

PATHWAY: INTELLECTUAL

Characteristics:

- 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

Strengths:

- Read great books that challenge you.
- Expose yourself to lots of teaching.
- Find like-minded people with whom you can learn.

Cautions:

- Guard against becoming all head and no heart.
- Don't confuse being smart with being spiritually mature.

Ways to Stretch:

- Devote yourself to corporate worship and to private adoration and prayer.
- Your learning needs to lead to worship; otherwise it will get dangerous.
- Engage in self-examination to assess whether or not you are being loving.

From: John Ortberg and Ruth Haley Barton, *An Ordinary Day With Jesus: Experiencing the Reality of God in Your Everyday Life*, Barrington: Willow Creek Resources

PATHWAY: RELATIONAL

Characteristics:

- 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.
- Being alone can drive you crazy.
- In key times of growth, God will often speak to you through people.

Biblical Example

The Apostle Peter

Strengths:

- You need a relationally rich life.
- Use your spiritual gift to serve others.
- Pray with others in community.
- Learn in a class with other people or in a small group.
- Use your network of contacts to further God's Kingdom.

Cautions:

- Guard against superficiality.
- You can grow dependent on others and become a spiritual chameleon.

Ways to Stretch:

- Develop a capacity for silence.
- 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.

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PATHWAY: SERVING

Characteristics:

- 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. If you have a role, then you sense God's presence and delight.
- You constantly look for acts of service you can engage in and often don't even need to be asked.

Contemporary Example

Mother Teresa

Strengths:

- Get plugged into a community so you have opportunities for meaningful service to offer God.
- 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.

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PATHWAY: WORSHIP

Characteristics:

- 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.
- In worship, your heart opens up, and you come alive and enthusiastically participate.

Biblical Example

King David

Strengths:

- Experience great worship on a regular basis.
- Use worship tapes or CD's 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 always has you looking for the next worship "high".
- This is what C.S. Lewis called "the fatal sin of saying 'encore!'".

Ways to Stretch:

- Engage in the discipline of study.
- Serve God in concrete ways as an extension of your worship.
- Remain committed to your church even when worship isn't all you would like it to be.

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PATHWAY: ACTIVIST

Characteristics:

- 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.
- 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

Nehemiah

Strengths:

- Create a sense of challenge in your life by immersing yourself in tasks that call out the best you have to offer.
- Find a team of people you can invest in and work with to accomplish big goals.

Cautions:

- You may run over people or use them because you get so focused on achieving the goal.
- Guard against going too long without pausing to reflect on what you're doing.
- You can end up not even knowing your own motives, spiritual condition or emotional state.

Ways to Stretch:

- Spend time in solitude and silence.
- Cultivate a reflective discipline like journaling.
- 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.

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PATHWAY: CONTEMPLATIVE

Characteristics:

- You love uninterrupted time alone.
- Reflection comes naturally to you.
- You have a large capacity for prayer.
- If you get busy or spend a lot of time with people you feel drained and yearn for times of solitude.

Biblical Example

Mary, Martha's sister (Luke 10:38-42)

Strengths:

- You need regular, protected, intense times of solitude and stillness.
- Faithfully follow the intuitions and leadings that come in your times alone with God.
- Act on what you hear from God in 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.
 - Consider getting involved in some aspect of their ministry activities.

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PATHWAY: CREATION

Characteristics:

- You respond deeply to God through your experience of nature.
- Being outdoors replenishes you.
- You're highly aware of your physical senses, and often art or symbols or ritual will help you grow.

Biblical Example

Jesus

Strengths:

- Spend time outdoors.
- Find a location for getaways.
- Make beauty part of your spiritual life.

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.
- 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 His creation.

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