

# BORN IDENTITY

## Born to Worship God

*Yet a time...has now come when the true worshippers will worship of the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks.*  
John 4:23

Sir, the woman said "...Our fathers worshipped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem. Jesus declared, 'Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem'" John 4:20-21

True Worship is not ...

- In a specific place  
*You Samaritans worship what you do not know...*  
John 4:22
- In a tradition
- From a wrong heart

True Worship is ...

- In Spirit—Genesis 2:17
- In Truth—John 14-6, 17:17
- In a person  
*...Then Jesus declared, 'I who speak to you am He'*  
John 4:25-26

### Spiritual Pathways

- Relational
- Intellectual
- Serving
- Contemplative
- Activist
- Creation
- Worship

We are all Born to Worship God - just how we do this is different for all. There are seven pathways that people are on. Here is the [Spiritual Pathways Assessment Sheet](#). By doing this easy assessment it can help you not only understand how you best connect with God but others also.

There is also a sheet with detailed explanation of all of the seven different pathways.

# Spiritual Pathway Assessment

Respond to each statement below according to the following scale:

3 = Consistently/definitely true of me

2 = Often/usually true of me

1 = Once in a while/sometimes true of me

0 = Not at all/never true of me

Transfer the numbers you gave for each assessment statement to the grid.

Total each column. The highest number identifies your preferred spiritual pathway; the next highest number, your secondary pathway.

1. *When I have a problem, I'd rather pray with people than pray alone.*
2. *In church service, I most look forward to the teaching.*
3. *People who know me would describe me as enthusiastic during worship times.*
4. *No matter how tired I get, I usually come alive when a challenge is placed before me.*
5. *Spiritual reality sometimes feels more real to me than the physical world.*
6. *I get distracted in meetings or services if I notice details in the surroundings that haven't been attended to.*
7. *A beautiful sunset can give me a spiritual high that temporarily blocks out everything bothering me.*
8. *It makes me feel better about myself to hang out with people I know and like.*
9. *I've never understood why people don't love to study the Bible in depth.*
10. *God touches me every time I gather with other believers for praise.*
11. *People around me know how passionate I feel about the causes I'm involved in.*
12. *I experience a deep inner joy when I am in a quiet place, free from distractions.*
13. *Helping others is easy for me, even when I have problems.*
14. *When faced with a difficult decision, I am drawn to walk in the woods, on the beach, or in some other outdoor setting.*
15. *When I am alone too much, I tend to lose energy or get a little depressed.*
16. *People seek me out when they need answers to biblical questions.*
17. *Even when I'm tired, I look forward to going to a church service.*
18. *I sense the presence of God most when I'm doing his work.*
19. *I don't understand how Christians can be so busy and still think they're hearing from God.*
20. *I love being able to serve behind the scenes, out of the spotlight.*
21. *I experience God in nature so powerfully I'm sometimes tempted not to bother with Church.*
22. *I experience God most tangibly in fellowship with a few others.*
23. *When I need to be refreshed, a stimulating book is just the thing.*
24. *I am happiest with I praise God together with others.*
25. *"When the going gets tough, the tough get going" – that's true about me!*
26. *My family and friends sometimes tease me about being such a hermit.*
27. *People around me sometimes tell me they admire my compassion.*
28. *Things in nature often teach me valuable lessons about God.*
29. *I don't understand people who have a hard time revealing personal things about themselves.*
30. *Sometimes I spend too much time learning about an issue rather than dealing with it.*
31. *I don't think there's any good excuse for missing a worship time.*
32. *I get tremendous satisfaction from seeing people working together to achieve a goal*

33. *When I face a difficulty, being alone feels most helpful.*
34. *Even when I'm tired, I find I have the energy and desire to care for people's problems.*
35. *God is so real when I'm in a beautiful, natural setting.*
36. *When I'm tired, there's nothing better than going out with friends to refresh me.*
37. *I worship God best in response to theological truth clearly explained.*
38. *I like how all the world's problems – including mine – seem unimportant when I'm praising God at church.*
39. *I get frustrated with people's apathy in the face of injustice.*
40. *If the truth were told, I sometimes feel guilty for enjoying silence and solitude so much.*
41. *I am happiest when I find someone who really needs help and I step in and offer it.*
42. *Others know that if I'm not around, I'm most likely outside in a beautiful place.*
43. *People around me describe me as a people person.*
44. *I often read lots of books or articles to help me work through a problem.*
45. *When I get overwhelmed, there's nothing like a good worship service to get me back on track.*
46. *I should probably take more time to slow down, but I really love what I do, especially ministry.*
47. *Sometimes I spend too much time mulling over negative things people say about me.*
48. *I experience God's presence as I counsel someone who is struggling or in trouble.*
49. *When I see natural beauty, something wonderful stirs in me that is difficult to describe.*

## Spiritual Pathway Assessment Scoring

Transfer the numbers from the assessment to this grid, and total each column.

1		2		3		4		5		6		7	
8		9		10		11		12		13		14	
15		16		17		18		19		20		21	
22		23		24		25		26		27		28	
29		30		31		32		33		34		35	
36		37		38		39		40		41		42	
43		44		45		46		47		48		49	
Total		Total		Total		Total		Total		Total		Total	
A		B		C		D		E		F		G	
Relational		Intellectual		Worship		Activist		Contemplative		Serving		Creation	

- Relational – I connect best to God when I am with others* A
- Intellectual – I connect best to God when I learn* B
- Worship – I connect best to God when I worship* C
- Activist – I connect best to God when doing great things* D
- Contemplative – I connect best to God in silence* E
- Serving – I connect best to God while completing kingdom tasks* F
- Creation – I connect best to God in nature* G

## SPIRITUAL PATHWAYS

### RELATIONAL PATHWAY

#### *Biblical Example*

An example of someone in the Bible with a relational pathway is the Apostle Peter. Peter came to Jesus with others. He was part of that inner circle along with James and John and Jesus. In John 21, after the crucifixion, Peter gathered others together with him and went fishing. The defining moments of his life—his choice to follow Christ, his confession of Jesus as Messiah, his denial of Christ, his restoration—all took place in a relational context.

#### *Other Example*

Although he lived over 200 years ago, **JOHN WESLEY**, founder of Methodism, is a good example of this pathway.

Wesley was radically committed to relationships and had a passion for getting believers to meet together in small groups, which is how Methodism started. Anyone here think you have a relational pathway?

#### **Strength / Cautions / Stretch** *Strengths*

If this is you, you need a relationally rich life.

Use your spiritual gift in to serve others, and pray with others in community.

You'll probably learn best in a class with other people, or in a small group.

You'll tend to have lots of relationships and you can use your network of contacts to further God's kingdom.

#### *Cautions*

Here are two cautions for those who have a relational pathway.

#### *First*, guard against superficiality.

You need to be sure you have a few deep relationships in your life—people who get past your external self, and who love you, challenge you, encourage you, and give you wise counsel.

#### *Second*, you can grow **DEPENDENT** on others and become a spiritual chameleon.

Peter had this problem. In the beginning of Galatians, Paul talks about how Peter had to be confronted. When Peter was with people from different ethnic backgrounds, he initially reached out to them and made no distinction between him and them. But when some legalistic Jewish believers came along, Peter started acting aloof like they were.

#### *Ways to Stretch*

Here are a few ways to stretch.

Develop a capacity for **SILENCE** so you can learn to speak and listen to God when you are alone.

Keep some of your experiences with God secret so you don't get addicted to what other people think.

Study Scripture for yourself so you are grounded in God's Word rather than others' opinions.

Finally, be intentional about inviting one or two close friends to speak truth to you so that your relationship is more than just social.

## INTELLECTUAL

#### *Biblical Example*

The Apostle Paul is an example of someone in the Bible who had an intellectual pathway.

Even before his conversion, he tells us that he studied at the feet of Gamaliel, one of the great Jewish scholars of his day. After his conversion, Paul went into the synagogues and reasoned from Scripture. He also went to Athens and talked with the philosophers.

If you're like Paul, the road to your heart usually

leads through your head. You hear God best as you learn. When you're deeply immersed in great books, classes, deep thought, and new learning, you come to life. Many of your moments of decision or repentance flow out of discovery and insight as you learn.

#### *Other Example*

Cambridge professor and author **C.S. LEWIS**, who wrote *Mere Christianity*, is a good recent example of this pathway. That book—and many of Lewis' other books—contained a well-reasoned

defense of the Christian faith.

Anyone think you have an intellectual pathway?

#### **Strength / Cautions / Stretch**

#### *Strengths*

Intellectual pathway people need to build on their strength:

the discipline of study. If they quit learning, they grow stagnant.

If this is your pathway, you need to read great books that challenge you.

Expose yourself to lots of teaching, maybe through seminary or message tapes that feed your mind.

Find some like-minded people with whom you can learn.

#### *Cautions*

If you're on this pathway,

Guard against becoming all head and no heart.

You love to be right, and that can be dangerous.

Dallas Willard once observed, "One of the hardest things in the world is to be right and not to hurt anybody with it."

Isn't it remarkable that Jesus was always right and never hurt anybody with being right?

Another caution: don't confuse being smart with spiritual maturity.

As we noted in session two, the right gauge of spiritual health and maturity is love, not intelligence.

#### *Ways to Stretch*

One way you can stretch is devote yourself to corporate worship and to private adoration and prayer.

This may not come naturally, but your learning needs to lead to **WORSHIP**, otherwise it will get dangerous.

In 1 Corinthians 8:1, Paul warns, "Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up."

Another way to stretch is to engage in self-examination, to assess whether or not you are being loving as you interact with others in sharing your knowledge.

## SERVING

### *Biblical Example*

An example of someone in the Bible with this pathway is a woman named Dorcas. The Book of Acts describes her as someone well known for a life of good deeds. Her name became synonymous with caring for the poor and acts of servant hood.

### *Other Example*

**MOTHER TERESA**, the nun who served those who were homeless and dying in the streets of Calcutta, India, is an example of someone in our lifetime who had this pathway. She said the reason she lived life the way she did was for the joy it brought her. She saw the face of Christ in the people she served, and it motivated for a lifetime.

Anyone think you have a serving pathway?

### Strength / Cautions / Stretch

#### *Strengths*

If this is you, you connect with God when you're helping. So you need to build on this strength.

Get plugged into a **COMMUNITY** so you have opportunities for meaningful service to offer God. If you're just attending church but you have nowhere to serve, your connection to God will begin to feel distant.

Look for glimpses of God's presence in the

It might be that you'll never really catch your spiritual stride until you find out how you can serve. When you feel God using you, as you serve him, you'll never be the same again. You'll feel close to God and you'll stay close to God through the serving pathway.

people you serve, and in the execution of your tasks.

Cultivate an awareness of those moments when you sense God with you as you serve. Prepare to serve first by praying so your service is genuinely spiritual service.

### *Cautions*

Here are a couple cautions.

First, be careful not to resent other people who don't serve as much as you do.

Second, remember that God loves you not because you are so faithful in serving him, but because you are his **CHILD**.

Don't confuse serving with earning God's love.

### *Ways to Stretch*

A way for you to stretch is to balance your service with small group and community life.

Learn how to receive love even when you're not being productive.

Practice expressing love through **WORDS** as well as actions.

That way, your pathway will help you feel liberated by service rather than confined by it.

Do you know anyone like this? It might be you.

## CONTEMPLATIVE

### *Biblical Example*

Someone in the Bible who fits this profile was Mary, Martha's sister in the story of Mary and Martha recorded in Luke 10:38-42.

Mary sat at Jesus' feet while Martha was preparing a meal. If you're like her, you love to just sit at Jesus' feet. You'd rather be with him, in quiet, than be busy with tasks.

In a noisy world like ours, this can pose challenges. What happens when a quiet, contemplative type meets a chatty, relational

type? They get married—and drive each other crazy! The contemplative says, "Don't you have any depth at all? You just want to socialize!" And the relational type says, "Don't you care about people? You just want to navel-gaze all the time!"

### *Other Example*

Author **HENRI NOUWEN** is a recent example of someone with this pathway.

He thought deeply about many aspects of the Christian life, and his insights and writings—rooted in times of quiet reflection and solitude—provide much needed wisdom for our journey with God and each other.

Who thinks they have a contemplative pathway?

### Strength / Cautions / Stretch

#### *Strengths*

If you're a contemplative, you probably need to hear this: you have permission to build on your strengths.

Don't criticize yourself for what you're not. You have what Gordon MacDonald calls "a large interior world."

You need regular, protected, intense times of solitude and stillness.

Making time to listen to God is vital to the health of your soul. The Holy Spirit will often use your intuitions, and you will probably feel things deeply.

Faithfully follow your intuitions and the leadings that come in your times alone with God. Act on what you hear from God in the silence

### *Cautions*

Here are a few cautions.

You have a tendency to avoid the demands of the real world because it doesn't live up to your ideals.

Be careful not to retreat to your inner world when friends, family, or society disappoint you.

Resist the temptation to consider your times of private prayer and solitude as less important than the more public acts of ministry performed by others.

### *Ways to Stretch*

To stretch, choose a regular place of active service. That way your deep insights and learning will be useful to more people, and you'll be able to "show [your] faith by what [you] do" as the Apostle James urged.

Stay relationally connected, even when those relationships become difficult or challenging. Connect with those who have an activist pathway. Pray for them and consider getting involved in some aspect of their ministry activities.

## ACTIVISTIC

### *Biblical Example*

One example of an activist in the Bible is Nehemiah. When Nehemiah hears about the condition of Jerusalem—that the capital city of his people has fallen into disrepair—he is upset and wants to take action.

There's a little line in the story that you could easily overlook. It's a simple phrase that captures the essence of the activist.

Nehemiah says, "I prayed to the God of heaven, and I answered the king."

He then makes his proposal for action. Prayer and action are always combined for the activist. Nehemiah prays, and then he talks to the authorities to get the ball rolling. That's the activist.

### *Other Example*

In the 1800's, **WILLIAM AND CATHERINE BOOTH**, the founders of the Salvation Army exemplified this spiritual pathway.

Their ministry began as they saw the suffering of impoverished people in the city, and they determined to reach "into hell" to bring them back.

Anyone think this is your pathway?

### **Strength / Cautions / Stretch**

#### *Strengths*

To build on your strengths, create a sense of **CHALLENGE** in your life by immersing yourself in tasks that demand the best you have to offer. If you aren't moving, you get frustrated and stagnant. Like Eric Liddel the Olympic athlete featured in the movie *Chariots of Fire*, said, "When I run, I feel God's pleasure."

Find a team of people you can invest in and work with to accomplish big goals.

#### *Cautions*

A caution for you is to be aware that you may run over people or use them because you get so focused on achieving the goal.

Also, guard against going too long without pausing to reflect on what you're doing, otherwise you can end up not even knowing your own **MOTIVES**, spiritual condition, or emotional state.

#### *Ways to Stretch*

Here are some ways to stretch

Create a balance to your activism by spending time in solitude and silence. This will help you to become increasingly aware of your motives so you can respond to God's purposes rather than your own.

Cultivate a reflective discipline like journaling. Journal writing can be helpful because it's an action—and you like action—but it requires you to slow down long enough to reflect on your interior world.

Develop close spiritual friendships with one or two other people. Invite them to regularly ask you questions and speak to you about what God is doing in you, not just through you. These relationships must be focused on you, not on tasks.

Are some of you activist-types?

## CREATION

### *Biblical Example*

The biblical example here is

Of course, Jesus lived in continual connection with his Father and can be said to exemplify all the pathways. However, the Bible portrays him as being especially drawn to nature. He often withdrew from others to be outdoors—to go to a lake or the mountains—to be with his Father. He always wanted to be in creation, which is not surprising because he created it!

### *Other Example*

**GEORGE WASHINGTON CARVER** is an example from the previous century who exemplifies this pathway.

He was an African-American chemist who invented hundreds of uses for peanut by-products.

It is claimed he prayed, "God show me the secrets of the universe," and God responded, "The universe is too big for you; I'll show you what is in the peanut!"

Who thinks this might be your pathway?

### **Strength / Caution / Stretch**

#### *Strengths*

The Psalmist says, "The heavens declare the glory of God." If you're on this pathway, you hear that message all the time.

To build on your strengths, you need to spend time **OUTDOORS**.

In Jesus' day, this happened quite naturally—people were outdoors most of the time. In our day, it doesn't.

Find a location for getaways.

Make beauty a part of your spiritual life.

When you pray, you may need to have some beauty near you—maybe art, or flowers, or candles that create soft lighting.

#### *Cautions*

Here are a few cautions for you.

You may be tempted to use beauty or nature to escape.

You will find that people are sometimes disappointing.

Guard against the temptation to avoid church because you think to yourself, "I can worship God in nature, on my own."

Yes, you were made for God's beauty, but you also need to learn to see beauty in people and allow God to speak to you through them.

Otherwise, you're missing an important aspect of how he works.

#### *Ways to Stretch*

A way you can stretch is to stay involved in a worshipping community.

You need people, because, after all, they're part of God's wonderful creation too!

From time to time, be willing to help out in less than-beautiful settings. The ugliness of the fallen world may be repulsive, but God's love has to reach into every dark corner, and you can help bring it there.

Take Scripture with you into nature and mediate on God's Word as you enjoy his creation.

## **WORSHIP**

### ***Biblical Example***

Kind David is an example in the Bible of someone who had a worship pathway. David danced before the Lord with all of his heart. He wrote psalms and poetry to God. He played his lyre and expressed his love for God through music.

### ***Other Example***

**Darlene Zschech** (pronounced “check”), a worship leader and songwriter from Australia, is one of the many worship leaders in our day who exemplifies this pathway. Who thinks this might be your pathway?

## **Strength / Challenges / Stretch**

### ***Strengths***

Here are some ways to build on your strengths.

Experience great worship on a regular basis.

When the body of Christ gathers, be there.

Use worship tapes or CDs and make your car a private sanctuary. Don't worry that we're all staring at you as you go down the road, singing your lungs out. It doesn't matter because this is how you connect to God.

Learn about other worship traditions, and incorporate what you learn into your personal worship time.

### ***Cautions***

Here are a couple cautions.

Be careful not to judge those who aren't as expressive in worship.

Don't assume they don't love God as much or aren't experiencing the work of the Holy Spirit. Some people are consumed by love and joy and peace—the Spirit's true fruit—but in their tradition, nobody even lifts a finger, let alone a hand, in a worship service.

Guard against an experience-based spirituality that has you always looking for the next worship “high.”

This is what C.S. Lewis calls “the fatal sin of saying ‘encore!’” by demanding that God reproduce an experience or an emotion. Meister Eckhart says, “The danger in finding a way to God is that people grow to love the way more than they love God.” You'll need to watch out for this.

### ***Ways to Stretch***

To stretch, engage in the discipline of **STUDY**.

You need to make sure that your mind is filled with the knowledge of God and keep that area growing so your heart and emotions are solidly rooted.

Serve God in concrete ways as an extension of your worship.

Serving gets you into people's lives and provides a practical outlet for the exuberance you feel in worship.

Remain committed to your church even when worship isn't all you would like it to be.

Be part of the solution by staying faithful and bringing your best contribution to making worship a meaningful experience for your church.