

“Remain in Me”

Maintaining a Vital Connection with God

John 15:5-8

5 “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. 6 If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. 7 If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 8 This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

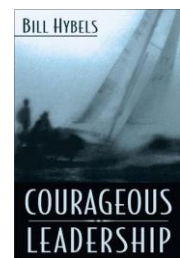
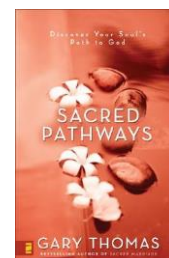


PAUSE & REFLECT:

What helps you to stay connected with God?

Maintaining Your Vital Connection with God

Based on Bill Hybels: *Courageous Leadership* (ch. 11)
and Gary Thomas: *Sacred Pathways*



1. Relational Pathway

Matt 18:20 - And when two or three of you are together because of me, you can be sure that I'll be there.

Bill Hybels: “People who connect best with God on the **relational pathway** feel a kind of spiritual dullness with they try to walk alone with God.”

Think about:

Join a small group, taking friends on a retreat, regularly pray with others (via skype)

2. Intellectual Pathway

Ps 49: 3-4

*I set plainspoken wisdom before you,
my heart-seasoned understandings of life.
I fine-tuned my ear to the sayings of the wise,
I solve life's riddle with the help of a harp.*

Gary Thomas:

A professor of biology can love God with his mind every bit as much as a professor of systematic theology. Since God created all, any study that explores, examines, and explains the natural world can shed some light on the nature of our God and help us to know him better.

3. Serving Pathway

e.g. Mordecai in *Esther* 2:7, Jesus



“Adopting” a prisoner
Helping a friend through a personal crisis
Lending money
Helping somebody battling substance abuse
Volunteering on a rescue squad
Helping an illiterate person learn to read
Donating time at a battered women's shelter
Counseling at a pregnancy care center
Working in a soup kitchen
Fixing somebody's car
Repairing a house
Making recordings for the blind
Researching a cure for a disease
Helping somebody reconfigure their computer system
Watching the children of some tired parents

4. Contemplative Pathway

Mark 1:35-37 - While it was still night, way before dawn, he got up and went out to a secluded spot and prayed. Simon and those with him went looking for him. They found him and said, "Everybody's looking for you."



Suggested Secret Acts of devotion:

An anonymous gift of cash to someone in need
A poem or letter written to God, then burned
A song sung only in the presence of God
A "secret" walk or night vigil taken in the presence of God
A secret devotional place where you frequently go to meet God
Intensive, intercessory prayer and fasting
A vow to give up something permanently or for a period of time to signify how your most important needs are met in God
A symbol of your love for God, which you carry in your pocket or wear as a necklace or ring
Working "behind the scenes" to help an unemployed person get a job
Sending an anonymous note of encouragement to a pastor or friend
Planting a tree or sowing wildflower seeds in a field to celebrate God the Creator

5. Activist Pathway

Hybels: "Activists are at their best at a speed of Mach 2. Happiest when white knuckled and gasping for breath. They need a highly challenging environment that pushed them to the edge of their potential. When they're on the edge, they feel closest to God - and invoke his name Oh God Oh God!!!"

6. Creation Pathway

Romans 1:20 - For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.

Psalms 19:1 - The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.

7. Worship Pathway

2 Sam 6:14 - Wearing a linen ephod, David was dancing before the Lord with all his might,



8. Art/Senses Pathway

Visions in Ezekiel & Revelation
Bezalel & Oholiab in Ex 31



9. Tradition/Ritual/Symbols

Symbols help us to preserve this "moral memory," which is so essential to right living.



Making the most of the Pathways:

1. Identify Your Pathway
2. Lean into Your Pathway
3. Appreciate all the Pathways
4. Help others identify their Pathways

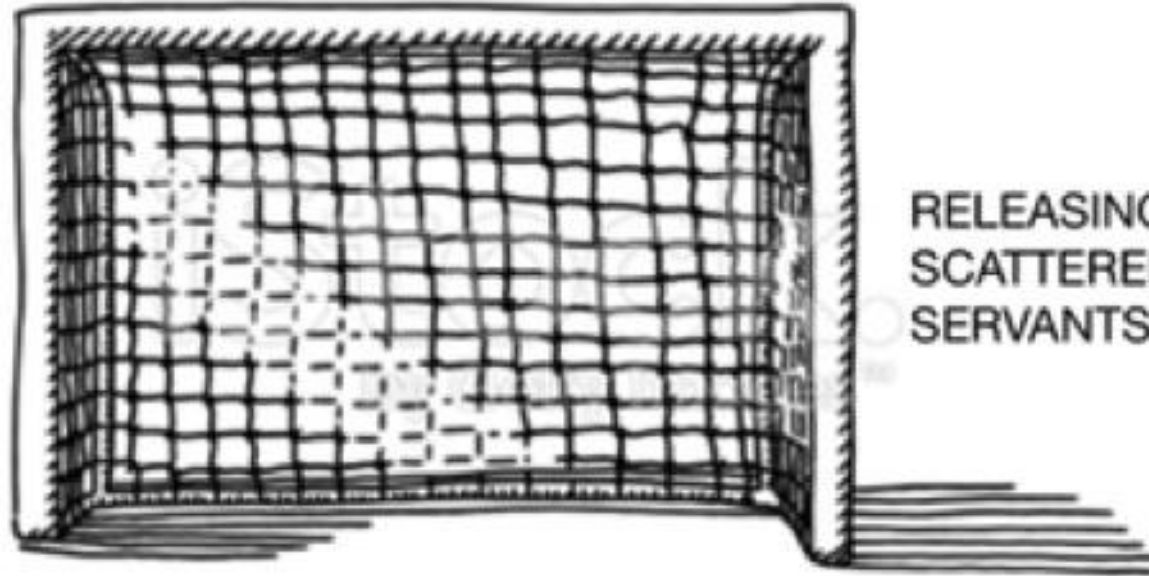


winchester  **vineyard**
church

Leading our Communities into Life

STEWARDING THE PRESENCE OF GOD

GROWING
GATHERED
ENVIRONMENTS



RELEASING
SCATTERED
SERVANTS

John 15:5-8

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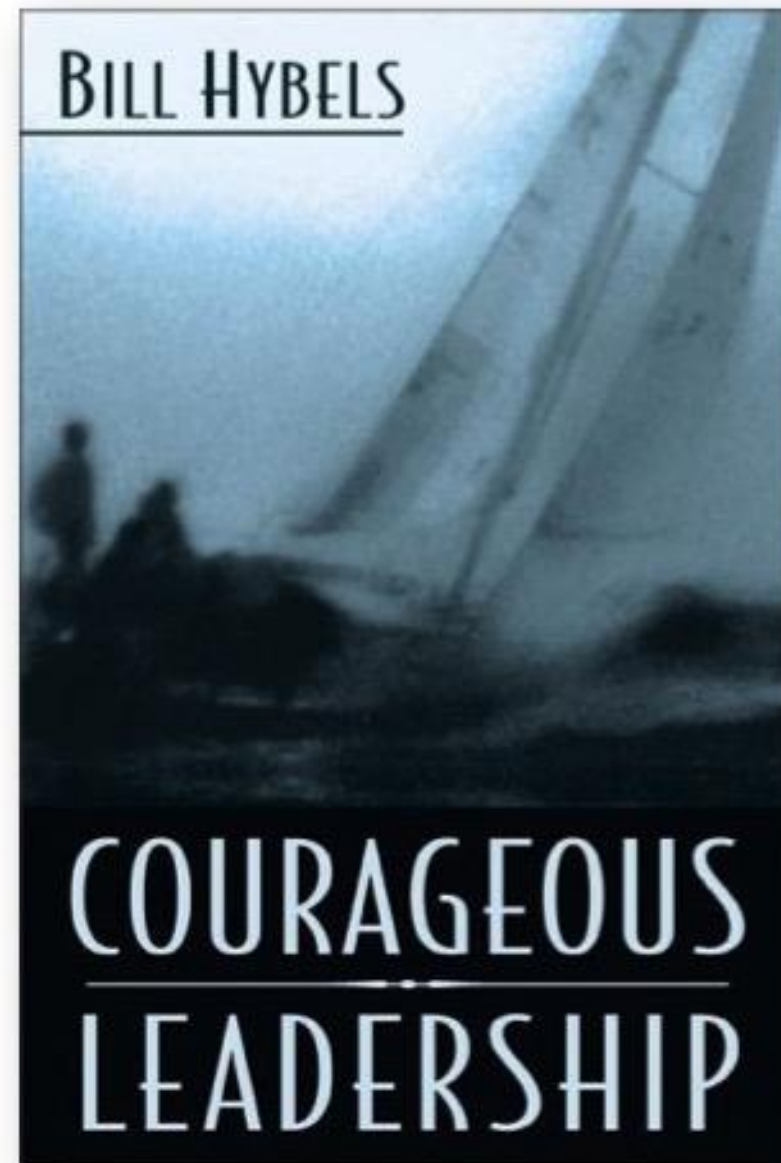
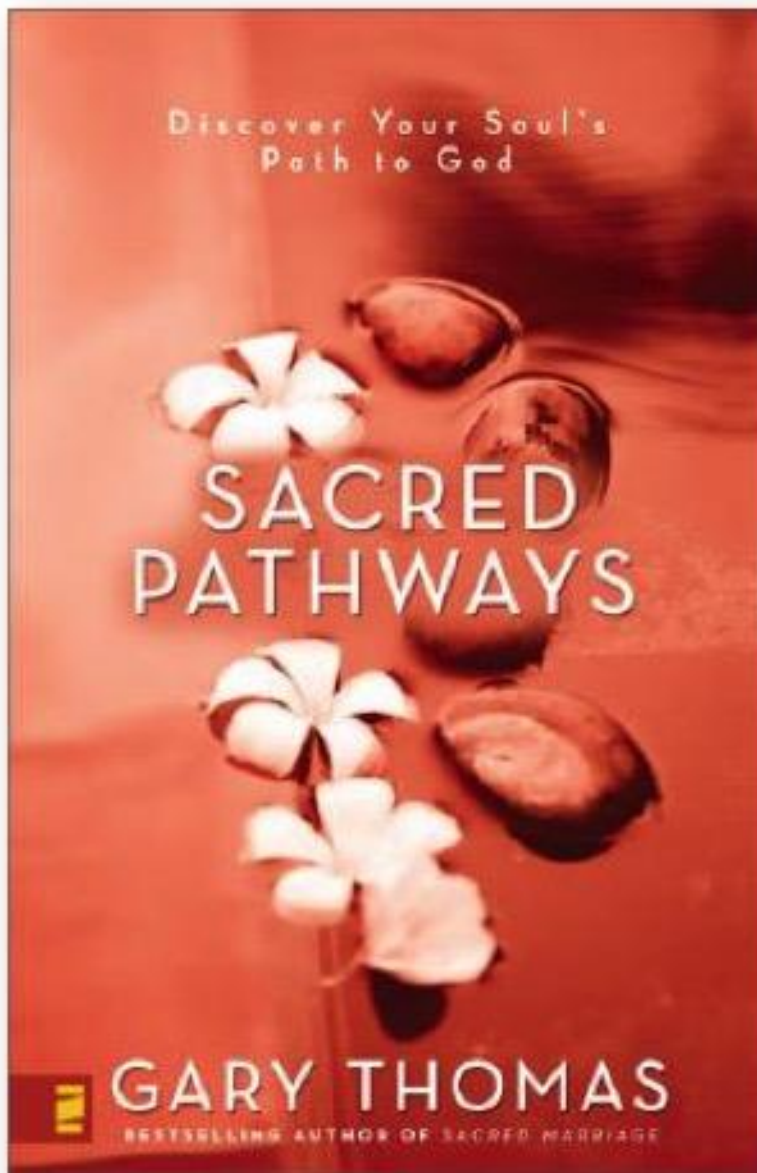


What helps you stay connected with God?





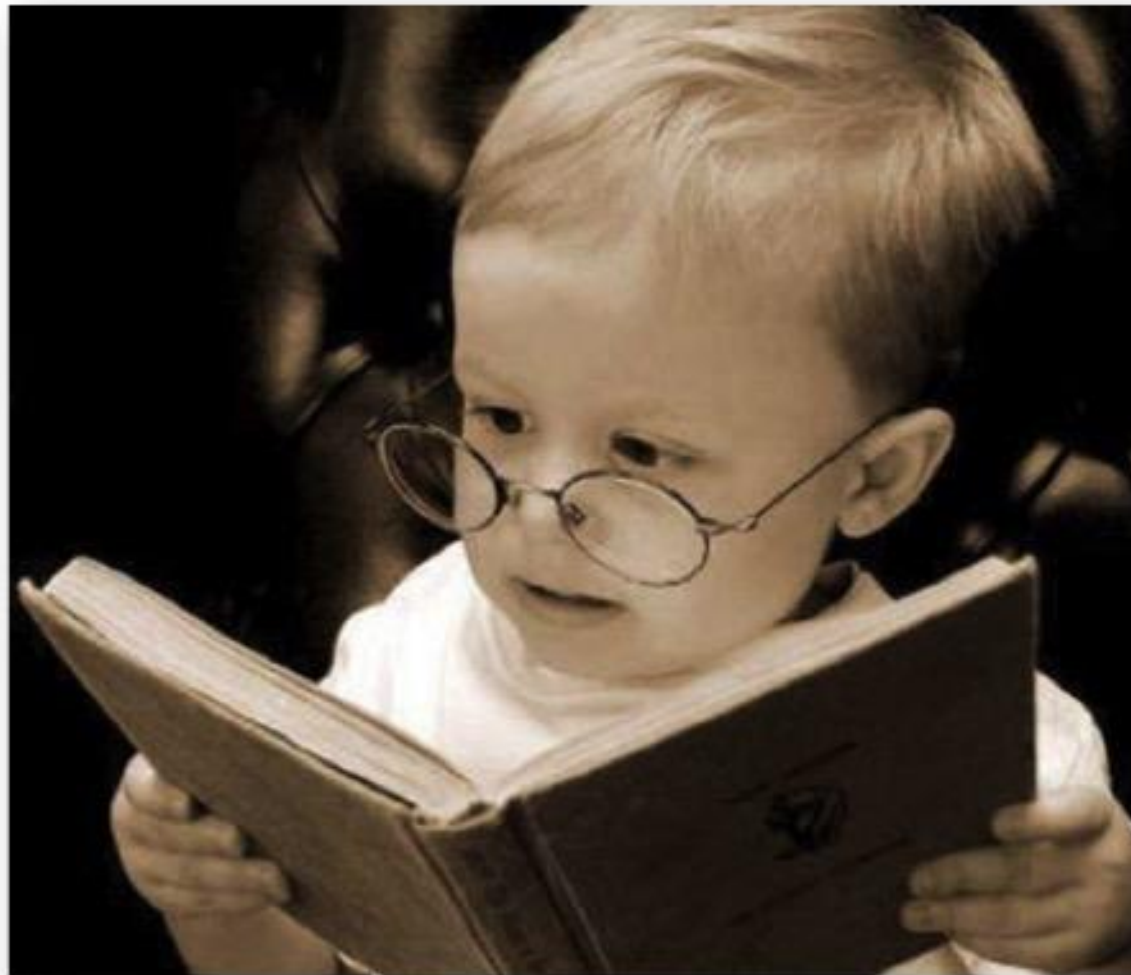
Everyone is Unique!



1. Relational Pathway



2. Intellectual Pathway



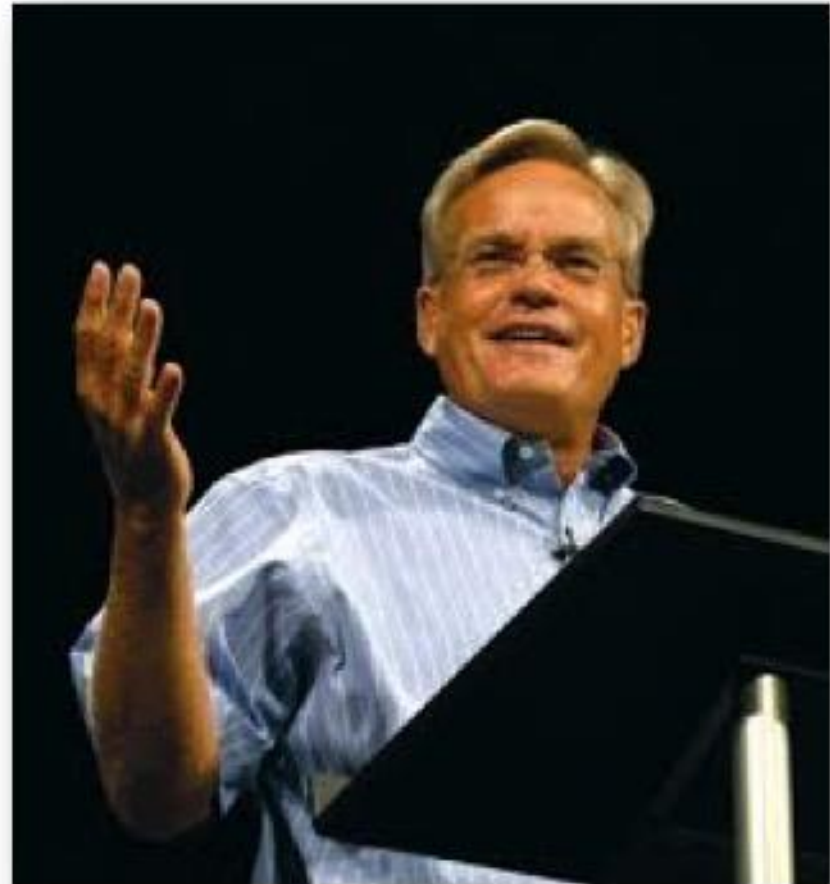
3. Serving Pathway



4. Contemplative Pathway



5. Activist Pathway



6. Creation Pathway





7. Worship Pathway



8. Art/Senses Pathway



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9. Tradition / Ritual / Symbol



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