

Sensates

Experiencing God with your physical senses or imagination.
Loving God with the Senses

I feel closest to God when...

I can see, hear, or touch God in some way.

To be spiritually renewed I need to...

Experience God in a tangible way (e.g., receiving communion, kneeling by a cross, lighting a candle, or appreciating spiritual architecture)

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

Imagining myself in a Gospel story, work of religious art, or spiritual movie, the act of creating beauty.

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

Experience the "touch" of God's presence on me.

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

The senses 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 – read & encourage discussion

Vogt (a Pastor from the 1900's) maintained people aren't been able to understand truth without a symbol, sacrament or rite in which they can express that truth. That's where beauty comes in. Anything that is going to express the truth of heaven must be a beautiful as possible.

Remember that God created our senses. Enjoyment through the sense was his idea not Satan's. In Christian worship the senses have been used in many ways – here are some.

Sound

The Bible (especially in the Psalms) tells us to use instruments & make songs.
Hearing scripture read out loud engages more of our minds than just reading.

Smell

Incense was used (& commanded to be used) in the Old Testament & is still in many church traditions.

Scents can evoke strong memories, which can help us enter into the presence of God by reminding us of worship. It can help us pray.

Touch

We can use objects to communicate eg holding nails to remind us of Christ's suffering.

Sight

God created trees to be a delight to the eye as well as useful for food. He commanded the first temple be built with great beauty.

We can worship anywhere but should we settle for dreary?!

Taste

If the Communion "wine" is real wine rather than weak juice the taste lingers in the mouth reinforcing the experience.

At Passover the meal includes tasting sweet & bitter to remember what has happened & what God has done.

How can we do these things, what can encourage or help us?

Temptations of Sensates – read & encourage discussion

1. Worshipping without conviction.

Singing “deep” words but not meaning them. Getting carried along by an artificial mood.

2. Idolising Beauty. God, who is the source of beauty is who we worship.

3. Worshipping worship rather than God. We can leave a worships service with our senses satisfied but not even think of God

Consider – perhaps in discussion groups

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

2. Have you ever had a moment when God used a stunning painting, photograph, or song to open up your heart to him in a new way? If so, describe it.

3. As you read Ezekiel 1:4—28; 3:1 -3, consider the senses involved.

How does Ezekiel’s vision of God in heaven incorporate each sense? As you read this, are your senses stimulated to draw you into God’s presence more fully? If so, describe.

4. Do you find that beauty (in any form) transports you into God’s presence, or does it distract you from your focus on him? Why?

5. How can churches do a better job of incorporating all five senses into their worship services?

6. Design a “sensual” experience (using all five senses) to interface with God. What were your reactions to that experience? Did it add or detract from your sense of God’s presence?

Clues for Sensates in the Bible. God’s voice is often likened to water & storms & trumpets etc. In Old Testament & Revelation God Is very loud & colourful.

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