

Loving God Different Ways

The Refuge August 2011 - Adapted from Sacred Pathways: Discovering your soul's path to God by Gary Thomas

1. NATURALISTS: Loving God Through Nature



- Learn best God lessons in the outdoors.
- Can visualize scriptural truths, see God more clearly & learn to rest in the outdoors.
- Feel free & unconstricted outside.

Dangers: Individualism, spiritual delusion, idolizing nature

2. SENSATES: Loving God Through the Senses



- Connect with God through sight, smell, taste, touch, and sound.
- Inspired by tangible experiences that connect with the senses (see God in art, feel textures, listen to music, smell perfume, taste food).

Dangers: Worshipping without conviction, worshipping worship, idolizing beauty.

3. TRADITIONALISTS: Loving God Through Ritual & Symbol



- Value rituals, symbols, and liturgical practices.
- Appreciate reading or saying specific prayers.
- High value on the beauty of the church calendar, including the practices of Lent and Advent.

Dangers: Serving God without knowing God, judging others, repeating mechanically.

4. ASCETICS: Loving God Through Silence & Solitude



- Love being alone with God
- Value simplicity.
- Make room for quiet.
- Like to fast and pray, distracted by senses.

Dangers: Overemphasizing God's piety, seeking pain for pain's sake, seeking to gain God's favor.

5. ACTIVISTS: Loving God Through Confrontation



- Spiritually nourished through the battle of a "cause"
- Connect with God through social activism, advocating on behalf of others.
- Offer time and energy to create change.

Dangers: Becoming judgemental, ambition, elitism, resentment toward the not-as-passionate.

6. CAREGIVERS: Loving God Through Loving Others



- Love to help, listen, care for others in a variety of ways including listening, actively helping, repairing broken things for others.
- Feel close to God when actively engaged with people.

Dangers: Judging others who aren't helping, serving ourselves by serving others, holding narrow definitions, neglecting those closest to us.

7. ENTHUSIASTS: Loving God Through Mystery & Celebration



- Love getting caught up in worship experiences.
- Look for movements of God--both big and small.
- Expectant about God's power & possibility, dreams & visions.

Dangers: Seeking experience for experience sake, independent, equating "good feelings" with "good worship"

8. CONTEMPLATIVES: Loving God Through Adoration



- Love to rest in God's presence.
- Value spending quality time connecting with God through different forms of prayer including centering prayer, intercessory prayer, meditative prayers.

Dangers: Losing balance, forgetting action, getting addicted to spiritual experience,

9. INTELLECTUALS: Loving God With the Mind



- Love the Bible, systematic theology, and creeds.
- Value beliefs about God.
- Stimulated by Bible studies, lectionaries, and historical texts as well as philosophical conversations about God.

Dangers: Loving controversy, knowing rather than doing, being proud.

10. HEALERS: Loving God Through Recovery



- Feel close to God when I am powerless & desperate.
- Experience connection with God through the principles of the 12 steps
- Find God's love through connecting with own and others pain.

Dangers: Judgemental, focus on pain instead of joy, singularly focused