

Enthusiasts

Celebrating God's goodness with thanks and praise.

Loving God with celebration and mystery.

I feel closest to God when...

I am singing praise songs to God or creating.

To be spiritually renewed I need to...

Celebrate God and his love with music and songs of worship with others.

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

Expectant enthusiastic prayer.

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

Give joyful thanks and praise to God!

Intellectual <-----> Experiential
Intellectual ... Enthusiasts & Sensates

Enthusiasts in the Bible - intro discussion

Can you think of Bible characters or incidences which show this pathway.

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

About this Pathway

1 Want to experience God – in awe & excitement

2 Hunger for the transcendent – accept dreams & the supernatural

3 Open to God moving in new ways – they pray expecting him to work

2 Being creative - can fit here as an act of enthusiastic worship

Temptations of Enthusiasts

1. Seeking experiences for their own sake

2. Being independent & not relying on a community to be held accountable

3. Thinking good feelings = good worship

4. Not balancing reason with mystery

Consider – perhaps in discussion groups

1. Which aspects of the enthusiast's path to connecting with God seem most helpful or intriguing to you? Which aspects seem least interesting?

2. Gary talks about "the mystery of faith." What does he mean by this phrase, and how does this concept/experience feed the enthusiast's walk with God?

Read Genesis 24:1 -27. Abraham's servant involved God in a mysterious way as he sought to find the right woman to marry Abraham's son Isaac. Have you had similar "mysterious" or "coincidental" experiences that can only be attributed to God's orchestration of your life? If so, describe.

3. Has God ever spoken to you through a dream? How did you eventually determine that it was actually God communicating to you? What are the dangers of opening yourself up to this type of experience?

4. We all know people (or perhaps are people!) who act as if they have the inside scoop on everything that God is up to, not only in their own lives, but in everyone else's as well. What suggestions woven throughout the chapter can keep the enthusiast in balance in his or her walk with God?

5. Have you ever lived in a state of expectancy, making yourself available and waiting for God to use you in surprising or even mysterious ways? What was it like? How would you counsel someone who makes himself or herself available but nothing much ever seems to happen?

6. Read 2 Samuel 6:1 — 5, 12-23. What keeps you from celebrating God as David did? Why do you think Michal despised David for his actions? What lessons can you learn from this?

7. Have you ever sensed God's presence as you were in the act of creating something? What were you doing? How can you use hobbies or interests as regular acts of worship?

8. Create an opportunity this week to unleash the elements of mystery, celebration, creation, or deep worship. Write your experiences and discoveries here.

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 McKerrrow'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