

## Activists

Social Justice: Actively engaging with others to serve the poor and needy.  
Loving God using resolve & confrontation

### I feel closest to God when...

I'm joining with others to defend the cause of the poor and needy.

### To be spiritually renewed I need to...

Be part of a cause to promote the care of those who are less fortunate

### It's especially helpful for me to connect with God through...

Helping a sick neighbour, providing food for the hungry, or ministering to the elderly, abused, or imprisoned

### I benefit especially from speakers and authors who help me to...

Stand up for justice and make an impact for the disenfranchised.



### Seeing Tradition in the Bible

Can you think of Bible characters or incidences that show this pathway?

Can you think of Christians you admire who fit this pathway?

### About this Pathway

- 1. Devotion to God** - Devoting themselves to God in self-sacrificing activism they find God in all their daily labour.
- 2. Serve a God of Justice** - worship is standing against evil, they want to wage war against injustice.
- 3. Confrontation is fine** - energized more by interaction with others, even in conflict, than by being alone or in small groups. Confrontation isn't an end in itself but they don't shy away from it.
- 4. Don't want to play it safe** - they need the exhilaration of seeing God work in miraculous ways

### How to Live as Activists

When our activism is centred around the love of God it is as acceptable to God as the Contemplative's prayer.

We can work on social reform, confronting evil & error.

Pray!

*Everybody thinks of changing humanity and nobody thinks of changing himself. Leo Tolstoy*

### Temptations of Activists

1. Judging others. Lack of grace & hating the sinner as well as the sin
2. Ambition. Becoming proud & ambitious, selfish.
3. Elistism & resentment. Feeling others are not loving enough, not courageous enough, not working hard enough & forgetting victory is a gift from God.
4. A preoccupation with activity ignoring piety. Thoughtful prayer is needed along with sincerity & effort. Don't be a hypocrite, reform begins with us.

## Consider – perhaps in group discussion

1. Which aspects of the activists path to connecting with God seem most helpful or intriguing to you? Which aspects seem least interesting?
2. Read Isaiah 58:6-12. God is calling his people out of the complacency of merely seeking personal holiness (through fasting and religious obligations) and urging them to become deeply concerned about social injustices as well. In this passage, what issues most concern God? What actions does God call Israel to?  
What are the promised personal benefits that follow our obedience to God's agenda?
3. Gary constantly warns against becoming arrogant, jaded, or harsh in our efforts to bring about change in society for Jesus' sake. How would embracing the truth of Micah 6:8 help guard against this?
4. Can you think of a contemporary activist who inspires you? What is it about him or her that makes this person's faith contagious?  
Think about someone who turns you off. Is there something that makes his or her expression of faith unhealthy or problematic, or do you just not feel kindly toward activists? Has this chapter changed your view of activists in any way? If so, how?
5. For many of us, it's easier to fly under the radar of confrontation and enjoy the peace of our personal walk with God. In Luke 19:45-48, what got Jesus fired up enough to make an active issue of injustice and unrighteousness? What inspires you to become more active?
6. Discuss the difference between being an activist in temperament and an activist as an occasional obligation.
7. How can the church help activists to express their faith as a part of devotion, while avoiding the temptations Gary warns about on pages 140-43?
8. Given your area of concern, what one thing can you do this week to act on your conviction? Pray about it and ask God for the right wisdom, motivation, and attitude to honour him in your activism.  
Record your thoughts or discoveries here.

Clues to seeing Activists in the Bible. Elijah & Elisha

For everyone:

Consider these Spiritual Disciplines

<https://www.soulshpherd.org/spiritual-disciplines-list/>

Solitude, Silence, Fasting, Sabbath, Secrecy, Submission

Bible reading, Worship, Prayer, Fellowship, Personal reflection, Service

**Read** (to be challenged, comforted, provoked to argument, helped to grow ...)

Richard Foster's Celebration of Discipline

Brother Lawrence's The Practice of The Presence of God

Joel McKerrow's Woven (an artist remaking the faith he almost lost)

Brian McLaren's Generous Orthodoxy (or for more controversy the more recent A New Kind of Christian)

Henri Nouwen's In the House Of The Lord (an amazing unpacking of a short passage of scripture, you can do a whole term of Home Group studies from this little gem!)

<https://www.follow.org.au> for contemplation in a busy world