

January 22

Five
Forks
Church

Is the "Ascetic" pathway for you?

CURRENT SERMON SERIES

Pathways



Each week you will have an opportunity to take the pathway survey and determine if the given pathway is for you. Take a few minutes to answer the following questions, using a scale of 0-5; with 0 being not true at all and 5 being very true. Record your total score at the bottom, out of a possible 30 points. At the end of the series you will have 9 of these surveys and be able to determine which pathways connect best with you.

_____1.

I have a hard time concentrating on my relationship with God, when there are dirty dishes in the sink, or laundry to fold or clutter around the house or a task that is on my mind.

_____2.

I feel most connected to God when I am by myself and there is nothing to distract my attention. I consider myself to be an introvert and can focus more on God's presence when other people aren't around.

_____3.

I appreciate turning off the television or radio and do not need background noise to help me concentrate.

_____4.

I am energized when I am able to create space in my schedule, have a quiet evening at home or when I clean out a cluttered room. I feel inspired when I choose not to purchase unnecessary items at the store.

_____5.

On a scale of 0-5, how much does the statement describing the hearts cry of ascetic resonate with you in comparison with the others?

Naturalist: Let Me Be Outdoors

Sensate: Let Me Experience

Ascetic: Let Me Be Alone

Traditionalist: Let Me Remember

Activist: Let Me Conquer

Caregiver: Let Me Care

Enthusiast: Let Me Celebrate

Contemplative: Let Me Feel

Intellectual: Let Me Think

_____6.

Words like simplicity, solitude, reflection, and quiet time are appealing to me. I could spend a large amount of time praying, reading, studying Scripture, abstaining or fasting.

Total all of your answers: _____

**The above questionnaire is adapted from Gary Thomas' book, Sacred Pathways (pg. 33-34).*

One Way to Practice the Ascetic Pathway:

*Below are some suggestions for ways you could intentionally practice the ascetic pathway. Don't get stuck trying to follow this plan, instead, be creative. Adapt it to suit your schedule and personality.

1. **Read** - Mark 1; Psalm 46; Philippians 4; Matthew 19:16-30; Matthew 6

2. **Connect with God through intentional solitude and simplicity.**

- Don't turn on the TV or radio before work/school or in the car.
- Tell God about your day...starting with when you woke up. Think about your emotions and reactions to circumstances throughout your day and talk to God about them. Pray about the people you interacted with throughout the day.
- Find a quiet space and time...You can read. (Read Scripture). Write. Journal. Memorize Scripture.
- Go for a walk or run without headphones.
- Unclutter your closet/dresser or your schedule by eliminating an activity this week.
- Give something away that is important to you.
- Fasting/Abstaining - Take a break from cell phone use, TV, a favorite food, etc. this week.

3. **Consider** these two reflection questions:

-How does my experience of solitude and simplicity connect to the Scriptures I read above or to any other Scriptures?

-What does my experience of solitude and simplicity teach me about God, about myself and about my relationship to God?

4. **Prayer** - Talk to God about your experience of solitude and simplicity.