

SACRED PATHWAYS – Wk. 2

How Do You Make Room for God?

Traditionalist • Ascetic • Activist • Caregiver

Introduction

Last week we began exploring the idea that God has uniquely wired each of us to connect with Him. Our differences aren't necessarily good or bad—they're just different. But every pathway has both a **gift** and a **danger**. The same thing that can help us draw closer to God can become unhealthy when we take it to an extreme.

Icebreaker:

Think about a time when you felt especially close to God. What were you doing, where were you, or what was happening that helped you connect with Him?

1. TRADITIONALIST — Loving God Through Ritual & Symbol

Read Luke 11:1–4

Jesus gave His disciples a pattern for prayer. Throughout Scripture, God's people have used prayers, rituals, symbols, rhythms, and traditions to help them remember who God is and how they are called to live.

For the Traditionalist, these practices can provide stability, depth, and a tangible connection to the faith that has been passed down through generations. But the danger comes when the practice becomes more important than the relationship.

“Religion can serve faith, but it doesn't substitute for faith.”

Discussion Questions

1. What traditions, rituals, or spiritual practices have helped you connect with God?
2. Why do you think repeated practices can be meaningful rather than simply routine?
3. When can a good spiritual practice become an empty exercise?
4. Have you ever found yourself “going through the motions” spiritually? What helped you move beyond that?
5. How can our spiritual practices help us become more loving toward others rather than more judgmental of them?

Key Truth

Spiritual practices are meant to draw us toward God, not simply give us something to check off our list.

2. ASCETIC — Loving God Through Solitude & Simplicity



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Read Mark 1:35

Jesus regularly made room for solitude. Before the demands of ministry took over His day, He intentionally withdrew to pray.

For the Ascetic, solitude, simplicity, fasting, and spiritual discipline can create space to hear God and focus on what matters most. But this pathway can become unhealthy when personal spiritual renewal turns inward and becomes disconnected from loving others.

Discussion Questions

1. What makes it difficult for you to find quiet or solitude?
2. When have you experienced God most clearly in a quiet or simple setting?
3. Why is spiritual renewal important for our relationship with God?
4. How could solitude or spiritual discipline become self-focused rather than God-focused?
5. What is one distraction, comfort, or habit you might need to set aside in order to make more room for God?

Key Truth

Spiritual renewal should move us toward God—and then outward toward others.

3. ACTIVIST — Loving God Through Confrontation

Read Matthew 21:12–13

Jesus did not ignore injustice or wrongdoing. He confronted what was happening in the temple because His passion for God's purposes moved Him to action.

The Activist brings passion, courage, and a desire to make things right. But that same passion can become anger, burnout, resentment, or judgment. We can become so focused on what is wrong around us that we forget what God is doing within us.

“The very qualities that help you succeed as an activist may tempt you to fail as a Christian.”

Discussion Questions

1. What injustices or problems tend to stir your passion?
2. Why do you think some people are more naturally inclined to confront problems than others?
3. When does righteous passion cross the line into anger or judgment?
4. How can we pursue justice while still showing compassion toward people who are struggling?
5. Before confronting a problem, what questions should we ask ourselves and God?

Key Truth

Spiritual maturity means caring deeply about what is wrong without losing compassion for the people involved.

4. CAREGIVER — Loving God by Loving Others

Read Philippians 2:3–4

Some people naturally draw closer to God by meeting the needs of others. Serving isn't simply something they do—it is an expression of worship.

But caregiving has its own dangers. We can begin to believe, “I have to do it,” or become dependent on being needed. We can even become so focused on helping others that we neglect the people closest to us.

Discussion Questions

1. Who has cared for you in a way that made a lasting difference in your life?
2. Why can serving others feel like an act of worship?
3. How can helping others become unhealthy or self-serving?
4. Have you ever struggled with feeling like everything depended on you?
5. How can we care for others without neglecting our own relationships and responsibilities?

Key Truth

Serving others is a beautiful expression of faith—but we are called to serve from God's strength, not from a need to be needed.

Putting It All Together

Each of these pathways reveals something beautiful about how people connect with God:

- **Traditionalist:** “I make room for God through rhythm, ritual, and tradition.”
- **Ascetic:** “I make room for God through solitude, simplicity, and discipline.”
- **Activist:** “I make room for God by pursuing justice and confronting what is wrong.”
- **Caregiver:** “I make room for God by loving and serving others.”

But none of these pathways is the destination.

Your pathway isn't the destination. God is.

Discussion Questions

1. Which of these four pathways feels most natural to you? Why?
2. Which pathway feels least natural to you?
3. What might you learn about God by practicing a pathway that is different from your own?
4. What is one “danger” from your natural pathway that you need to watch for?
5. How could understanding these differences help you become more patient and compassionate toward other people?

TAKEAWAY

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This week, don't just identify your pathway—**practice it in a healthy way.**

Choose one:

- **Traditionalist:** Use a historic prayer or liturgy during your week.
- **Ascetic:** Create intentional space for solitude, silence, or simplicity.
- **Activist:** Do something about an injustice you've noticed, but pray before you act.
- **Caregiver:** Serve someone anonymously, expecting nothing in return.

Closing Thought

God has wired each of us differently, but He is calling all of us toward the same thing: **greater love for Him and greater love for others.**

It's not good or bad. It's just different. And when we understand our differences, we can use them for God's glory.