

YOU'VE GOT

style



COMPANION GUIDE

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COMPANION GUIDE

THE
Naturalist

LOVING GOD THROUGH
THE OUTDOORS



OVERVIEW

The Naturalist seeks to leave the formal architecture and the padded pews to enter an entirely new “cathedral,” a place that God himself has built: the out-of-doors. Any place that has some trees or a stream or, at minimum, open skies, can be God’s cathedral. Naturalists have found that getting outside can literally flood parched hearts and soften the hardest soul. Naturalists often learn their best lessons in the out-of-doors. Three particularly come to mind: they visualize scriptural truths, they see God more clearly, and they learn to rest.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

PRAYER WALK

- Slowly and deliberately walk through places for the purpose of intentional and listening prayer.
- Walking through your neighborhood, a park, your town giving to God the people and activities that go on there.
- Taking a group of children or adults on a prayer walk; talking to them about what it is like for them.
- Allowing the visual nature of this journey to prompt prayers.
- Becoming quiet and listening to God's prayer for a particular place.

PRACTICING THE PRESENCE

- Developing a rhythm of living that brings God to mind throughout the day wherever you are.
- Intentionally recollecting yourself before God as you engage in the activities duties of life.

- Seeking to see others through the eyes of God.
- Stopping throughout the day to listen to God.
- Remaining open and teachable at all moments.

UNPLUGGING

- Unplugging electronic devices that interrupt relationships.
- Refraining from use of email.
- Devoting time and attention to others without interruption.
- Communicating face to face rather than virtually.
- Settling into uninterrupted quiet with Jesus.
- Freedom from the compulsive and demanding nature of the technological communication and its toll on the soul.

POTENTIAL PITFALLS

INDIVIDUALISM

Jesus spent time outdoors to prepare to go back into the world. We must make sure we are not using creation to escape the duties of following Jesus.

SPIRITUAL DELUSION

Anything “received” on a walk with God should not be considered authoritative, but merely advice that must be tested. The Bible is our only sure guide. Satan can provide counterfeit experiences that can lead us astray.

IDOLIZING NATURE

Be wary of the heresy of pantheism – the worship of nature. It is not true that God is in all of nature, or that nature is God. The Bible teaches, “the earth is the Lord’s.” Pantheism twists it to “The earth is the Lord.” Pantheism is a New Age philosophy. Nevertheless, do not allow the lie of pantheism rob you of worshiping God through an appreciation of what he has made.

HOW CAN I CONNECT WITH GOD?

- Fully commit your life to Christ. The more you appreciate the Creator, the more you will appreciate His creation.
- Consider the greatness of creation – mountains, sky, and oceans all portray the immense power, wisdom and goodness of God.
- Consider the variety of creation – plant and animal life have more variety than we could ever examine in a lifetime. God is capable of doing a multitude of things at once.
- Consider the beauty of creation – beauty in God's world comes in many shapes, colors, shades. God's beauty cannot be revealed through one form.
- Consider the abundance of creation - count stars in sky, sand on shore, trees in forest. We serve a God of plenty whose love and mercy are inexhaustible.
- View God's world as His cathedral where He wants to meet with you and others.

COMPANION GUIDE

THE
Sensate

LOVING GOD THROUGH
THEIR SENSES



OVERVIEW

The Sensate are moved more by a sensuous worship experience than by anything else. By sensuous we are referring to the five senses: taste, touch, smell, sound, and sight. When we embrace the use of the senses— which God created, after all—we open up entirely new avenues of worship. God created our senses, enjoyment through the senses was his idea. Sensates experience God in concrete, visible, palpable symbols. They see God in beauty, are creative and artistic and enjoy God's creation.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

CELEBRATION

Celebration is a way of engaging in actions that orient the spirit toward worship, praise and thanksgiving:

- Pursuing activities that bring the heart deep gladness and reveling in them before the Lord including: spending time with others, sharing meals, working, serving, worshiping, laughing, listening to music, dancing.
- Enjoying every good and perfect gift as coming from God.
- Cultivating a spirit of gladness.
- Taking yourself less seriously.
- Having holiday traditions that guide your celebration.
- Seek out church worship and social events.
- Look on the calendar for scheduled Nights of Worship.

PRAYING IN COLOR

- Getting prayerfully creative and using doodles, color, words, pictures as a way of expressing what is in your heart and seeking connection with God.
- It is a visual, concrete and lasting way to pray.
- It is useful if there are no words for prayer.

COMMUNION

The Lord's Supper celebrates God's redemptive plan through the sacrificial death of Jesus. Through this meal of bread and wine (or grape juice) we join ourselves to Christ and feed on him in our hearts through faith.

Includes:

- Partaking of Christ's body and blood in the sacrament of communion engages the senses.
- Keeping company with Jesus no matter what happens and having nourishment for the journey.
- Developing a deeper love for Jesus.

- More fully appreciating Jesus' sacrificial love for you.
- Appreciating the diversity of the other believers who take of the Lord's Supper with you.

POTENTIAL PITFALLS

WORSHIPING WITHOUT CONVICTION OR CONTENT

Words by be sung with no more emotion than placing an order for a Big Mac. Also, while we're singing, the words we say don't really matter. God knows it's just a song, we think. Music can make us feign a commitment that just isn't there, causing us to become callous, insincere believers.

IDOLIZING BEAUTY

Someone could leave a very beautiful liturgical service satisfied by the sensuous experience without having entered the true presence of God.

WORSHIPING WORSHIP

Sensory stimulation is not the same thing as a true commitment of the will. Be cautious of using your senses to worship worship.

HOW CAN I CONNECT WITH GOD?

- **SOUND:** “Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth. Sing to the Lord, praise his name” Psalm 96. Use musical instruments – Psalms 147, 149, 150. Read the Scriptures out loud. We often have our hearts and thoughts challenged when we hear the Word of God.
- **SMELL:** No incense offering will wipe out a single sin. However, incense isn’t used to find favor with God, but to help us pray. It is a means, not an end.
- **TOUCH:** Holding a paper clip while you pray could help you focus on a marriage that is falling apart; a rubber band could help you pray for a pliable heart. Carry a nail in your pocket on Good Friday to reaffirm your commitment.
- **SIGHT:** Check out the religious art of Rembrandt and others. We may find that looking at someone or a picture of someone while we pray for them increases our ability to pray.
- **TASTE:** Taste some salt as you pray for your influence in a non-Christian environment. Jesus says He is the bread of life; remind yourself of this when you taste it.

COMPANION GUIDE

THE
Traditionalist

LOVING GOD THROUGH
RITUAL AND SYMBOL



OVERVIEW

Religious practices are the way men and women use the physical world to embody (non-physical) spiritual truths. There are three elements of the traditionalist pathway: ritual (or liturgical pattern); symbol (or significant image); and sacrifice. Through ritual and ceremonies traditionalists in turn make order out of chaos.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

LITURGICAL PRAYER

Liturgical prayer is a written or memorized prayer that serves as a framework for individual or corporate worship and devotion.

Includes:

- Praying prayers written by others.
- Praying or singing Scripture as a part of worship (e.g. the Lord's Prayer, psalms, responsive readings, doxologies etc).
- Praying prayers of the church that have come down to us from the past.
- Praying the Liturgy of the Hours or the Daily Offices.
- Praying the prayers written for each season of the church year.
- Keeping company with Jesus through the prayers and writings of others.

HABIT OF PRAYER-FIXED HOUR

Fixed-hour prayers call for regular and consistent patterns of attending to God throughout the day. Includes:

- Interrupting work at set times for prayer.
- Following the prayers in the Liturgy of the Hours.
- Following a personal liturgy for prayer at set hours of the day.
- Stopping at the top of every hour for prayer.
- Keeping company with Jesus throughout the hours of the day.
- Developing the ability to hear a word from God in the midst of daily activities.

FASTING

A fast is the self-denial of normal necessities in order to intentionally attend to God in prayer. Bringing attachments and cravings to the surface opens a place for prayer: This physical awareness of emptiness is the reminder to turn to Jesus who alone can satisfy. Includes:

- Abstaining from food, drink, shopping, desserts, chocolate and so on to intentionally be with God.
- Abstaining from media: TV, radio, music, email, cellphones, computer games to allow space for listening to the voice of Jesus.
- Abstaining from habits or comforts in order to give God undivided attention.
- Observing fast days and seasons of the church year.
- Addressing excessive attachments or appetites and the entitlements behind them, and partnering with God for changed habits.
- Repenting and waiting on God.
- Seeking strength to persevere, obey and serve.
- Overcoming addictions, compulsions, whims and cravings.
- Keeping company with Jesus in relinquishment.

POTENTIAL PITFALLS

SERVING GOD WITHOUT KNOWING GOD

Religion can serve faith, but it doesn't substitute for faith, and it can never replace faith.

NEGLECTING SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS

It is not enough for us to cultivate holiness; we must reach out and minister to others. Amos 5:21-24. Jesus says that religion without substance is hypocrisy.

JUDGING OTHERS

Religious practice can powerfully enhance a person's faith, but it can also destroy corporate faith if it is used to criticize, measure, or divide. Colossians 2:16-17.

REPEATING MECHANICALLY

Without attention ritual becomes an empty exercise that fills us with insincerity.

HOW CAN I CONNECT WITH GOD?

RITUAL

- Find a special way to celebrate the religious holidays, i.e. Good Friday, Easter, Christmas, Pentecost. Place a reminder in your calendar.
- Read Scripture aloud.
- People in church history read Psalms 50, 62, 90, 103, & 140 daily or regularly.
- Read something from Pascal on November 23rd the day he had a life-changing experience with God. Read Bonhoeffer on April 9th – the day of his martyrdom. Look up Augustine’s birthday and read him that day.
- Develop your own call to worship and repeat it frequently every month. Write and repeat your own prayers.
- Create an intercessory prayer list.

SYMBOL

- Symbols help us to preserve a “moral memory” to help us live rightly. Some who have failed sexually can begin wearing a cross to remind them to stay pure. Others could wear a ring during certain periods of prayer to remind them to pray.

- Symbols from Christian art that you could place in your home include: anchor [hope]; arrow [martyrdom/pain]; banner [triumph]; circle [eternity]; crown [sovereignty]; lamp [wisdom]; square [earthly existence].

SACRIFICE

- Fasting during Lent.
- Give up something permanently or dedicate something to the Lord's use.
- Give your money sacrificially.

COMPANION GUIDE

THE *Ascetic*

LOVING GOD THROUGH
SOLITUDE AND SIMPLICITY



OVERVIEW

The Ascetic temperament gravitates toward solitude, austerity, simplicity, and deep commitment. It's the “monastic” temperament, so to speak, representing believers who aren't afraid of discipline, severity, and solitude— indeed, believers who find that these elements awaken their souls to God's presence. Ascetics experience God away from worldly distractions and have no need for anything other than God and the Spirit.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

SILENCE

Silence is a regenerative practice of attending and listening to God in quiet, without interruption and noise. Silence provides freedom from speaking as well as from listening to words or music. Includes:

- Setting a period of time in which you don't speak but isolate yourself from sounds.
- Driving or commuting without the radio on.
- Leaving the TV off; spending time in silence with God alone.
- Exercising without attending to noise; listening to God.
- Having personal retreats of silence.

SOLITUDE

The practice of solitude involves scheduling enough uninterrupted time in a distraction-free environment that you experience isolation and are alone with God. Includes:

- Giving God time and space that is not in competition with social contact, noise or stimulation.
- Taking a retreat.
- Observing Sabbath refreshment by abstaining from constant interaction with others, information and activities.
- Communing with God alone while you walk or run by yourself.
- Practicing disciplines alone: study, prayer, examen, journaling and so forth.

SIMPLICITY

To uncomplicated and untangle my life so that I can focus on what really matters.

Includes:

- Assessing the things and activities that keep life convoluted, complicated and confusing; working to simplify these things.

- Setting priorities that flow from loving God above all else.
- Downsizing possessions.
- Eating simple foods.
- Enjoying simple pleasures that require no expense.
- Removing distractions and preoccupations with things.

POTENTIAL PITFALLS

OVEREMPHASIZING PERSONAL PIETY

Instead of outward displays of piety, God calls people to administer true justice by showing mercy and compassion. “Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the alien or the poor” Zechariah 7:1-10. Our need for spiritual refreshment must be balanced with our obligation to reach out to others.

SEEKING PAIN FOR ITS OWN SAKE

Masochism is a sickness, not a spiritual path. Asceticism is a means to an end, never an end in itself.

SEEKING TO GAIN GOD’S FAVOR

It is futile to try to win God’s approval or forgiveness by developing an extraordinary holiness. There is nothing we can do that can make God love us any more. His love is absolute and His forgiveness is based on a prior work completed by Jesus, not our current spiritual practices.

HOW CAN I CONNECT WITH GOD?

SOLITUDE

- Perhaps create a prayer room in your home.
- See if your church will give you keys to the sanctuary to get away and pray.
- Learn to live in detachment within society.
- Arrive early to work or class to be alone.

AUSTERITY

Be very simple. Susanna Wesley frequently pulled her apron over her head and prayed. Her kids learned not to bother her during that time.

STRICTNESS:

- Ascetics are strict only because they want to reserve their time and energy to passionately pursue God.
- Fast. Deny yourself some pleasure, entertainment, or comfort, and then focus on purity of mind and heart. You can fast from food entirely, just eat one light meal per day, or fast certain types of food.
- Some Christians have found the middle of the night to be one of their best times of prayer & worship.

- Rise earlier than normal one day per week.
- More important than losing sleep is being vigilant when others commonly are not.
- Try to be silent for a few hours at a time.
- Take a personal retreat for several hours, an afternoon, a day, weekend or a week at a time.
- Endure hardship rather than fight it; don't choose to be pampered. Don't demand to be warm when it is cold.
- When sickness, heat, cold, hunger, or tiredness come, you can either adopt a demanding spirit and stunt your spiritual growth, or embrace them, learn from them, and mature in your faith. Your attitude will make all the difference.

COMPANION GUIDE

THE
Activist

LOVING GOD THROUGH
FIGHTING FOR GODLY PRINCIPLES



OVERVIEW

The Activist love God by standing up for righteousness and justice. Activists need to find the right balance—indeed, the balance modeled by Christ who regularly interspersed times of spiritual refreshment with intense ministry. Activism can take the form of Christian activism, social reform, or to confront error and evil. Writers, preachers, politicians, academics, artists, and homemakers can all be activists, faithful in their own sphere to stand up for the truth. Activists will never be satisfied playing it safe. They need to experience the exhilaration of seeing a miraculous God come through in miraculous ways.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

JUSTICE

Justice seeks to help others through correcting and redressing wrongs. It treats others fairly and shows no favoritism.

Includes:

- Being responsible to God and others.
- Being a good steward of what you own.
- Supporting just causes with time, action and financial support.
- Treating others impartially and fairly.
- Providing for the poor, needy and oppressed through the means available to you.
- Volunteering for food-bank work and ministries that serve needs in the community.
- Refusing to buy products of companies that take advantage of the poor.

WALKING PRAYER

- Slowly and deliberately walk through places for the purpose of intentional and listening prayer.
- Walking through housing projects and government facilities, in places of need, fear, conflict, and decision-making, blessing the rooms and praying for the activities and people that gather there.
- Walking through your neighborhood, a park, your town giving to God the people and activities that go on there.
- Taking a group of children or adults on a prayer walk; talking to them about what it is like for them.
- Allowing the visual nature of this journey to prompt prayers.
- Becoming quiet and listening to God's prayer for a particular place.

INTERCESSORY PRAYER

Intercessory prayer invites us into God's care and concern for us, our families and friends, and the entire world. No concern is too trivial for God to receive with loving attention.

However, intercession is not a means of manipulating heaven into doing our will. It is a way we become aware of God's prayer for a person and join in that intercession. Includes:

- Hosting prayer meetings.
- Contributing to prayer chains or prayer lists.
- Going on prayer walks.
- Participating in healing prayer.
- Praying for the world, for peace, for God's kingdom to come.
- Praying for personal concerns, tasks, transactions and relationships.

POTENTIAL PITFALLS

BECOMING JUDGMENTAL

Where activists often go wrong is assuming that the holier they become, the less able they'll be to tolerate sinners. Maturity is evidenced by eagerness to see sin leave our lives, coupled with compassion toward other sinners. A self-righteous, critical attitude is not a reflection of the compassion of Christ.

AMBITION AND SEX

- There seems to be a direct spiritual relationship between the level of a person's ambition and sexual temptation, especially in men.
- Ambition is often a fight against powerlessness and a fight for control.
- The ambitious person is also inherently selfish.
- The very qualities that help you succeed as an activist may tempt you to fail as a Christian.

- Ambition coupled with secrecy is a fertile ground for sexual sin; throw in fatigue, and you are almost certain to embarrass yourself and the ministry God has given you. The activist needs honest accountability.

ELITISM AND RESENTMENT

An activist may enjoy confrontation and not understand why others may fear it. They also have little appreciation for other spiritual gifts or callings. They can condemn others for their lack of activism.

PREOCCUPATION WITH ACTIVITY AND STATISTICS

- For an activist, we must leave the results to God or we'll be consumed and driven by success rather than by the Holy Spirit. Beware; some activists just cannot accept defeat.
- When God first gave Moses his commission, Moses said, "Who am I, that I should...bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" God's response was an implicit rebuke against such self-sufficiency. God said simply, "I will be with you." In other words,

it doesn't matter who you are, Moses; what matters is who is sending you.

- Habakkuk is a good warning to activists. God seems to be accused more that he is petitioned, as if Habakkuk was more concerned about Justice than God Himself.
- You must stand on a stool with three legs: sincerity, effort, and thoughtful prayer.

LACK OF EMPHASIS ON PERSONAL SANCTITY

Make sure you examine yourself before God.
Matthew 7:2-4.

HOW CAN I CONNECT WITH GOD?

WRITING

Many writers have changed the destinies of millions through the written word, i.e. Harriet Beecher Stowe.

SOCIAL REFORM

- John Wesley said there is “no holiness but social holiness...and to turn Christianity into a solitary religion is to destroy it.”
- Charles Finney refused to baptize Christians who still believed in slavery.
- The Bible calls for us to reach out to less fortunate – James 1:27; Matthew 25:35-36.
- While others may disagree, we first must be fully informed; then prayerfully decisive; third, fully involved.
- Activists must also actively confront error and evil. Sometimes truth equals confrontation.

PRAYER AND ACTIVISTS

- Of all the pathways, prayer is crucial to the activist. Cultivate an active prayer life!
- Prayer Walks: Intercede for a dorm floor or classroom building by walking around it in silent prayer.

- Spread a map in front of you and pray for unreached people groups.
- Pray with your Bible in one hand and the newspaper in the other.

PROCESSIONS

Here large numbers of Christians gather to march in celebration of Jesus. This was very popular during the Baroque period 1550-1750.

COMPANION GUIDE

THE
Caregiver

LOVING GOD THROUGH
SERVING OTHERS



OVERVIEW

For the Caregiver, acts of mercy are a very practical way for them to show their love for God, but also to grow in their love for God. Caregivers may hear God more clearly when caring for someone than when they sit quietly in prayer. Caregivers have found that one of the most profound ways they can love God is to love others. For Caregivers, giving care isn't a chore but a form of worship.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

SERVICE

Service is a way of offering resources, time, treasure, influence and expertise for the care, protection, justice, and nurture of others.

Includes:

- Mentoring, gifts of mercy and helps.
- Using your influence to better the lives of others.
- Using your gifts to build the kingdom of God.
- Doing service projects.
- Serving the homeless
- “Adopting” a prisoner
- Helping a friend through a personal crisis
- Lending money
- Helping somebody battling substance abuse
- Helping an illiterate person learn to read
- Donating time at a battered women’s shelter

- Counseling at a pregnancy care center
- Working in a soup kitchen
- Fixing somebody's car
- Repairing a house
- Helping somebody reconfigure their computer system
- Watching the children of some tired parents

HOSPITALITY

Hospitality creates a safe, open space where a friend or stranger can enter and experience the welcoming spirit of Christ in another.

Includes:

- Sharing your home, food, resources, car and all that you call your own so that another might experience the reality of God's welcoming heart.
- Reaching out to and receiving the stranger or enemy with the hope that he or she might be transformed into a friend.
- Loving, not entertaining the guest.

- Welcoming others into your clique, club, group, life.
- Spontaneously inviting others for meals.
- Reaching out beyond your nuclear family to include others.
- Hosting exchange students.

MENTORING

To accompany and encourage others to grow in their God-given potential. Includes:

- Guidance, encouragement and modeling given by a more mature believer to a younger one.
- Training that equips another to better use their gifts.
- Building authentic relationships that provide support, encouragement and help in specific areas.
- Providing or receiving influence, instruction, training and perspective.

POTENTIAL PITFALLS

JUDGING

Remember the lesson of Martha & Mary. Caregiving is not a license to judge others who serve God in different ways. True, all Christians are called to care for others, but there are different ways this obligation can be fulfilled, and it is not for us to judge the validity of someone else's worship.

SERVING OURSELVES THROUGH SERVING OTHERS

Some people with esteem problems feel a need to serve others for self-validation. When caregiving becomes an act of taking, an act of deception, it is done so others will love or need them in return.

NEGLECTING THOSE CLOSEST TO US

In our zeal to love others, we must remember that God makes home the priority. See 1 Timothy 5:8. Don't neglect your family while you save the world.

HOW CAN I CONNECT WITH GOD?

The Caregiver temperament incorporates many different avenues of loving God through serving others:

- Nursing sick people
- Visiting the elderly
- Volunteer rescue unit
- Repairing a house
- “Adopting” a prisoner
- Helping a friend through a personal crisis
- Lending money
- Help someone battle substance abuse
- Helping an illiterate person learn to read
- Donating time at a battered women’s shelter
- Counseling at a pregnancy care center
- Working in a soup kitchen
- Fixing somebody’s car
- Repairing a house
- Making recordings for the blind

- Researching a cure for a disease
- Helping somebody reconfigure their computer
- Watching the children of some tired parents
- Giving free cookies out on campus
- Raking leaves of elderly
- Providing free firewood for needy
- Shovel snow
- Remove trash from dorm rooms on your floor

COMPANION GUIDE

THE *Enthusiast*

LOVING GOD THROUGH
MYSTERY AND CELEBRATION



OVERVIEW

The Enthusiast enjoys a celebratory form of worship as well as many of the more supernatural forms of faith. People with this spiritual temperament like to let go and experience God on the precipice of excitement and awe. Enthusiasts long to preserve the mystery of faith. They understand that there are certain things about God and Christianity that we simply can't fully understand. They are open to the spiritual world and believe in a God who is powerful and who acts.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

CELEBRATION

Celebration is a way of engaging in actions that orient the spirit toward worship, praise and thanksgiving. Includes:

- Pursuing activities that bring the heart deep gladness and reveling in them before the Lord including: spending time with others, sharing meals, working, serving, worshiping, laughing, listening to music, dancing.
- Enjoying every good and perfect gift as coming from God.
- Cultivating a spirit of gladness.
- Taking yourself less seriously.
- Having holiday traditions that guide your celebration.
- Seek out church worship and social events.

CONVERSATIONAL PRAYER

Talking naturally and un-self consciously to God in group prayer times with others. Includes:

- Attending prayer meetings.
- Having short, vocal prayer in planned and unplanned venues.
- Praying spontaneously with others around specific topics as they come to mind.

WORSHIP

Worship happens whenever we intentionally cherish God and value him above all else in life. Worship reveals what is important to us.

Includes:

- Focusing on and responding to God with your whole being.
- Offering my body as a “spiritual act of worship.”
- Regularly engaging with a worshiping community.
- Seeking first the kingdom of God, keeping secondary things second.

POTENTIAL PITFALLS

SEEKING EXPERIENCES FOR EXPERIENCES SAKE

Beware – many spiritual manifestations are expressly forbidden for a Christian, see Duet. 18:10-12. Be careful to remain true to seeking God rather than searching for new experiences. To demand that God answer all our prayers with a “yes” is to ask for his omnipotence [power] without having the benefit of his omniscience [knowledge].

BEING INDEPENDENT

Enthusiasts need to be rooted in a strong church to help them interpret their encounters with God.

EQUATING “GOOD FEELINGS” WITH “GOOD WORSHIP”

Feelings come and go. Enthusiasts shouldn't apologize for enjoying them, but they should avoid becoming dependent upon them.

HOW CAN I CONNECT WITH GOD?

- For some who have lost their ability to celebrate, spending time with children might be a good way to recapture the joy and wonder of your faith.
- You should never accept a dream that clashes with the revelation of Scripture. Also, never make a major decision based solely on a dream. However, you may find that God can bring insight into a situation, or give you a warning, when you are open to receiving something in a dream.
- Expect God to give you specific answers to specific prayers.
- Believe God to heal or respond in a supernatural way in real situations in your life.
- Step out in faith. Whether it's building a business, writing a poem, planting a garden, painting a picture, creating something can be a profoundly holy experience.

COMPANION GUIDE

THE *Contemplative*

LOVING GOD THROUGH
ADORATION



OVERVIEW

The Contemplative seeks to perform the first work of adoring God. God is known and described as the heavenly spouse in whom all the contemplative's delight is met. While some seek to serve the Lord, others seek to celebrate him, and still others seek to explain him, the contemplative seeks to gaze lovingly into God's face and be caught up in the rapture of a lover's experience. Contemplatives live for the love of God. They want nothing more than some privacy and quiet to gaze upon the face of their heavenly lover and give all of themselves to God.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

BREATHE PRAYER

Breathe prayer is a form of contemplative prayer linked to the rhythms of breathing.

Includes:

- Repeating a simple one-sentence prayer that begins with a biblical name of God that is meaningful to you; follow the name with a word or a phrase expressing your deep God-given desire; connect the prayer to your breathing and return to it throughout the day until it becomes a soul reflex
- Saying a traditionally scriptural breath prayer known as the “Jesus Prayer”: “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner” Breath prayers include phrases of Scripture: for example, “My soul glorifies the Lord” (Luke 1:46), “My soul finds rest in God alone” (Psalm 62:1); breath prayers can be short prayers of love and desire, for example, “Shepherd, lead me by still waters,” or “Come Holy Spirit, come.”

CENTERING PRAYER

Centering prayer is a form of contemplative prayer where the pray-er seeks to quiet scattered thoughts and desires in the still center of Christ's presence. Includes:

- Resting in and gazing on Christ.
- Waiting before the Lord in open attentiveness.
- Attending to the presence of the spirit within.
- Taming scattered thoughts by attending to Christ through the use of a prayer word.
- Releasing distractions into the hands of God and returning constantly to his presence within.

SOLITUDE

The practice of solitude involves scheduling enough uninterrupted time in a distraction-free environment that you experience isolation and are alone with God. Includes:

- Giving God time and space that is not in competition with social contact, noise or stimulation.

- Taking a retreat.
- Observing Sabbath refreshment by abstaining from constant interaction with others, information and activities.
- Communing with God alone while you walk or run by yourself.
- Practicing disciplines alone: study, prayer, examen, journaling and so forth.

POTENTIAL PITFALLS

LOSING BALANCE

Beware that your love for God is precluding enjoying the company of others or something God has made.

CREATING A VACUUM

Be cautious of practices that speak of emptying yourself and creating a vacuum. A Christian wants to be filled with the Holy Spirit, not emptied out.

HOW CAN I CONNECT WITH GOD?

THE JESUS PRAYER

- Through history, contemplatives made great use of the “Jesus Prayer,” that goes like this: “Lord Jesus Christ, son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.”
- The purpose of the Jesus Prayer is to practice the presence of God.
- When you are anxious, frightened, uptight, spiritually dry, or being tempted, the Jesus prayer calls you to a humble reliance on God.

SECRET ACTS OF DEVOTION

A secret act of devotion is something you do – giving an anonymous gift, helping out someone “behind the scenes,” sending a card – without letting anyone, even the person who benefits, know you had anything to do with it. The importance of secrecy is that it ensures that you are doing it for the love of God – only. Examples include:

- Anonymous gift of cash to someone in need.
- Poem written to God, then burned.
- Song sung only in the presence of God.
- Intensive, intercessory prayer with fasting.

- A symbol of your love for God, which you carry in your pocket or wear as a necklace or ring.

CENTERING PRAYER

- Choose a word [i.e. Jesus or Father, etc.] as a focus for contemplative prayer. Repeat the word silently in your mind for a set amount of time [say, 15 minutes]. Fill your mind with thoughts of Jesus, or love, joy, or peace.
- The goal is not to create a spiritual experience, but to simply rest in and enjoy the presence of God.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

- Simply read through the events of Christ's crucifixion, i.e. death sentence given to Jesus, Gethsemane, women mourning for Jesus, being stripped, beaten, mocked, nailed, Jesus speaking to John about Mary, dying, removed from cross, laid in tomb.
- At each point pause and picture the truth of Scripture this episode highlights.

COMPANION GUIDE

THE
Intellectual

LOVING GOD THROUGH
THEIR MIND AND UNDERSTANDING



OVERVIEW

The Intellectual feels that to be growing in Christ, they need to have their mind stimulated with Scriptures and other reading materials and intellectual pursuits. They need to be challenged, if they are not learning new things about God then their relationship with him feels stagnant. Intellectuals remind us of the high calling of loving God with our mind.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

BIBLE STUDY

Bible study involves engaging the mind and focusing attention on Scripture in an attempt to understand and apply truth to every part of my life. Includes:

- Attending to biblical instruction with an open mind and heart in order to grow in love and understanding of the truth.
- Systematically studying Scripture to gain the big picture of what God is doing on planet earth.
- Using study guides, manuscript studies, small group Bible studies etc.

MEMORIZATION

Memorization is the process of continually remembering the words, truths and images God uses to shape us. Memorization provides us with a store of learning, which can be accessed anywhere and anytime. Includes:

- Memorizing Scripture, hymns, poems, quotes, etc.

- Rereading portions of Scripture until they are committed to memory.
- Memorizing Scripture verses that clearly reveal God's plan of salvation.
- Memorizing books of the Bible, particular dates and times as well as where various verses are found.
- Learning by heart portions of Scripture that encourage you when you are tempted.

WITNESS

To witness means modeling and telling of the difference Jesus has made in one's life.

- Living in the presence of Christ in a way the world finds compelling and desirable.
- Intentionally engaging in life with people of different beliefs.
- Serving others to investigate the claims of Christ and the community of faith.
- Sharing the good news of Jesus at the appropriate time and in the appropriate way.

- Leading a Bible study with God seekers.
- Comfortably expressing my Christian journey with words that appropriately connect with others.

POTENTIAL PITFALLS

LOVING CONTROVERSY

See: 1 Timothy 1:4, 6:4-5; 2 Timothy 2:23-25. Discussions aimed at defeating rather than caring for the welfare of the other person is not godly.

KNOWING RATHER THAN DOING

Knowing what is right is not a substitute for doing what is right. According to the book of Proverbs, the truly wise person is someone who actively applies the ways of righteousness which they have studied.

BEING PROUD

Pride is a common failing among intellectuals. It is demonstrated by the common desire to correct virtually everyone.

HOW CAN I CONNECT WITH GOD?

- Consider getting a *MA* from a seminary after undergrad studies.
- Many seminaries offer one-week courses during the summer – this could set your study agenda for the entire year following.
- Think how much stronger you'd be as a Christian if you picked one topic a year for in-depth study.
- Many courses are available through audio or video formats.
- What are the five basic building blocks for a Christian mind? - church history, biblical studies, systematic theology, ethics, and apologetics.