



Adult Sunday Morning Class
Stamford Church of Christ
Facilitated by Chris Altrack
D.Min.

1

Invite a Friend - let's grow our community through a simple invitation to a fellow Stamford member, a friend or family member to join us next week.

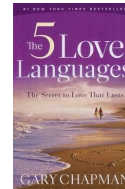
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**Part One:
Naturalists, Sensates and Traditionalists**

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Gary Chapman *The Five Love Languages*

There is more than one way to give/ receive love.
There is no one-way to give/ receive love.



4



#1 Words of Affirmation

Words of praise and encouragement are a powerful way to share love for someone. To speak this language, you give verbal compliments often.

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#2 Quality Time

The key to quality time is undivided attention. It can either be quality conversations or quality activities.

6



#3 Gift Giving

Remember that it doesn't matter how much it costs; it's just the act of going out and getting or making a gift for someone that will show them how you feel about them.

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#4 Acts of Service

This is helping your partner with the things with which you know they would appreciate help.

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#5 Physical Touch

Even in infancy, humans need physical touch to thrive. We often forget, but this carries on into adulthood as well.

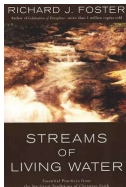
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1. Which one is your "love language"?
2. Can you name someone who's "love language" is different than yours?
3. What factors influenced the "love language" that means the most to you?

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Richard Foster *Streams of Living Water*

Historically, there is more than one way to connect with God/ experience God.



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Prayer-Filled Life

The Contemplative Tradition stresses the value of silence, solitude, and prayer as ways we engage with God's presence, whether we take a silent walk in the early morning, ride the bus to work, wash dishes while the kids nap, or even take a nap ourselves.

12



Virtuous Life

The Holiness Tradition emphasizes the re-formation of our hearts so that we are able to respond appropriately to the challenges of life. It encourages us to the ultimate goal: not to “get us into heaven, but to get heaven into us.”

13



Spirit-Empowered Life

The Charismatic Tradition focuses on the power of God's Spirit moving in and through us.

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Compassionate Life

The Social Justice Tradition expresses the themes of justice, compassion, and peace.

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Word-Centered Life

The Evangelical Tradition encompasses much more than simply converting people. This is the message embodied in Jesus himself, rooted in the word of God, and ultimately expressed through the lives of those who follow Christ.

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Sacramental Life

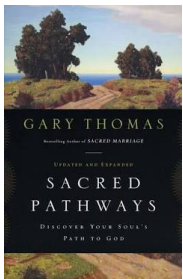
The Incarnational Tradition focuses on the relationship between the invisible spirit and physical reality, helping us to see God's divine presence in the material world in which we live.

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1. Which one do you resonate with?
2. What factors led to this being the way you best connect with God?

18

Gary Thomas *Sacred Pathways*



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Gary Thomas *Sacred Pathways*

Individual followers of God approached God differently:
Abraham built altars;
Moses and Elijah were activists;
David celebrated God enthusiastically;
Ezekiel and John experienced loud and colorful images;
Mordecai cared for others;
Mary was a contemplative sitting at Jesus' feet. (see Thomas pages 18-19).

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Gary Thomas *Sacred Pathways*

Movements of God approached God differently;
Roman Catholics relied on sacramental rites;
Protestants relied on Scripture;
Anabaptists were pacifists;
the Orthodox Church engaged the senses (see Thomas pages 18-22).

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As we explore these 9 pathways consider the following:

1. How can I take advantage of the pathway most "natural" to me?
2. In what ways is God inviting me to stretch into pathways less "natural" to me?
3. How do I respond to other people/ groups who emphasize a pathway different from mine?

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The Naturalist



23



Psalm 19

The heavens declare the glory of God,
and the sky above[a] proclaims his handiwork.
2 Day to day pours out speech,
and night to night reveals knowledge.

24



3 There is no speech, nor are there words,
whose voice is not heard.
4 Their voice goes out through all the earth,
and their words to the end of the world.
In them he has set a tent for the sun,

25



5 which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his
chamber, and, like a strong man, runs its course with
joy.
6 Its rising is from the end of the heavens,
and its circuit to the end of them,
and there is nothing hidden from its heat.

26



"The naturalist seeks to leave the formal architecture
and the padded pews to enter an entirely new
'cathedral,' a place that God himself has built: the
outdoors." (see Thomas page 44)

27



"There are 3 ways to love God outdoors (see Thomas
pages 51-55).
1 - Believe ("the first way to become awakened is to
seek the Creator behind the creation.")

28



2 - Perceive (consider the greatness of creation; the multitude of creation; and the beauty of creation)

3 - Receive ("Walks that are truly helpful are walks in which I lay down my agenda at the first sign of grass and let God lead my mind wherever he chooses.")

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Spiritual Disciplines for Naturalists:

1 - Prayer walk - Slowly and deliberately walk through places for the purpose of intentional and listening prayer. Walking through your neighborhood, a park, your town giving to God the people and activities that go on there.

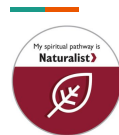
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Spiritual Disciplines for Naturalists:

2 - Practicing the Presence - Developing a rhythm of living that brings God to mind throughout the day wherever you are. Stopping throughout the day to listen to God.

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Spiritual Disciplines for Naturalists:

3 - Unplugging - Unplugging electronic devices that interrupt relationships. Settling into uninterrupted quiet with Jesus.

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Naturalist Assessment

Score the following on a scale of 1 to 5; 1 = not true at all and 5 = very true.

NATURE

- 1. I feel closest to God when I'm surrounded by what He has made - the mountains, the forests or the ocean.
- 2. I feel cut off if I have to spend too much time indoors, just listening to speakers or singing songs. Nothing makes me feel closer to God than being outside.
- 3. I would rather worship God by spending an hour beside a small brook than by participating in a group service.
- 4. If I could escape to a garden to pray on a cold day, walk through a meadow on a warm day and take a trip by myself to the mountains on another day, I would be very happy.
- 5. A book called *Nature's Sanctuaries: A Picture Book* would be appealing to me.
- 6. Seeing God's beauty in nature is more moving to me than understanding new concepts, participating in a formal religious service or participating in social causes.
- Total of all your answers

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Consider the following:

1. How can I take advantage of this pathway if it is most "natural" to me?
2. In what ways is God inviting me to stretch into this pathway if it is less "natural" to me?
3. How do I respond to other people/ groups who emphasize a pathway different from mine?

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The Sensate



35



Matthew 26

26 Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." 27 And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, 28 for this is my blood of the[c] covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

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"Some believers feel their hearts warm up to God in the presence of beautiful art, music, or some other sensual experience." (see Thomas pages 62)

37



There are 5 ways that our senses enable us to experience God (see Thomas pages 65-75)

1 - Sound ("Beautiful music has been part of church life since its beginning.")

38



There are 5 ways that our senses enable us to experience God (see Thomas pages 65-75)

2 - Smell ("Smell can cement memories ... Perhaps it is this property of smell that caused incense to play such a key role in Old Testament worship.")

39



There are 5 ways that our senses enable us to experience God (see Thomas pages 65-75)

3 - Touch (carrying a nail; kissing a cross; touching a person we are praying for)

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There are 5 ways that our senses enable us to experience God (see Thomas pages 65-75)

4 - Sight ("Besides worship rooms, other Christians have made use of sight through pictures or icons.")

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There are 5 ways that our senses enable us to experience God (see Thomas pages 65-75)

5 - Taste (Wine at communion; sweet and bitter tastes reminding us of blessings / trials)

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Spiritual Practices for Sensates:

1 - Celebration - Pursuing activities that bring the heart deep gladness and reveling in them before the Lord including: spending time with others, sharing meals, working, serving, worshiping, laughing, listening to music, dancing. Cultivating a spirit of gladness.

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Spiritual Practices for Sensates:

2- Praying in color - Getting prayerfully creative and using doodles, color, words, pictures as a way of expressing what is in your heart and seeking connection with God

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Spiritual Practices for Sensates:

3 - Holy Communion - Partaking of Christ's body and blood in the sacrament of communion engages the senses.

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Sensate Assessment

Score the following on a scale of 1 to 5: 1 - not true at all and 5 = very true.

SENSES

- 1. I feel closest to God when I'm in a church service that allows my senses to come alive - when I can see, smell, hear and almost taste His majesty.
- 2. I enjoy attending a "high church" service with a formal communion.
- 3. I'd have a difficult time worshiping in a church building that is plain and lacks a sense of awe or majesty. Beauty is very important to me, and I have a difficult time worshiping through second-rate Christian art or music.
- 4. The words sensuous, colorful and aromatic are very appealing to me.
- 5. I'm naturally drawn to museums and concerts more than I'm inclined to take a walk in the woods, work in a soup kitchen or read a book by myself.
- 6. I would really enjoy drawing exercises or classical music playing in the background to improve my prayer life.
- Total of all your answers

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As we explore these 9 pathways consider the following:

1. How can I take advantage of this pathway if it is most "natural" to me?
2. In what ways is God inviting me to stretch into this pathway if it is less "natural" to me?
3. How do I respond to other people/ groups who emphasize a pathway different from mine?

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