

Intellectuals

Learning about God & life with him.
Loving God with the mind.

I feel closest to God when...

I learn something new about God or life with him.

To be spiritually renewed I need to...

Read the Bible and think deeply about what God is saying.

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

Studying the Bible thoughtfully & using spiritual disciplines.

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

Teach me new insights about my life with God.



Seeing Intellectuals in the Bible

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. Mind first, concepts first - even with things that stir the emotions (like worship music) the lyrics come first

2. Need to be learning - new things about God & their faith & their relationship with God, this keeps them growing & alive.

3. Wanting a "right" belief - this will direct their actions, what you now & understand about someone influences how you treat them (& their commands).

Acts of the Intellectuals

Reading, learning, discussing eg Calvinism, infant baptism, ordination of women, and predestination.

The Temptations of Intellectuals

1. Loving controversy (like the activists)
2. Knowing rather than doing (like the contemplatives)
3. Being proud about being right & happy to correct everyone else
4. Ignoring & despising emotions & sense

Consider – perhaps in a discussion group

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

2. Has learning something new about someone ever completely changed the way you looked at them and thought about them?

How might this same principle apply in the way you think about and worship God?

3. Solomon, considered one of the wisest men to have ever lived, wrote the book of Proverbs to instruct his sons in the ways of God. Read Proverbs 2:1 — 15. What does Solomon tell his sons to seek and acquire? What will wisdom and knowledge do for the person who truly seeks them? How are understanding, wisdom, and knowledge connected with loving and knowing God?

4. Seeking knowledge for the sake of accumulating more facts or winning an argument can be an exercise in pride and result in arrogance. How does God want to use intellectual growth and theological understanding to draw you closer to him? How can it help you become more like Christ?

5. How could study in these five classic areas help you grow in your walk with God?
church history (stories of faith)

biblical studies

systematic theology

ethics

apologetics

6. How might Christians who don't consider themselves particularly smart or academically inclined still operate as intellectuals, when it comes to their spiritual pathway?

7. Read Psalms 64:9; 111:1 -2; Ecclesiastes 12:9— 11. How do these verses direct us to use our minds to worship God? What special role can intellectuals play in service to Christ's church?

8. Design an intellectual time of worship and write down what you learned from your experience - how your understanding of new concepts helped you worship God, enjoy his presence, expanded your heart, or led to new respect or affection toward our heavenly Father.

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