical separation into groups that agree on many larger issues but often vehemently disagree on smaller ones. I looked into several controversies in Christian history and found that a different way of relating to God—a way hinted at through a spiritual temperament—was behind many of them. It would be simplistic to suggest that such differences were the sole or even primary cause of many church splits and denominations, but they did have some effect.

Let's take just the last five hundred years of church history. In the Middle Ages, the Western branch of the church, Roman Catholicism, was steeped in the mystery of sacramental rites; Roman Catholic worship focused on the altar. When Luther theologically broke with Rome, worship was altered considerably. Luther stressed *sola scriptura* (the sufficiency of Scripture), so he elevated the pulpit to show the importance of preaching the Word. Thus in a Reformation church, your eye would be drawn to a majestic-looking pulpit, not to an ornate altar. This change created two different styles of

worship—one emphasizing a ritual reenactment of the crucifixion, the other emphasizing intellectual discourse in knowing, understanding, and explaining the existence of God.

The Reformers differed among themselves, however. Lutherans tended to keep many of Rome's elements of worship unless those elements were overtly rejected by Scripture. Calvinists tended to get rid of every element unless it was prescribed in Scripture.

The different ways of loving God extended even to how that love was expressed in the world. Calvinists rejected the monastic expression of loving God—a strict separation from society—and opted instead to express love for God by transforming society. The line between church and state began to blur. Calvin wanted Christians to hold the important offices of the state and even went so far as to allow the execution of a heretic.

The Anabaptists, on the other hand, sought to express their love for God by stressing the inner reality of the gospel. They became separatists and pacifists, refusing to participate in the affairs of secular government. Instead, they attempted to create a model society that would witness to the unbelieving world by inviting them to come out of the secular society and join the community of faith. Their worship often consisted of sitting quietly before God, waiting for the Spirit to speak through his people. Neither the pulpit nor the altar starred. An Anabaptist church accommodated congregational sharing, believing that God's Holy Spirit spoke to his people, through his people.

Further to the east, the Orthodox Church maintained its centuries-old tradition of holding a very sensuous worship service, with worshipers touching various items (even occasionally kissing them), listening to bells ring, smelling incense, watching the priests wear elaborate clothing, and worshiping in colorful surroundings. These were tactile-oriented, senses-come-alive services steeped in mystery and awe.

All five players—Roman Catholics, Lutherans, Calvinists,

Anabaptists, and Orthodox—were trying to love God, but with unique expressions of that love. Many differences had theological roots, but some were also related to worship preferences.

John Wesley, an eminent Anglican, was humbled on a trans-oceanic trip as he witnessed the faith of the Moravians, who bravely maintained their serenity in the face of death. In response, Wesley traded in a faith based on creeds and discipline for the inner faith displayed by the Moravians and began preaching the necessity of relating to God through an inward transformation. Thus, Methodism was born.

In the early part of the twentieth century, the Azusa Street Revival brought Pentecostal practices back into common church life. Today, virtually every congregation has been influenced by the charismatic renewal, whether they agree with Pentecostal theology or not. The singing of choruses and the clapping or raising of hands have spread to virtually every denomination.

At the same time inner experience was melding with Pentecostal elements, another wing of the church began stressing the social obligations of the gospel—and the social gospel movement was born, with one wing promoting Prohibition and the other wing endorsing socialism. In this expression of Christianity, what counted was loving your neighbor and creating a just society, not having vague inner experiences of spiritual delight.

Instead of learning from others, Christians have often chosen to segregate themselves by starting a new church whenever worship preferences diverge. This segregation has erected denominational walls and impoverished many Christians. Unless you happen to be born into just the right tradition, you're brought up to feed on somebody else's diet. Unfortunately, some Christians have a tendency to question the legitimacy of any experience that may not particularly interest them. Instead of saying, "That's not for me," they proclaim, "That shouldn't be for anybody."

This is not unlike an attitude expressed one time by my home-

schooled daughter, who was struggling with a math problem that her mother had assigned her. Allison lamented, “This is too hard. It’s not fair! In fact, I think it’s unbiblical!”

Of course, there is nothing “unbiblical” about math, but this same approach is often adopted when we question experiences that other Christians have—particularly experiences that strike us as “weird.” I’m talking about “theologically neutral” practices here. For instance, one woman may discover that the burning of incense in a church helps her to pray, while another woman thinks using incense is distracting or just plain weird. The two can agree to disagree without making a theological issue out of a doctrinally neutral worship preference.

God has given us different personalities and temperaments. It’s only natural that these differences should be reflected in our worship.

Personality Temperaments

Carl Jung developed four profiles to describe human nature. (These profiles have been formulated by Isabel Briggs Myers in the popular Myers-Briggs test.) First, we approach reality either as an *extrovert*, who is most at home in the social world, or as an *introvert*, who prefers to dwell in the inner world. Second, we register input as either a *sensing* person, using the five senses, or an *intuitive* person, using the imagination. Third, we organize and arrange data either as a *thinking* person, who uses logic and the intellect, or as a *feeling* person, who arranges data according to how it affects people and relates to human values. Finally, we arrange our outer reality as either a *judging* person, who is orderly, controlling, and managing, or a *perceptive* person, who is spontaneous and flexible. Combinations of these four profiles can create sixteen different personality types, and the Myers-Briggs test is designed to separate these types.²

While spiritual temperaments differ from personality temperaments, Myers-Briggs “types” can point us to different ways that we relate to the God who created us with a variety of dispositions and

inclinations. Using biblical figures, historic church movements, and various personality temperaments, we can identify nine spiritual temperaments—what I call “sacred pathways.”

Sacred Pathways: An Overview

What is a “sacred pathway”? Put very simply, it describes the way we relate to God, how we draw near to him. Do we have just one pathway? Not necessarily. Most of us, however, will naturally have a certain predisposition for relating to God, which is our predominant spiritual temperament.

Here is a short overview of the nine spiritual temperaments. Part 2 of this book will take a detailed look at each temperament. As you read through the descriptions of these nine sacred pathways, you might check the ones that apply to you.

Naturalists: Loving God Outdoors

Naturalists would prefer to leave any building, however beautiful or austere, to pray to God beside a river. Leave the books behind, forget the demonstrations—just let them take a walk through the woods, mountains, or open meadows.

These Christians believe that nature clearly proclaims “God is!” They may learn more from watching an ant colony or looking at a peaceful lake than from reading a book or listening to a sermon, though they may find fulfillment from reading the parables of Jesus that are based on nature and selections from the psalms.

Naturalists are related to contemplatives, except that they are moved by creation in addition to the inner world. When they are outdoors, their heart soars to worship God. A modern-day example is the writer Annie Dillard. In her book *Holy the Firm*, Dillard wrote, “I know only enough of God to want to worship him, by any means ready to hand.”³ One of her primary means was spending time outdoors. Perhaps because Dillard fell in love with the Pacific

Northwest, where I grew up, I have a particular affinity for her works. I've also lived in Virginia, where Dillard camped out in the Blue Ridge Mountains and recorded that now famous and moving scene of a moth flying into a candle's flame.

From these ordinary events and scenes—moths, mountains, and the Puget Sound—Dillard uncovered the mystery of the holy, transcendent God. She wrote that she visited the Cascade Range “to study hard things, rock mountain and salt sea, and to temper my spirit on their edges.”

“Teach me thy ways, O Lord” is, like all prayers, a rash one, and one I cannot but recommend. These mountains—Mount Baker and the Sisters and Shuksan, the Canadian Coastal Range and the Olympics on the peninsula, are surely the edge of the known and comprehended world. They are high. That they bear their own unimaginable masses and weathers aloft, holding them up in the sky for anyone to see plain, makes them, as Chesterton said of the Eucharist, only the more mysterious by their very visibility and absence of secrecy. They are the western rim of the real, if not considerably beyond it.⁴

Like Dillard, naturalists learn to seek God by surrounding themselves with all that he has made. Notice how the physical beauty that surrounds Dillard continually mirrors the spiritual, unseen faith within her.

Sensates: Loving God with the Senses

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.

Whereas some Christians might find such a sensuous onslaught

distracting, these Christians delight in it. The five senses are God's most effective inroad to their hearts.

W. Phillip Keller, author of the popular book *A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23*, strikes me as someone with sensate tendencies. In his book *Taming Tension*, Keller writes about being a university student confined to a "rather cramped and drab home" one winter. He found escape in a picture of a "magnificent sunset scene. Again and again I absorbed myself in its loveliness. It was a tremendous uplift and inspiration amid what otherwise would have been unbearable surroundings."⁵

In the same book, Keller talks about the role of music in his life. During his self-described "lonely years" in a foreign land, Keller took out his violin "to ease the heartache and inner pain. An hour of music making would set my heart to singing again."⁶ He found that "even such a simple habit as humming or whistling can turn a doleful day into one filled with new hope and good cheer."⁷

Once Keller fully understood the meaning of Handel's *Messiah*, he began playing it year-round. "At times when I am downcast or despondent over life's sufferings, the melodies and message of this music, showing how Christ himself also felt such grief and sorrow, have lifted me in a way that no other human agency could possibly have done."⁸

Sight and music, among other things, have played key roles in bringing Keller into new realms of worship and fellowship with God. Anything that touches the senses can be a powerful threshold of worship for sensate Christians.

Traditionalists: Loving God through Ritual and Symbol

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. Frequently they enjoy regular attendance at church services, tithing, keeping the Sabbath, and so on.

Traditionalists have a need for ritual and structure. The contemplatives' unstructured "prayer of the quiet" would be confusing and fairly unfulfilling to them.

Rod Dreher, a *Dallas Morning News* columnist, may be a traditionalist. Dreher grew up attending informal Christian worship services. The emotional fervor of these services attracted him to the faith, but it wasn't enough to hold him—and his commitment fell off during his days in boarding school. An encounter with some modern-day Christian writings eventually led Dreher back to the faith, but this time he found himself craving more established ritual and structure. Much to his surprise, he soon found that liturgies weren't confining and dead, as he had supposed they were, but rather carried a depth and historicity that added a new aesthetic to his worship. "It was more beautiful than anything I had ever experienced," he said.

Dreher was drawn by the ritual of the Orthodox Church, moved by the fact that he was praying prayers that had been prayed by many Christians in earlier centuries. The structure of the services brought more discipline to his personal life. Experiencing the same ritual week after week has deepened his understanding of the faith and his commitment to it.

Now Dreher says, "I live more liturgically in my everyday life. It's created a greater depth and texture to my Christian faith."

Ascetics: Loving God in Solitude and Simplicity

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. Frequently introspective, sometimes to a fault, they are uncomfortable in any environment that keeps them from "listening to the quiet."

Singer and writer Michael Card is a good example of the ascetic temperament. He lives in a Shaker-inspired home on one hundred acres in a rural part of Franklin, Tennessee. Card admires the Shaker emphasis on simplicity in architecture and lifestyle. His dream is to establish a small, silent retreat center on his land where pastors, artists, and songwriters can spend time with the Lord in prayer and fasting.

The lyrics of Card's songs, like the reprise in "The Things We Leave Behind," often advocate the simple life: "Every heart needs to be set free from possessions that hold it so tight . . . and we can't imagine the freedom we find from the things we leave behind."⁹

Activists: Loving God through Confrontation

Activists serve a God of justice, and their favorite Scripture is often the story of Jesus' cleansing of the temple. They define *worship* as standing against evil and calling sinners to repentance. These Christians often view the church as a place to recharge their batteries so they can go back into the world to wage war against injustice.

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.

Francis Schaeffer is a good example of this temperament. Though he was known primarily as a "thinker," Schaeffer's thoughts usually led to activism. In his seminal work *How Should We Then Live?* Francis Schaeffer wrote that "as Christians we are not only to *know* the right world view . . . but consciously to *act* upon that world view so as to influence society in all its parts and facets across the whole spectrum of life, as much as we can to the extent of our individual and collective ability."¹⁰ Schaeffer goes on to commend great Christian activists such as Elizabeth Fry, Lord Shaftesbury, William Wilberforce, and John Wesley.

Schaeffer believed that truth equals confrontation and that once

an idea is unleashed, it has the power to change society. His book *Whatever Happened to the Human Race?* cowritten with C. Everett Koop, was one of the first contemporary evangelical books to point out the evils of abortion and to encourage Christians to a posture of active opposition. Schaeffer lived his beliefs; he played a significant role in helping to found Care Net—one of the most strategic pro-life organizations still operating today.

Caregivers: Loving God by Loving Others

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 view the devotional lives of contemplatives and enthusiasts as selfish. Whereas caring for others might wear many of us down, this activity recharges a caregiver's batteries.

Perhaps the supreme example of this temperament was Mother Teresa of Calcutta (born Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu), who at the age of twelve was so struck by the accounts of poverty in India that she decided to become a Roman Catholic missionary. In 1946, as a member of a community of Irish nuns working in the Motijheel slums of Calcutta, she heard God's call to change course: "I was to leave the convent and help the poor while living among them."¹¹

In 1950, she became an Indian citizen and founded her Missionaries of Charity as part of the Archdiocese of Calcutta. Many Americans do not realize that her work now extends to this country and throughout the world. Today some four thousand nuns, recognized by their white saris, small crucifixes, and spartan lifestyles, run approximately five hundred convents in eighty-seven countries. Nuns work in inner-city convents in New York, Washington, Atlanta, Los Angeles, and thirty other U.S. cities, feeding the hungry, housing the homeless, and caring for the diseased.

When she dedicated a convent in Charlotte, North Carolina, in 1995, Mother Teresa said, "God died for you and for me and for

that leper and for that person dying of hunger and for that person on the street. . . . It's not enough to say you love God. You also have to say you love your neighbor. Love, to be true, has to hurt. This requires people giving until it hurts. Otherwise it is not true love. . . . Be the good news to your home people first. Find out about your next-door neighbor."¹²

Enthusiasts: Loving God with Mystery and Celebration

Excitement and mystery in worship is the spiritual lifeblood of enthusiasts. As sensates want to be surrounded by beauty and intellectuals love to grapple with concepts, enthusiasts are inspired by joyful celebration. These Christians are cheerleaders for God and the Christian life. Let them clap their hands, shout "Amen!" and dance in their excitement—that's all they ask.

If their hearts aren't moved, if they don't experience God's power, something is missing. They don't want simply to know concepts but to experience them, to feel them, and to be moved by them.

Younger readers probably won't be familiar with a popular writer and speaker from the 1970s named Ann Kiemel Anderson, but older readers might. Anderson's love of spending time with children, which shows her playful and childlike spirit, her delight in celebrative songs, and her belief in God's power to work out everything according to his will are all hallmarks of a true enthusiast.

Contemplatives: Loving God through Adoration

Contemplatives refer to God as their lover, and images of a loving Father and Bridegroom best capture their view of God. Their favorite Bible passages may come from the Song of Songs, as they enter the "divine romance." The focus is not necessarily on serving God, doing his will, accomplishing great things in his name, or even obeying him. Rather, these Christians seek to love God with the purest, deepest, and brightest love imaginable.

It's difficult to give a well-known modern-day example of a contemplative since a true contemplative is not going to seek the spotlight. However, virtually every Christian is familiar with the biblical account of Mary of Bethany, who sat and worshiped at Jesus' feet and was commended by Jesus for doing so. If you love this story and feel a kindred spirit with Mary, you may be a contemplative.

Intellectuals: Loving God with the Mind

Intellectuals need their minds to be stirred before their hearts come truly alive. They are likely to be studying (and, in some instances, arguing either for or against) topics such as Calvinism, infant baptism, ordination of women, and predestination. These Christians live in the world of concepts.

Some intellectuals, influenced by a personality type that is shy or withdrawn, might avoid intellectual confrontation but still be "fed" primarily by intellectual activity. "Faith" is something to be understood as much as experienced. They may feel closest to God when they first understand something new about him.

There are many well-respected Christian intellectuals in our time, including Dr. J. I. Packer and Dr. R. C. Sproul. Though Dr. Packer has earned the respect of academic theologians worldwide, he continues to make the doctrines of academics accessible and useful to the people in the pew. His classic books, such as *Knowing God* and *Keep in Step with the Spirit*, are popular studies that make difficult theological discussions understandable to even the newest Christian.¹³

One of the ways to determine your dominant spiritual temperament is to list those Christians whom you most admire and seek to emulate. How would you describe each one? If you consistently find yourself picking leaders of a particular spiritual temperament, you may share that makeup.