

STRENGTHENING  
**YOUR SOUL**

RESOURCES

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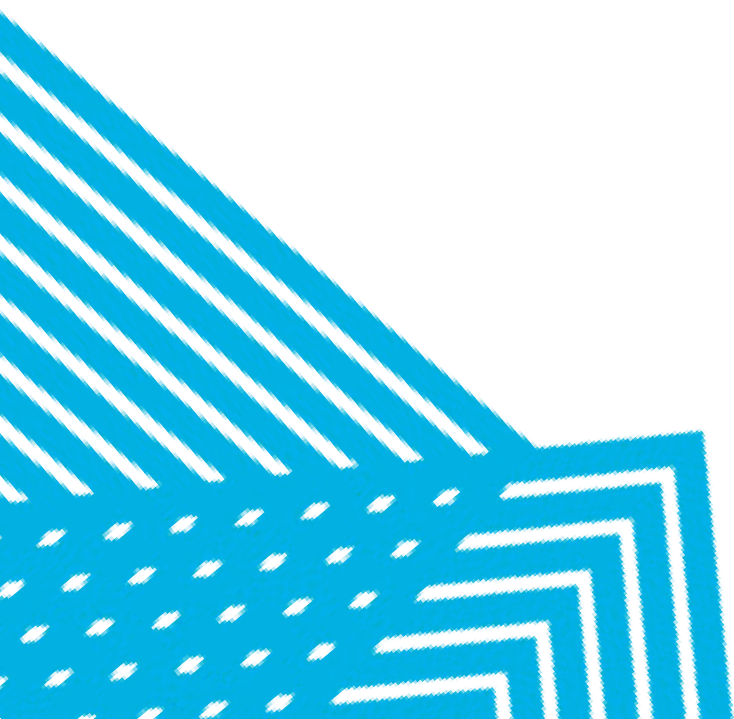
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# SOUL CARE

## SELF ASSESSMENT



# OVERVIEW

Guided by the value of Deepen Devotion, it is the desire of the Send Network leadership that every Send Network personnel live and serve from a healthy relationship with Jesus, others, and themselves.

Solomon once said, “Above everything else, guard your heart. Everything you do comes from it.” (Proverbs 4:23 NIRV)

As the wisest man that has ever lived (besides Jesus), Solomon knew well that as the heart goes, so goes your life! Therefore, the heart is worth guarding, nurturing, protecting, and strengthening.

In Matthew 11, Jesus talked about his heart and the relationship to your soul. He said, “Take up my yoke and learn from me, because I am lowly and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.” (Matthew 11:29 CSB)

Your soul matters! As an integral part of the Send Network, the health of your soul affects not only the impact of your life for the Kingdom but also the mission of the Send Network.

So, how is your soul? Far too often the soul is overlooked, abused, or simply dismissed in light of the demands of life and work. The more intentional you are in caring for your soul, the more likely you are to experience the presence of God in your life.

The following pages contain two resources that are designed to serve you in strengthening your soul:

1. **Soul Care Self-Assessment** (approximately 10 minutes)
2. **Soul Care Pathway Discovery Inventory** (approximately 20 minutes)

Although these resources are self-administered, the real value-add comes through discussion and conversations with others regarding insights and discoveries from these tools. May these tools and future conversations lead you to live and work from a place of refreshing, life-giving intimacy with Jesus for the good of all and the glory of God!

# DEFINITIONS AND INSTRUCTIONS

## Definitions:

“Your soul is what integrates your will (intentions), your mind (thoughts and feelings, values and conscience), and your body (face, body language, and actions) into a single life.” (Soul Keeping, John Orberg, Zondervan, pg 43)

The "soul": **The combined integration of the mind, body, will, and emotions comprising the essence of a person.**

A healthy soul: **The state of being when the essence of one’s life, in union with Christ, is rightly aligned with God spiritually, physically, emotionally, and relationally!**

Soul care: **The intentional efforts to nurture and strengthen one’s spiritual, physical, emotional, and relational health.**

## Instructions:

The soul is comprised of four areas integrated in your life that determines the health of your "being". The assessment on the following page is designed to look at each of these areas and have you determine a level of health based upon behaviors related to each area. Although Soul Care is the pursuit of “being” more than simply “doing”, what we “do” is formative in “who” we become!

From the four “**I am...**” statements, honestly discern if the statement characterizes you by means of rating yourself from the behaviors and habits listed below them. The rating is your assessment of yourself and useful as a discovery tool for self awareness. Your honest transparency in evaluating your life will serve you best in the development of your personal spiritual formation plan.

# SOUL CARE SELF ASSESSMENT

Please use the following scale:

1- Not At All Satisfied 2- Slightly Satisfied 3- Moderately Satisfied 4- Very Satisfied 5- Completely Satisfied

**Spiritually: (I am a beloved son/daughter of God experiencing joy and peace from my relationship with Jesus!)**

- \_\_\_ Personal awareness – I am satisfied with the way I look for the Father’s presence in every aspect of my life each day.
- \_\_\_ Prayer engagement – I am satisfied with the way I make time to intentionally engage in personal prayer each day.
- \_\_\_ Worship engagement – I am satisfied with the way I seek moments to refresh my soul in personal worship each day.
- \_\_\_ Bible reading – I am satisfied with the way I make time to intentionally engage in reading the Bible each day.
- \_\_\_ Sabbath– I am satisfied with the way I stop work for a full day each week to engage in soul replenishing activities.
- \_\_\_ **Total**

**Physically: (I am a healthy son/daughter of God having energy to serve and participate in personal activities!)**

- \_\_\_ Sleep – I am satisfied with the way I average 7-8 hours of sleep each night.
- \_\_\_ Weight management– I am satisfied with the way I practice intentional habits to keep my weight at a healthy level.
- \_\_\_ Water consumption – I am satisfied with the way I drink at least 48 ounces of water each day.
- \_\_\_ Recreational Engagement – I am satisfied with the way I engage in physical/recreational activity 3+ times a week.
- \_\_\_ Annual Physical Checkup – I am satisfied with the way I have a physical checkup, including lab work, every year.
- \_\_\_ **Total**

**Emotionally: (I am a secure son/daughter of God expressing emotions but not allowing them to control me!)**

- \_\_\_ Peace – I am satisfied with the way I live with a calm sense of well-being regarding myself and my world each day.
- \_\_\_ Love – I am satisfied with the way I freely give and receive love to and from those in my life each day.
- \_\_\_ Gratitude – I am satisfied with the way I express appreciation for something that has blessed me each day.
- \_\_\_ Hopeful– I am satisfied with the way I live each day with a positive outlook and anticipate good things in the future.
- \_\_\_ Laughter/joy– I am satisfied with the way I experience something that makes me smile and/or laugh each day.
- \_\_\_ **Total**

**Relationally: (I am an accepted son/daughter of God engaging in authentic community with others!)**

- \_\_\_ Single– I am satisfied with the way I maintain biblically healthy relationships with brothers and sisters in my church.
- \_\_\_ Married– I am satisfied with my spouse's and children's (if applicable) view our family as healthy and thriving.
- \_\_\_ Family of origin– I am satisfied with the way I maintain healthy relationships with my family of origin.
- \_\_\_ Close friends – I am satisfied with the way I have friendships that I communicate openly and honestly with each week.
- \_\_\_ Neighbor involvement– I am satisfied with the way I intentionally engage in relationships with my neighbors.
- \_\_\_ Gospel Intentionality – I am satisfied with the way I intentionally engage in relationships with unbelievers.
- \_\_\_ **Total**

# NEXT STEPS

## Assessment Results

Total up each section and then transfer to the Results column below. Total up all the points to arrive at the overall score of complete satisfaction.

RESULTS	AREAS
_____	Spiritually
_____	Physically
_____	Emotionally
_____	Relationally
_____	TOTAL

**G- Green** (Great Job! )

75-100

**Y- Yellow** (Keep At It! )

46-74

**R- Red** ( Attention Needed)

20-45

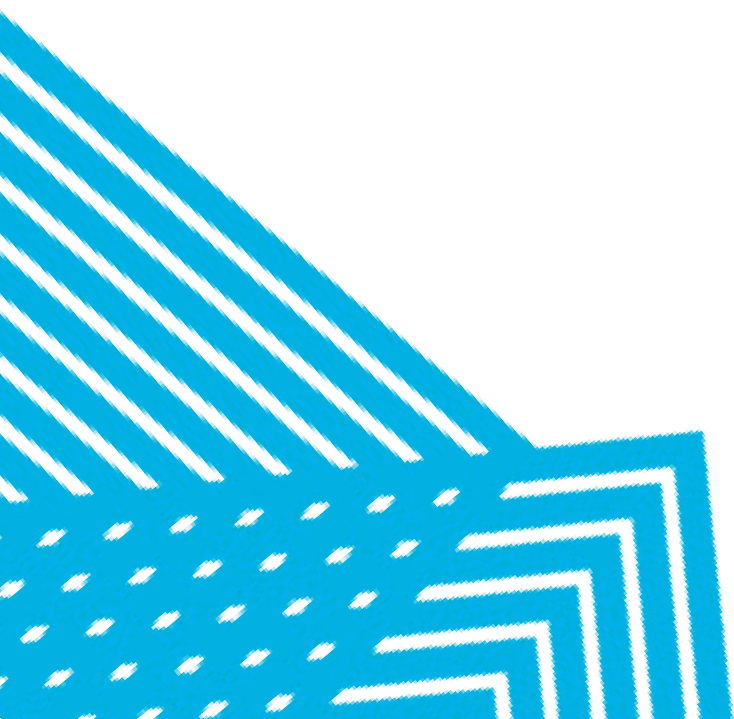
## Follow Up Questions:

What does this assessment reveal to you?

What is one actionable step you will take to strengthen the health of your soul?

Who can you share that step with for encouragement and feedback?

# SPIRITUAL PATHWAYS INVENTORY



# OVERVIEW

## The Spiritual Pathways Inventory\*

In 1996, pastor, seminary professor, and author, Gary Thomas released a book entitled, "Sacred Pathways". In this book, Thomas reveals nine distinct spiritual temperaments - and their strengths, weaknesses, and tendencies - to help individuals improve their spiritual life and deepen their personal walk with God. His hope was to help people discover the path God designed them to take—a path marked by growth and fulfillment, based on their unique temperament. Through scripture and experience, he guides readers toward a style of relating to God that is freeing and life-giving.

Some years following, pastor and author John Ortberg, along with Ruth Haley Barton condensed the nine -“pathways”- that Thomas introduced to seven pathways. Additionally, a self-guided inventory was created to help individuals discover their unique pathway(s).

Just as we have different personalities and temperaments, we each gravitate toward unique ways to connect with God and refresh ourselves spiritually.

These ways of connecting with God are called “spiritual pathways.”

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1- Adapted from An Ordinary Day with Jesus by John Ortberg and Ruth Haley Barton. For use solely within Send Network and cannot be reproduced without permission from Willowcreek.

# DEFINITIONS AND INSTRUCTIONS

## **Definitions:**

**A spiritual pathway is the way we most naturally connect with God and grow spiritually.**

The goal of the inventory on the following pages is to help you discover your pathway(s) so that you can incorporate the path into the rhythm of your life on more consistent basis. Identifying and engaging in your spiritual pathway(s) will serve you in experiencing God's presence in ways that refresh the soul and energize you towards Kingdom impact.

## **Instructions:**

Pick a number from 0-3 corresponding to the description in the scale and put the number in the blank before each statement. Don't over-think it, just put down the number that most immediately comes to mind after reading the statement.

Transfer the numbers for each statement to the grid on page 12.

Total each column. The highest number identifies your preferred spiritual pathway; the next highest number, your secondary pathway.

# SPIRITUAL PATHWAYS INVENTORY <sup>1</sup>

Respond to each statement below according to the following scale:

**3-** consistently true of me    **2-** often true of me    **1-** once in a while true of me    **0-** not at all true of me

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. When I have a problem, I'd rather pray with people than pray alone.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. In a church service, I look most forward to the teaching.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. People who know me would describe me as enthusiastic during worship times.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. No matter how tired I get, I usually come alive when a challenge is placed before me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Spiritual reality sometimes feels more real to me than the physical world.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. I get distracted in meetings or services if I notice details in the surroundings that haven't been attended to.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. A beautiful sunset can give me a spiritual high that temporarily blocks out everything bothering me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. It makes me feel better about myself to hang out with people I know and like.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. I've never understood why people don't love to study the Bible in depth.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. God touches me every time I gather with other believers for praise.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. People around me know how passionate I feel about the causes I'm involved in.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. I experience a deep inner joy when I am in a quiet place, free from distractions.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. Helping others is easy for me, even when I have problems.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. When faced with a difficult decision, I am drawn to walk in the woods, on the beach, or in another outdoor setting.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. When I am alone too much, I tend to lose energy or get a little depressed.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. People seek me out when they need answers to biblical questions.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. Even when I'm tired, I look forward to going to a church service.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. I sense the presence of God most when I'm doing His work.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 19. I don't understand how Christians can be so busy and still think they're hearing from God.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 20. I love being able to serve behind the scenes, out of the spotlight.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 21. I experience God in nature so powerfully I'm sometimes tempted not to bother with church.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 22. I experience God most tangibly in fellowship with a few others.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 23. When I need to be refreshed, a stimulating book is just the thing.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 24. I am happiest when I praise God together with others.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 25. "When the going gets tough, the tough get going" – that's true about me!
- \_\_\_\_\_ 26. My family and friends sometimes tease me about being such a hermit.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 27. People around me sometimes tell me they admire my compassion.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 28. Things in nature often teach me valuable lessons about God.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 29. I don't understand people who have a hard time revealing personal things about themselves.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 30. Sometimes I spend too much time learning about an issue rather than dealing with it.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 31. I don't think there's any good excuse for missing a worship time.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 32. I get tremendous satisfaction from seeing people working together to achieve a goal.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 33. When I face a difficulty, being alone feels most helpful.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 34. Even when I'm tired, I find I have energy and desire to care for people's problems.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 35. God is so real when I'm in a beautiful, natural setting.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 36. When I'm tired, there's nothing better than going out with friends to refresh me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 37. I worship best in response to theological truth clearly explained.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 38. I like how all the world's problems – including mine – seem unimportant when I'm praising God at church.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 39. I get frustrated with people's apathy in the face of injustice.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 40. If the truth were told, I sometimes feel guilty for enjoying silence and solitude so much.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 41. I am happiest when I find someone who really needs help and I step in and offer it.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 42. Others know that if I'm not around, I'm most likely outside in a beautiful place.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 43. People around me describe me as a people person.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 44. I often read lots of books or articles to help me work through a problem.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 45. When I get overwhelmed, there's nothing like a good worship service to get me back on track.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 46. I should probably take more time to slow down, but I really love what I do, especially ministry.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 47. Sometimes I spend too much time mulling over negative things people say about me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 48. I experience God's presence as I counsel someone who is struggling or in trouble.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 49. When I see natural beauty, something wonderful stirs in me that is difficult to describe.

# SPIRITUAL PATHWAYS SCORING:<sup>1</sup>

Transfer the numbers from the inventory to this grid and total each column.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	32	33	34	35
36	37	38	39	40	41	42
43	44	45	46	47	48	49
Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total
A	B	C	D	E	F	G

1- Adapted from An Ordinary Day with Jesus by John Ortberg and Ruth Haley Barton. For use solely within Send Network and cannot be reproduced without permission from Willowcreek.

# SUMMARY OF SPIRITUAL PATHWAYS:

- A. Relational – I connect best to God when I am with others.
- B. Intellectual – I connect best to God when I learn.
- C. Worship – I connect best to God when I worship.
- D. Activist – I connect best to God when doing great things.
- E. Contemplative – I connect best to God in silence.
- F. Serving – I connect best to God while completing Kingdom tasks.
- G. Creation – I connect best to God in nature.

More description\* for each pathway is provided on the following pages.

\*Adapted from God Is Closer than You Think. Ortberg, John. Zondervan/Willow Creek, 2005. pp. 109-124.

# RELATIONAL

Spiritual growth comes most naturally when you're involved in significant relationships. Small groups and other community life experiences are key. Your life is an open book, and you're surprised that it's difficult for others to be open. Being alone can drive you crazy. In key times of growth – like confronting sin, guidance for decisions, accountability for actions, and expressions of love – God will often speak to you through people.

- **Biblical Example:** Apostle Peter seemed to have the relational pathway. Peter came to Jesus *with* others. He was part of that inner circle along with James and John and Jesus. In John 21, after the Crucifixion, Peter gathered others together with him and went fishing. The defining moments of his life – his choice to follow Christ, his confession of Jesus as Messiah, his denial of Christ, his restoration – all took place in a relational context.
- **Other Example:** Although he lived over 200 years ago, John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, is a good example of this pathway. Wesley was radically committed to relationships and has a passion for getting believers to meet together in small groups, which is how Methodism started.
- **Build Strength:** You need a relationally rich life. Use your “wiring” to serve others, and pray with others in community. You will learn best within a circle of people. You’ll tend to have lots of relationships, and you can use your network of contacts to further God’s kingdom.
- **Cautions:** Guard against superficiality. You need to be sure you have a few deep relationships in your life – people who get past your external self and who love you, challenge you, encourage you, and give you wise counsel. You can grow dependent on others and become a spiritual chameleon.
- **Ways to Stretch:** Develop a capacity for silence so you can learn to speak and listen to God when you are alone. Keep some of your experiences with. God secret so you don’t get addicted to what other people think. Study Scripture for yourself so you are grounded in God’s Word rather than in others’ opinions. Be intentional about inviting one or two close friends to speak truth to you so that your relationship is more than just social.

# INTELLECTUAL

**You draw close to God as you're able to learn more about Him. The study of Scripture and theology comes naturally. You have little patience for emotional approaches to faith. You are a thinker. When you face problems or spiritual challenges, you go into problem-solving mode.**

- **Biblical Example:** The Apostle Paul is an example of someone in the Bible who had an intellectual pathway. Even before his conversion, he tells us that he studied at the feet of Gamaliel, one of the great Jewish scholars of his day. After his conversion, Paul went into the synagogues and reasoned from Scripture. He also went to Athens and talked with the philosophers. If you're like Paul, the road to your heart usually leads through your head. You hear God best as you learn. When you're deeply immersed in great books, classes, deep thought, and new learning, you come to life. Many of your moments of decision or repentance flow out of discovery and insight as you learn.
- **Other Examples:** Cambridge professor and author C.S. Lewis, who wrote *Mere Christianity*, is a good recent example of this pathway. That book – and many of Lewis' other books – contained a well-reasoned defense of the Christian faith.
- **Strengths:** Intellectual pathway people need to build on their strength through the discipline of study. If you quit learning, you grow stagnant. You need to read great books that challenge and expose yourself to lots of teaching that feed the mind. Finding some like-minded people with whom you can learn is important.
- **Cautions:** Guard against becoming all head and not heart. You love to be right, and that can be dangerous. Do not confuse being smart with being spiritually mature.
- **Ways to Stretch:** Devote yourself to corporate worship and to private adoration and prayer. This may not come naturally, but your learning needs to lead to worship; otherwise it will get dangerous. In 1 Corinthians 8:1, Paul warns, "knowledge puffs up, but love builds up." Another way to stretch is to engage in self-examination to assess whether or not you are being loving as you interact with others in sharing your knowledge.

# WORSHIP

**You have a deep love of corporate praise and a natural inclination toward celebration. In difficult periods of life, worship is one of the most healing activities you engage in. When you worship at a church service, you hope it will go on for hours. Your heart opens up when you worship and you come alive and enthusiastically participate.**

- **Biblical Example:** King David is an example in the Bible of someone who had a worship pathway. David danced before the LORD with all of his heart. He wrote psalms and poetry to God. He played his lyre and expressed his love for God through music.
- **Other Example:** Each generation, especially since the 1970's, produces worship leaders who exemplify this pathway as they write, produce, and sing new songs that stir the souls of people to engage in personal and corporate worship.
- **Build Strength:** Experience great worship on a regular basis when the body of Christ gathers. Use worshipful music tapes or CDs and make your car a private sanctuary. Learn about other worship traditions, and incorporate what you learn into your personal worship time.
- **Cautions:** Be careful not to judge those who aren't as expressive in worship. Guard against an experience-based spirituality that has you always looking for the next worship "high".
- **Ways to Stretch:** Engage in the discipline of study. You need to make sure that your mind is filled with the knowledge of God and to keep that area growing so your heart and emotions are solidly rooted. Serve God in concrete ways as an extension of your worship. Remain committed to your church even when a worship service isn't all you would like it to be. Be part of the solution by staying faithful and bringing your best contribution to making worship a meaningful experience for your church.

# ACTIVIST

You have a single-minded zeal and a very strong sense of vision. You have a passion to build the church and to work for justice. Challenges don't discourage you. They energize you. You thrive on opposition. You do everything you can to bring out the potential God has placed in other people. You love a fast-paced, problem-filled, complex, strenuous way of life.

- **Biblical Example:** One example of an activist in the Bible is Nehemiah. When Nehemiah hears about the condition of Jerusalem – that the capital city of his people has fallen into disrepair – he is upset and wants to take action. There's a little line in the story that you could easily overlook. It's a simple phrase that captures the essence of the activist. Nehemiah says, "I prayed to the God of heaven, and I answered the king." He then makes his proposal for action. Prayer and action go hand in hand for the activist. Nehemiah prays, and then he talks to the authorities to get the ball rolling. That's the activist.
- **Other Example:** In the 1800s, William and Catherine Booth, the founders of the Salvation Army, exemplified this spiritual pathway. Their ministry began as they saw the suffering of impoverished people in the city, and they determined to reach "into hell" to bring them back.
- **Building Strength:** Create a sense of challenge in your life by immersing yourself in tasks that demand the best you have to offer. If you aren't moving, you get frustrated and stagnant. Find a team of people you can invest in and work with them to accomplish big goals.
- **Cautions:** Be aware that you may run over people or use them because you get so focused on achieving the goal. Also, guard against going too long without pausing to reflect on what you're doing; otherwise you can end up not even knowing your own motives, spiritual condition, or emotional state.
- **Ways to Stretch:** Create a balance to your activism by spending time in solitude and silence. This will help you to become increasingly aware of your motives so you can respond to God's purposes rather than your own. Cultivate a reflective discipline like journaling. Journal writing can be helpful because it's an action – and you like action – but it requires you to slow down long enough to reflect on your interior world. Develop close spiritual friendships with one or two other people. Invite them to regularly ask you questions and speak to you about what God is doing in you, not just through you.

# CONTEMPLATIVE

**You love uninterrupted time alone. Reflection comes naturally to you. The presence of God is most real when all distractions are removed. You have a large capacity for prayer. If you get busy or you spend a lot of time with people, you feel drained and yearn for times of solitude.**

- **Biblical Example:** Someone in the Bible who fits this profile was Mary, Martha's sister in the story of Mary and Martha recorded in Luke 10:38-42. Mary sat at Jesus' feet while Martha was preparing a meal. If you're like her, you love to just sit at Jesus' feet. You'd rather be with Him, in quiet, than be busy with tasks. In a noisy world like ours, this can pose challenges. What happens when a quiet, contemplative type meets a chatty, relational type? They get married – and drive each other crazy!
- **Other Example:** Author Henri Nouwen is a recent example of someone with this pathway. He thought deeply about many aspects of the Christian life, and his insights and writings – rooted in times of quiet reflection and solitude – provided much needed wisdom for our journey with God and each other.
- **Building Strength:** Know you have permission to build on your strengths. Don't criticize yourself for what you're not. You have what has been called "a large interior world". You need regular protected, intense times of solitude and stillness. Faithfully follow your intuitions and the leadings that come in your times along with God. Act on what you hear from God in the silence.
- **Cautions:** You have a tendency to avoid the demands of the real world because it doesn't live up to your ideals. Be careful not to retreat to your inner world when friends, family, or society disappoint you. Resist the temptation to consider your times of private prayer and solitude as less important than the more public acts of ministry performed by others.
- **Ways to Stretch:** Choose a regular place of active service. Stay relationally connected, even when those relationships become difficult or challenging. Connect with those who have an activist pathway. Pray for them and consider getting involved in some aspect of their ministry activities.

# SERVING

God's presence seems most tangible when you're involved in helping others. You're often uncomfortable in a setting where you don't have a role. But if you have a role – as simple as setting up chairs, serving coffee, or offering some kind of care – then you sense God's presence and delight.

- **Biblical Example:** An example of someone in the Bible with this pathway is a woman named Tabitha. The Book of Acts describes her as someone well known for a life of good deeds. Her name became synonymous with acts of servanthood and caring for the poor.
- **Other Example:** Mother Teresa, the nun who served those who were homeless and dying in the streets of Calcutta, India, is an example of someone in our lifetime that had this pathway. She said the reason she lived life the way she did was for the joy it brought her. She saw the face of Christ in the people she served, and it motivated her for a lifetime.
- **Build Strength:** Get plugged into a community where you have opportunities for meaningful service to offer God. If you're just attending a church service but you have nowhere to serve, your connection to God will begin to feel distant. Look for glimpses of God's presence in the people you serve and in the execution of your tasks. Prepare to serve first by praying so your service is genuinely spiritual service.
- **Cautions:** Be careful not to resent other people who don't serve as much as you do. Remember that God loves you, not because you are so faithful in serving Him, but because you are His child. Don't confuse serving with earning God's love.
- **Ways to Stretch:** Balance your service with small group and community life. Learn how to receive love even when you're not being productive. Practice expressing love through words as well as actions.

# CREATION

You respond deeply to God through your experience of nature. Being outdoors replenishes you. It moves your heart, opens your soul, and strengthens your faith. You're highly aware of your physical senses, and often art, or symbols, or ritual will help you grow. Because you have an appreciation for God's creation, you tend to be creative yourself.

- **Biblical Example:** The biblical example here is Jesus. Of course, Jesus lived in continual connection with His Father and can be said to exemplify all the pathways. However, the Bible portrays Him as being especially drawn to nature. He often withdrew from others to be outdoors – to go to a lake or the mountains – to be with His Father. He always wanted to be in creation, which is not surprising because He created it!
- **Other Example:** George Washington Carver is an example from the previous century who exemplified this pathway. He was an African-American chemist who invented hundreds of uses for peanut by-products. It is claimed he prayed, “God show me the secrets of the universe,” and God responded, “The universe is too big for you; I’ll show you what is in the peanut!”
- **Building Strength:** You need to spend time outdoors. Find a location for getaways. Make beauty a part of your spiritual life. When you pray, you may need to have some beauty near you – maybe art, or flowers, or candles that create soft lighting.
- **Cautions:** You may be tempted to use beauty or nature to escape. You will find that people are sometimes disappointing. Guard against the temptation to avoid church because you think to yourself, “I can worship God in nature, on my own.”
- **Ways to stretch:** Stay involved in a worshiping community. You need people, because, after all, they're part of God's wonderful creation too! From time to time, be willing to help out in less-than-beautiful settings. Take Scripture with you into nature, and meditate on God's Word as you enjoy creation.

# NEXT STEPS:

1. Pray for insight and wisdom in growing in your relationship with God and for strengthening your soul.
2. Share with someone what you discovered about yourself in completing this inventory. Your supervisor or Tim Wheat, Director of Soul Care and Spiritual Formation are good starting points.
3. Establish a weekly rhythm where you walk in your unique pathway(s).
4. Give yourself permission to be who you are in God. Celebrate your pathway and enjoy it.
5. Be careful not to envy someone else's pathway. It may be easy to think, "The activists are the ones who really get things done in this world. I'm not like that, so I guess I'll always be second-class." Embrace the unique person God made you to be.
6. Beware of the temptation to judge someone else because of his or her pathway. A contemplative may think, "What's the matter with those activists? Why can't they pray for long periods of time like I can? Don't they have any depth?" Part of growing in community means we learn to neither envy nor judge each other, but help and learn from one another.
7. Explore and develop the other pathways. Most people can relate easily to more than one. You may find several of them important to your spiritual growth - but at some point every one of them can be useful to you.