



Sacred Pathways: Discover Your Soul's Path to God

Gary L. Thomas

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"Thou Shalt Not Covet Thy Neighbor's Spiritual Walk." After all, it's his, not yours. 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*, Gary Thomas strips away the frustration of a one-size-fits-all spirituality and guides you toward a path of worship that frees you to be you. If your devotional times have hit a snag, perhaps it is because you're trying to follow someone else's path. This book unfolds nine distinct spiritual temperaments--their traits, strengths, and pitfalls. In one or more, you will see yourself and the ways you most naturally express your relationship with Jesus Christ. Whatever temperament or blend of temperaments best describes you, rest assured it's not by accident. It's by the design of a Creator who knew what he was doing when he made you according to his own unique specifications. *Sacred Pathways* will show you the route you were made to travel, marked by growth and filled with the riches of a close walk with God.

Sacred Pathways: Discover Your Soul's Path to God Details

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Jeremy says

This book is an incredibly insightful work that sees to help the follower of Christ to identify ways that they are uniquely wired to practice their faith. In me it has wrought a sense of freedom in some of my tendencies that I thought quirky, and led to some conviction due the subtle judging I have developed in regard to how I perceive others' habits. I recommend it to all!

Sean-david says

This book leaves me in a bit of a predicament. On multiple levels, I have serious concerns about some of the ideas about spirituality, specifically teachings about prayer and intimacy with God in Thomas's text. Unfortunately, this is not surprising. Thomas quotes from and cites many of what have been coined the Christian Classics, early church writers and philosophers, many of which were Roman Catholic monks and mystics who taught a contemplative spirituality and mystic view of prayer. In his defense, when Thomas approaches these kinds of prayers he states his concern and even some hesitancy in doing so, but I still think we need to be concerned any time these kinds of prayers are taught to the Christian masses.

On the other hand, in teaching Spiritual Formation and Christian Life for two different Christian Universities I have read many of the standard Christian texts on the subject: books by Foster, Whitney, Ortberg, Nouwen, Westerhoff, and Willard. Thomas' finding your Gethsemane approach is inviting and I think important for mature Christians. I appreciate if nothing else his desire to foster a sense of community and grace in both loving people of different spiritual temperaments and in challenging Christians to do a little reflection on their own walk. Reflection on our spiritual temperaments and learning about the temperaments of others is an important part of the mature Christian life.

I would feel more comfortable recommending this book if Thomas had left out some of the teaching of contemplative spirituality. I would not recommend it to people newer in the faith, but this book invites important reflection into the spiritual temperament of the mature and biblically rooted Christian.

Melody Riggs says

I highly recommend this not just for helping yourself learn how you best connect with God, but for also helping yourself learn how others best connect with God.

Brittany says

This book confirmed and enlightened me to the ways that I experience God and connect with Him best. It was an assignment for school, and we also had to include our Myers Briggs personality test in the discussion

of this book. My top sacred pathways are caregiver (loving God by serving others), intellectual (loving God with my mind), and traditionalist (loving God through ritual and symbol). What are your sacred pathways?

Adam Shields says

Short review: This is a good book on different spiritual temperaments and how spiritual growth can be encouraged for the different temperaments. It is quite balanced and encouraging. But many people will probably get bored and only read the ones that they think apply to them. I would encourage you to take all nine of the short tests and at least read your top four or five chapters. The last chapter is essential reading to help you understand, no matter what your temperament, how you should proceed to think about spiritual development within the church and as an individual.

Full review on my blog at <http://bookwi.se/sacred-pathways-thomas/>

Catherine says

Do you feel closest to God when in nature? Or, do you feel most close to the Lord taking care of others? Are you an intellectual whose desire to know more brings you closer to God? These are just three of the paths discussed in Gary Thomas' book *Scared Pathways*.

Thomas discusses his own desire to understand what spirituality and worship meant for him. For too long, Christians have been told that true worship required quiet contemplation and solo prayer, but for many Christians this left them hollow. Like any plant without strong roots, not knowing how you feel spiritually nourished will eventually burn up your roots.

The book is broken into 9 paths with a description of each, how to apply it in one's life and the risks of relying too much on that one path. At the end of each chapter is a checklist of questions that asks you to evaluate how you feel about each path. Personally, I found I connected strongly with some paths and didn't really need the lists to help me understand this. If anything, it can help you understand which ones are more strongly apparent in your life than others.

For what it's worth, I'm a naturalist, activist, intellectual. This has keyed up with several spiritual gift inventories I have done that also led those ways. I hope you read this book and discover your own path.

Thanks to Pastor Jeannette Miller at Harker Heights UMC for recommending this book during Study.

Sue says

A very helpful book, focussing on nine different pathways that people meet with God. The author explains early on that these are not the same as personality preferences - such as the Myers-Briggs or Enneagram systems - although there are some obvious correlations.

There's a chapter on each of the pathways. Each one has an explanation with some examples from Scripture and from other lives; some suggestions; some warnings against extremes, and a useful short questionnaire

enabling the reader to build up a general profile.

As I read the first few, my scores on the questionnaires were all around 12-15, and I wondered if anything would apply to me. Then at last I read the last two - the contemplative and the intellectual - and scored 24 and 21 respectively. That made a lot more sense.

Nicely balanced, well written, clearly presented. It's made clear that these are nine different equally valid ways of finding God, and that we mostly have one or two preferred ways, although it's worth experimenting with others from time to time. my only slight reservation was the insistence -repeated a few times - that it was of vital importance to be part of an established congregation meeting for services... even though he also points out that one hour per week can do very little to meet most people's spiritual needs overall.

Recommended.

Lizzy B says

Absolutely fantastic. I have never come across such a clear call saying - people aren't all the same and as such shouldn't all need to relate to God the same way. Scrap the traditional quiet time as a one route - try them all, mix things up, learn your predominant preference, try new things and understand possibly why you struggle with church which is meant to be a celebration but just doesn't feel that way! Everyone celebrates differently!

Simple book that explains each "pathway" or temperament for reaching God in a separate chapter providing a simple self assessment after it to aid understanding!

Jordan says

If I was sure of a certain level of spiritual maturity and discernment, I would be inclined to recommend this book to everyone. Unfortunately, one issue with this book means I have to be careful recommending its otherwise wonderful contents. Namely, the author seems to be of a mind that certain sections falling under the broad term of "Christianity" are valid, when a study of their doctrines shows them to certainly not be so. With that caveat, however, I found Sacred Pathways to be an immensely helpful book.

The book is about nine types of spiritual "approaches" to worshipping God. The author presents the characteristics of each with examples of Bible figures who display them, discusses ways a person with that temperament might feel strengthened in his or her spiritual walk, outlines several temptations to be aware of with each approach, then ends with a brief test to help you figure out if you lean toward the approach. Thankfully, the book regularly points out that none of these spiritual temperaments are an island, and that you should find yourself feeling at home with more than one. The author is also careful to explain that none of the approaches is better than the others, and encourages every Christian to incorporate aspects of all nine, even the ones that may not resonate as well with them.

Where the book shines for me is in two ways. First, in gaining a better understanding of how some of my brothers and sisters worship, I now can see why they do some of the things that I just don't get. Second, as I read through the book, I noticed things in all nine temperaments that I felt would be beneficial for me to

practice.

My only concern beyond the caveat given that start of this review is that I wish the author had included one chapter on the basic, fundamental things that every Christian, regardless of which of the nine approaches most resonates with them, should be doing to cultivate their walk with God. He alludes to a few things in nearly every chapter which would have been nice spelled out, such as prayer, church attendance, and Bible reading.

Summing up: Read with discernment, but jump into this book with your mind open to learning how God has wired you to worship Him.

Rachel Genovese says

This book helped me to become more open-minded about different forms of personal worship. Thomas delineates 9 forms of "spiritual temperaments" that Christians may feel drawn to in varying degrees. It definitely made me rethink what ways would actually work for me in pursuing God. Clearly written and very practical. I'll read it again in the future.

Conor says

One of those kinds of books that reveal so many answers, and then bring space to ponder and evaluate. Loved it.

Reed says

This book outlines 7 different "spiritual temperaments", distinct ways that people feel worshipful. I very much appreciated this book, as it made my wife and I feel less abnormal that we don't feel worshipful when raising our arms during worship music! We have "Intellectual" temperaments, and feel most worshipful when we're learning new things about God. Others feel most worshipful when singing, when alone, when in nature, when using old liturgies, etc.

The book is structured in a very pragmatic form, with an overview and then a dedicated chapter to each temperament. It would be a great for small groups; if people didn't want to read the whole book, they could just read the introduction and then the two or so chapters they feel relate most to them.

This book will help you feel better about worshipping God differently than the person next to you in the pew!

Andrew says

One of the most important books a modern evangelical Christian can read, especially considering the extraordinary social pressure that everyone fit into a specific and socially acceptable mold.

Greg Grunau says

This is another favourite book of mine because it has helped me so much in giving myself (and others) freedom to connect with God in different ways. We have different personalities, but we also have different ways of connecting closely with God - of experiencing Him in profound ways. Yes, reading Scripture is one of them (study), and attending worship gatherings (enthusiast), but there are other ways that "count" as well! - like spending time in God's creation and enjoying Him there, and through our 5 senses, etc. It's a good and simply read, and should spark some great ongoing conversation if you read it with someone else or a few others.

MANUELA says

Great book. very helpful in understanding the different ways people love and worship God.
