

WHAT'S  
YOUR  
GOD  
LANGUAGE?

*Connecting with God through  
Your Unique Spiritual Temperament*

DR. MYRA PERRINE

FOREWORD BY GARY THOMAS



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“This book is transformational. You’re about to find a way to deepen your faith and fall more in love with your Savior—as you discover how He uniquely created *you* to love Him. I urge you to do your faith a favor and read this book!”

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Church Resource Ministries, Canada

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## FOREWORD

You are about to do yourself a great favor.

There is no greater joy in life—absolutely none—than to grow in intimacy with the God who created us, who loves us, and whose grace sustains us. And I can't think of a better way to grow in this intimacy than to spend some time in the able and gentle hands of a wise spiritual director such as Dr. Myra Perrine.

Myra's book reaches the rare air of literary achievement: It is at once practical and profound, comforting and convicting, theoretical and instructive. With an experienced hand and an obvious passion for God, Myra leads us into a deeper understanding of what we can do to respond to our Creator's marvelous grace. She takes us far beyond the one-size-fits-all mentality of so many popular books and helps us embrace the unique relationship into which God calls each one of us.

While her initial thoughts were in part inspired by the temperaments I lay out in *Sacred Pathways*, Myra has done me "one better" by not only offering a fresh rendering of these pathways, but also creating very practical exercises that make understanding them a much more life-changing realization.

There is no higher study than learning what it means to love and be loved by God, which puts Myra's work in the highest realm of importance. I am honored to recommend her work to you, and I am thankful that so many will have their hearts' passion renewed as Myra takes all of us on a journey of spiritual renewal.

Gary Thomas

December 2006

## PREFACE

Stuck. Frustrated. Dry. Confused. These are a few of the descriptors—along with bored and guilty—I hear as I speak to Christians about their relationship with the Lord. In my work with Church Resource Ministries, I often see people who are hungry to connect with Jesus, yet they simply aren't connecting, and what brings life to one doesn't automatically bring life to another. Just recently, a woman approached me and announced, "I don't fit into the prescribed Christian 'box,' and when I see how *other* Christians worship God, I truthfully feel like I have to pretend." Her dilemma is not unique. I meet people like this all the time who are looking for answers about how to more authentically love and serve God.

This book grew out of that desire and a conviction that, although life can be difficult, loving God ought not be! After all, He is the One who initiates and ultimately is in charge of the process. As we respond to His lead, a partnership with Him emerges—a rhythm of grace that flows freely in and through the spiritual journey.

This is a truth I didn't understand when I first became a Christian in 1970. Back then, I learned a simple acrostic for *growth* that worked pretty well:

**G**o to God in prayer daily.

**R**ead God's Word daily.

**O**bey God moment by moment.

**W**itness for Christ by your life and words.

**T**rust God for every detail of your life.

**H**oly Spirit—allow Him to control and empower your daily life and witness.<sup>1</sup>

Those in our college ministry were taught to use this in our daily spiritual lives. Early-morning quiet times consisting of prayer and Bible reading were encouraged, and we upheld those standards faithfully. In

fact, I remember wondering if I was rising early enough after hearing that Billy Graham was first attracted to his not-yet-wife, Ruth, because she arose before dawn each day to pray. (Not being an early-morning person, I wondered how I would ever find a husband!)

Those initial years as a young believer were wonderful ones, a time when foundational truths and habits in the Word were being established. Yet over time, it became necessary for me to expand my approach in order to give God ample space to do *His* part in the dance, to unveil more of His mystery and transcendence—in His own way and at His own time. As I've progressed with Jesus for more than three decades, my way of relating to Him has broadened and deepened as well . . . in the midst of difficult situations that brought heartache and disappointment, and through experiences that challenged my faith to the core and required my roots to go deeper. Yet through it all, my connection with God developed new colors and nuances. And rightly so. Life necessitates change and growth—in knowing the Lord and in knowing oneself. For as Richard Foster says in his book *Celebration of Discipline*, “The desperate need today is not for a greater number of intelligent people, or gifted people, but for deep people.”<sup>2</sup>

This book is the result of that ever-deepening process as I've listened to the navigational challenges forged in my own life and in the lives of others. It is also the result of the research gathered during my doctoral project as I explored spiritual formation through the lens of the spiritual temperaments. By studying how people best and most naturally relate to God—and offering them a series of specially designed spiritual practice exercises—I found quite fascinating results. As I surveyed and interviewed more than seventy ministry leaders about their spiritual preferences and practices, I noticed some interesting patterns:

1. The more closely someone's spiritual preferences matched his or her spiritual practices, the more spiritually “satisfied” that person reported to be in his or her relationship with God. In other words, greater spiritual satisfaction was experienced when people pursued God in ways they enjoyed and found most life giving.<sup>3</sup> Conversely, when spiritual preferences were not given expression—when people were solely doing what they



were taught to do rather than what they enjoyed—spiritual satisfaction was seen to decline, as did their sense of closeness to God.

2. The broader the spiritual practice scores across all nine spiritual temperaments, the more “hungry” people reported to be for God. In other words, the more experience and exposure people had in connecting with God in a variety of ways, the stronger their desire for Him became.

As I thought about this outcome, I remembered an old church-planting motto I’d once heard: “If Denny’s were the only restaurant in town, would more people eat at Denny’s, or would fewer people eat out?” This saying originally referred to the fact that different churches attract different people, but I wondered if it is also true that when people who had been taught that there is only one *right* way to “feast on the Lord,” they simply grew tired of that one spiritual diet. It seemed that when people had tasted many different spiritual practices—habits of the heart handed down through the centuries—their appetites for knowing Jesus remained hearty and even increased.

But my findings went even further. As I spoke with pastors about the different spiritual temperaments of the people in their churches, they began to see their congregants through a useful grid that clarified why some were growing and others were not, and even why some were leaving their churches—not because of theological discrepancies (which had often been the presumed problem) but because of simple differences in spiritual preference. Pastoral teams now had a better handle on how to create more meaningful opportunities for worship and service within their churches so that all the “love languages” of God would be included.

This book has been developed as a result of my findings, not only to help individual Christians grow in their love for God, but also to assist pastors, small group leaders, church boards, missionaries, Christian school teachers, university professors, organizational leaders, husbands, wives, and parents foster spiritual growth by using the spiritual temperament grid to understand themselves and others. As Henri Nouwen said, until we are in touch with our own belovedness,

we cannot touch the sacredness of another.<sup>4</sup> Until we embrace who God has made us to be, we will continually try to make others over in our own image.

This book will be a highly interactive tool to guide you through an important self-discovery process. Thus, it is not intended to be merely informational or inspirational, but *transformational* in its construction, providing practical “next steps” for you through offering ten weeks of spiritual practice exercises for each of the spiritual temperaments, which are located in part 2 of the book. The intermediate and advanced exercises are located at [www.ChristianBookGuides.com](http://www.ChristianBookGuides.com).

My hope is that this book will bring increased unity and celebration within the body of Christ, promoting personal growth and maturity for all who read it.

## INTRODUCTION

# THE GREAT INVITATION

My husband and I recently received an unusual card in the mail. On the front was a picture of a friend standing right next to the president of the United States! Yes, it was a real photograph, but I was actually a little surprised because our friend is neither a political figure nor one who would typically strive to be seen with a person of prominence. Upon closer inspection, I noticed that the card was actually an invitation to a banquet being held for my friend's "important people," and the insinuation was that, while the president wouldn't be with us, we were among those just as valuable to our friend as the leader of the free world!

Moments after I put the card down, it hit me: The wording on the invitation was profoundly true. As children of God, we *are* just as valuable as those in places of political power and influence . . . at least to our heavenly Father. Then I began to ponder the Lord's staggering invitation for us to come to the banquet *He* is preparing!

He said to his servants, "The wedding banquet is ready. . . . Go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find."

*Matthew 22:8-9*

Yes, it is true. At the center of life is an invitation, preceded by a desire and a longing. God desires relationship with humankind—He invites us to come be with Him—and within us a longing resides to respond to that invitation.

The LORD longs to be gracious to you, and therefore He waits on high to have compassion on you. For the LORD is a God of justice; how blessed are all those who long for Him.      *Isaiah 30:18 (NASB)*

God is a *longing* God, and every longing of His heart has been placed within us, too . . . a longing for beauty, for love, for closeness with Him. In the beginning, Adam and Eve had total access to God, walking and talking with Him face-to-face in the cool of the day. God Himself instructed them and gave them creative, meaningful work crafted just for them—subduing, ruling, naming—the very work that He does. There were animals for them to enjoy, perfect health without pain or aging, splendor galore, green grass, and massively colorful flowers, as well as all the fruits and veggies they could ever eat, which were being watered effortlessly by surrounding rivers and a constant mist. Adam and Eve were in perfect communion with one another, naked and unashamed, totally comfortable with their passion and purity, feeling safe in undisturbed love and trust.

Then came the big snafu. Though humans were intended to live in the Garden, Adam and Eve had to leave that place of communion with God for less-than-pleasant reasons. As they departed, they carried with them the inherent longing they'd been given to have what they'd always known of God and His world—the world for which they'd been created. And all these years later, we still carry that same longing in our hearts, for deep inside we are homesick for our initial Garden-life with God. I'm guessing God is homesick for that life with us as well.

Many years after the first Garden had been closed to humankind, Jesus came to earth, expressing His longings:

Oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem! . . . How often have I desired to gather thy children to me, just as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, and you would not come! *Matthew 23:37 (Weymouth)*

Though God wanted us to know the abundant, rich life He had designed for us to enjoy with Him (see John 10:10), people had found other ways to satisfy their desires. Our hearts had become occupied with a myriad of things, and we were pretty distracted and unreceptive to God's invitation. Because sin and the enemy had spoiled our original Garden place, we gradually lost touch with our own longings for home. Yet in spite of our reluctance, as Adam and Eve's offspring, we are still hungry to taste what they experienced in the Garden.

We cannot escape the truth: We were made by God, for God, and

we bear His image on our hearts. His trademark has been permanently woven into the fabric of every human soul. The very fact that we have been created in the image of our Creator assumes our need for connection with Him. We are incomplete without our God-connection, for our natures and destinies as those created in His image call us to glorify and enjoy Him forever (see Genesis 1:26-27). This yearning for communion with our unseen, present Lord, who comes to us as Father, Son, and Spirit, is in every son of Adam and daughter of Eve.

According to a parable I once heard about the Creation, in one moment of time, God looked into a mirror and saw His own image. Then He broke the mirror and scattered it into a million pieces, each piece becoming a human soul, and each soul bringing something of the image of God to the world.<sup>1</sup> Now—whether we know God or not—the call to be God’s image bearers remains. Our lives are shaped by our original purpose, and inwardly we hunger to come home to that place where we are fully known and loved. Oh, we can ignore that longing, masking it or trying to reconfigure it, but we cannot escape its reality, nor the perpetual summons reminding us that the great invitation has been extended personally to *us*.

This invitation is actually not dependent upon us at all, or upon our response. Even now, most days I live in oblivion to God’s perpetual inviting, yet there are moments when the Lord breaks in. It is then that I find myself in what the Celts called the “thin place,” where the veil that separates the eternal from the temporal becomes so thin and permeable that—through a vibrant sunset or a child at play—I get a whiff of celestial air. And there it is again: God’s invitation, always beckoning, pressing, even disturbing me, reminding me of His consistent longing for . . . *me*. He has created me for Himself. Oh, the Inviter is astonishingly long-suffering in His love!

Yet when we choose to respond, we taste once again a rich morsel of what our first parents knew so well. When we say yes and come to God, we find once more that *He* becomes our greatest reward.

*In this secluded place I meet a King.*

*He comes alone to drink reality*

*With me. Sometimes we talk, sometimes we sit*

*And sip a life that passes by the crowd.*

*As inwardness is born—a felt thing  
Of power—a commonality—of grace  
A union where unmended hopes are knit  
Where silence roars as quiet sings aloud.  
Oh Christ, I love it here! It is our place.  
Speak Lord or not. Touch me or not. Show then  
Your will or bid me wait in patient grace.  
Fill all my hungry need with joy again.  
With simple loaves of bread and chalice wine  
Heaven, earth, and all of God are mine.<sup>2</sup>*

We were meant to walk with our God in the cool of the day, in an ongoing relationship, just as our first parents did.

In the seventh century, John of Damascus, a Syrian theologian, described this love relationship as “the circle dance of God,” referring to the interaction of the Trinity as *perichoresis*. *Choros* is an ancient Greek round dance performed at banquets and festive occasions. John of Damascus envisioned the Godhead as a holy community, a circle where there exists an all-out sense of joy, freedom, song, intimacy, and love, and we are invited in. George Cladis said it this way: “Within the nature of God there is community. God the Father, Son, and Spirit are in relationship with one another and yet are one God. A unity of community exists between persons who love each other and live together in harmony.”<sup>3</sup> Astonishingly, we have been invited to join this holy dance!

This dance is one that includes family rights (see Galatians 3:26; 4:5), an inheritance (see Colossians 3:24), a never-ending life (see John 3:16), and an invitation to know our “Abba” personally (see Galatians 4:6). Dallas Willard describes it like this:

We have received an invitation. We are invited to make a pilgrimage—into the heart and life of God. The invitation has long been on public record. You can hardly look anywhere across the human scene and not encounter it. . . . God’s desire for us is that we should live in Him. . . . In its deepest nature and meaning our universe is a community of boundless and totally competent love.<sup>4</sup>

This invitation is an intimate one; we are asked to know and be known. The biblical authors described this relationship as more

than sonship, even more than friendship; they called it betrothal (see 2 Corinthians 11:2). When God says He knows us, we are not surprised; after all, He is God. But when He invites us to *know Him*, that call to mutuality nearly knocks us off our feet! It makes us a bit uneasy, for surely God is God and we are not. How can this mutual knowing even be possible?

But Jesus restated the invitation when He said that knowing Him was the very essence of life.

This is eternal life: that they may *know* you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. *John 17:3 (emphasis added)*

The Old Testament authors wrote similar statements:

Oh, that we might *know* the LORD! Let us press on to *know* him. He will respond to us as surely as the arrival of dawn or the coming of rains in early spring. *Hosea 6:3 (NLT, emphasis added)*

The Hebrew word used here is *yada*, which means “to clearly understand by experience, to know as an intimate friend, to have relations with” (as Adam *knew* Eve and she conceived a child). Yes, this is a close relationship indeed.

And though we are at the same time compelled and frightened by this invitation, we often find we are most ready to receive God’s offer during times of difficulty; it is then that we are most willing to turn toward God—our Source of Living Water—and drink deeply. As we cry out to Him, we look into His face with all our sin exposed and see that Jesus doesn’t look away. Instead, He says,

Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. . . . You are precious and honored in my sight, and . . . I love you. . . . Do not be afraid, for I am with you. *Isaiah 43:1, 4-5*

Arise, my darling, my beautiful one, and come along.

*Song of Solomon 2:10 (NASB)*

I have heard this intimate relationship defined as “in-to-me-see,” and surely that is a good explanation. But I have constructed my own description. I see intimacy as growing in one’s capacity to stand

progressively (not perfectly) “exposed”—spirit and soul—in the presence of another with diminishing fear. All known defenses relax because we have confidence that the other will act with our best interests in mind, that this person will guard our dignity and never intentionally shame or hurt us.

In other words, intimacy grows when we feel so loved, so safe with someone that we can be open about ourselves, even disclosing things we normally wouldn't tell others—our doubts, our fears, and our failings. And because we've experienced a kind of “sanctuary of the soul” when we're together—truly wanting the best for each other: wholeness, emancipation from bondage, and contentment in Jesus—we find that we are at ease when we're together. We feel confident that when something needs to be said, it will be said, and in the best possible way. And because love covers a multitude of sins (see 1 Peter 4:8), I can rest knowing that as I uncover myself, the other will cover me.

This intimacy is actually all about the heart; a grace-filled, self-aware, ever-healing heart is a safe heart. And though intimacy doesn't come easily or automatically, one of the great things about it is that it's not static; it's dynamic. It can grow! With commitment and effort, intimacy develops as we learn to be honest and vulnerable with one another, saying the hard thing in gentleness and love—even when it's easier to remain silent.

The requirement for developing intimacy with God is quite similar: being honest, vulnerable, and saying the hard thing to Jesus—exposing my true self to the One whose character and goodness I'm coming to know and trust more fully day by day—as He also speaks the truth to me, making Himself vulnerable, saying the hard thing to me. It is a dialogue of mutual, loving honesty. And this is how it works: My bills are due, and as I talk to God, I grow to *know* and *trust* Him as *Jehovah-Jireh*, my Provider. I need to nurture and guide my children, and as I listen for His instruction, I learn to *know* God as my wise *Jehovah-Raah*, the One who shepherds me. I make mistakes and my life becomes cluttered and messy, but as I speak with the Lord about my muddles, He forgives and corrects me with words of truth and grace, and I come to *know* Him as *Jehovah-Shalom*, the Lord my peace. Every decision, situation, or hardship becomes an opportunity to grow in



*knowing* and *trusting* the Lord, because the Almighty God Himself offers intimacy—sanctuary—in His love, as we *in-to-Him-see*.

Over the years I have come to realize that intimacy can only be experienced in the present moment, and unfortunately, many of us have trouble living in the present. We worry about the future; we mull over the past. But God only shows up in the *now*, and if I am willing to live there, He will indeed meet me. To be present in the moment is to arrive just as we are and open ourselves to someone else. With God, whenever we arrive, He is already present and waiting for us. He always arrives before we do and is consistently ready to connect; we don't have to overcome any reluctance on His part, for He created us for this connection.

The intimate life is, therefore, one of ongoing response to God's heart of passion for us—a response to His invitation to commune and partner with Him . . . now. He calls us to an eternal love relationship with Himself, the God of truth and grace, who—no matter what we've done—invites us to come and begin again with Him in the sacred dance. It is not so much about *what we do with God*—having a quiet time, spending time in prayer, serving—because it is not a perfunctory thing. It is more about *who we are with God*—being open, letting Jesus in, allowing ourselves to engage with Him heart to heart, trusting Him in the moment—because it is a relational thing. And even more important, in the final analysis it is not about what or who we are with God but what and who God is with us. He is the One who both initiates and sustains the invitation in this relationship.

Yes, God wants more from us than what we do for Him. He wants us, our hearts, our all. *We* are what He is after.

God's great invitation is still extended to us today—to come, to learn, to know, to dance. And what a dance it will be! I remember being asked one time to dance at a wedding reception by an attractive man named Joe. My mistake was that I simply said, "Sure," because later I learned that Joe had once been an Arthur Murray dance instructor. As we walked onto the floor, I soon realized that I was in way over my head! Joe was swinging me (alas, it was a "fast" dance), twirling me, and dipping me, and my goal quickly became to just remain vertical! But I eventually noticed that if I kept my eyes on Joe's face and just relaxed in his arms, he was a strong enough leader that I could follow him without



## God Is Intent upon Our Hearts

It is wonderful to realize that the Lord longs to be connected with us—heart to heart. Though there is much talk today about our Christian behavior, the Lord is intent upon our *hearts* (a word used more than 850 times in the Bible). We are told to come to God humbly, with vulnerable and repentant hearts, with sincere and undivided hearts. Here are a few of the things God says about our hearts.

The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart. *1 Samuel 16:7*

Let your heart therefore be wholly devoted to the LORD our God, to walk in His statutes and to keep His commandments, as at this day. *1 Kings 8:61 (NASB)*

Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life. *Proverbs 4:23 (NLT)*

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. *Matthew 5:8*

The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart. *Luke 6:45 (NASB)*

The goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. *1 Timothy 1:5 (NASB)*

Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart. *1 Peter 1:22 (NASB)*

Dear children, keep away from anything that might take God's place in your hearts. *1 John 5:21 (NLT)*



falling down or breaking something. I realized I didn't even need to know what was coming next because Joe knew, and he was leading. At one point, I even began to have fun, feeling as if I were Ginger Rogers being elegantly finessed around the dance floor by Fred Astaire himself!

As the dance ended, I saw that everyone had cleared off the floor and all eyes were on us. I hadn't seen this before; I was too busy focusing on Joe and surrendering to his lead. The crowd applauded as we walked to our seats, and as I looked into the eyes of the people who were smiling widely at me, I realized they didn't know the truth. They didn't know that I was a novice who was struggling just to stay upright, and it was Joe who deserved all the credit. Partnering with Joe actually made me look really good!

And so it is with Jesus. When we were first invited to dance, many of us began with a simple response. Since then, we may have wondered if we've gotten in over our heads. But somewhere along the line, we began to notice that things become easier when we fix our eyes on our Partner's face and relax in His arms; He is a strong Leader, and He can keep us upright. In this dance, there are points of exhilaration and joy like we've never known before, and we actually don't really need to know what's ahead. Our Partner knows, and He is leading. All we need to do is stay engaged in the dance and keep our eyes on Him in full surrender.

Of course, there is another way we can respond to His invitation. We can go to the dance floor not fully engaged with Jesus, spend most of our time looking around at what others are doing, learn the "right" steps, try to look cool, and now and then glance at our Partner with a nod. I've been there and done that. A dance like this isn't a tandem act; it's more of a solo performance. And this dance, of course, gets old. We find that we are constantly working to improve our style and do the steps better. But deep inside, we know this isn't the abundant dance Jesus invited us to. He wants us to be fully present to Him as He is fully present to us—leading, guiding, moving us across the floor with exhilaration. His dance is new every morning, and in our Partner's presence there is fullness of joy (see Psalm 16:11).

Perhaps you are reading this today feeling as fully engaged in the dance as you know how to be. For you this book may be a place to find

new ways to deepen your connection with your Partner. For others, this book may serve as a reminder that there is Someone on the dance floor who awaits you even now. You will discover that though the spiritual temperaments may cause the dance to look different for each of us, one thing is clear: We all have to choose to respond. When the Lord invites us to “come and talk with [Him],” our hearts will respond with, “Lord, I am coming” (Psalm 27:8, TLB).

Do you sense His summons even now? And if you do, how will you respond to His invitation? Will you step onto the dance floor and see what happens next? It will be exhilarating! For just as one songwriter said:

*I hope you never fear those mountains in the distance,  
Never settle for the path of least resistance. . . .  
Give the heavens above more than just a passing glance,  
And when you get the choice to sit it out or dance,  
I hope you dance  
I hope you dance  
I hope you dance.<sup>5</sup>*

PART ONE

THE  
GOD  
LANGUAGES

# 1

## WHAT IS A SPIRITUAL TEMPERAMENT?

Beth and I sat together in her living room drinking glasses of iced tea. Young parents of three, Beth and her husband were leading a large inner-city mission team, and Beth had asked if I'd come to help her sort out her spiritual life. Since I'd arrived, she'd told me about her recent move to the neighborhood, her freshly painted bedroom, and a bit about the kids. But I knew that once we settled down to tea, the spiritual concerns that were heaviest on her heart would begin to unfold.

On that hot summer day, Beth apprehensively told me her story. She said she felt dry spiritually, distant from God, that it had been a long time since she'd sensed God's presence or His leading in her life. Then she reluctantly confessed, "I actually haven't had a significant time with the Lord in months. My husband can sit at his desk, read his Bible, and journal for hours, but honestly, the only time I even feel *close* to God is when I'm in my garden."

Her garden. Beth continued to talk, but somehow I wasn't tuned in to what she was saying. My mind was riveted on the word *garden*. Vaguely picturing another garden, I found myself speculating about Eden, the setting where the Creator first interacted with His creation. Not a desk or a book or a journal. A garden.

A tiny bubble of sadness rose from my heart and burst on the surface of my thinking as I wondered what had happened. When did the very place the Lord first chose (and the Son selected in His most desperate hour) become so unacceptable? What had happened to narrow us so?

I stopped Beth midsentence and asked if we could go back and talk more about her time in the garden with God. Then we pondered together the Garden of Eden, deciding that since the Lord Himself initially chose it, perhaps the garden was indeed a sensible place to meet with Him. In fact, it may even be the optimal place for intimacy to occur, amid the earth, the plants, and the beauty of growing life. As we thought about the mystery of what is natural and organic, we both affirmed God's original choice.

Then with a bit of uncertain delight, I added my support of Beth's meeting place, sanctioning it as her very own "sacred space." With affirmation from me, Beth's eyes softened and the embarrassment faded from her face. A daughter of Eve had been given permission to meet with her Maker—genuinely, honestly, truly—in the place she felt most comfortable being herself.

That day as I got into my car, I wondered if I was feeling the same thing Peter felt long ago when he heard the Lord say, "Do not call something unclean if God has made it clean" (Acts 10:15, NLT). Something significant happened in my heart as I encouraged my friend to relate with God more authentically—in the breadth and depth of His creation. I saw in a more fundamental way my own need to help the Lord's people fully appreciate their own uniqueness, especially since diversity is one of God's core values. (After all, creating millions of distinct galaxies was His idea!) I longed for those who love the Lord to experience Him in His expansiveness, knowing firsthand that there is ample room for all to love Him—Father, Son, and Spirit—in a variety of ways.

## MY ROLE AS A SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR

That summer day with Beth was just one of many days I've spent listening to the stories of people who love Jesus. There is Jillian, a particularly sensitive young woman whose style of loving Jesus is best expressed in caring for troubled youth. And Della, who is moved heavenward most powerfully when reading a theology book written a lifetime ago. And Tim, who connects best with God while sitting on his noiseless balcony at one o'clock in the morning.

Dealing with spiritual differences has become an important

## ON YOUR OWN

*Consider the following questions about spiritual diversity, and write your thoughts in your journal or notebook.*

Do you really believe spiritual differences are okay?

*People connect with Jesus differently, and God actually designed it that way. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why?*

John Wesley, a renowned leader in England's evangelical revival in the eighteenth century, believed that Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience were complementary sources of religious authority. Each was meant to confirm, illuminate, and make vital the truths of the Christian life. Using each of these sources to support your answer, how do you respond to this restatement of the above assertion: *Considering Genesis 1 and God's universe (with its vast variety, breadth, and depth), people connect with Jesus differently—and God actually designed it that way.*

element of what I do. In fact, everywhere I go people ask how they might find more meaning in their relationship with Jesus, feeling their churches are not teaching them enough of what they need for their personal lives and struggles. Leaders often come for help, because in spite of their real need for spiritual connection, they simply aren't connecting! We talk about their spiritual dissatisfaction—how they hunger to know the Lord in His fullness, yet they just don't know how to make that happen for themselves. They know how to serve God, and they feel pretty good about that. But they realize there is more depth to this journey, and many just can't find their way.

Interestingly, some of these people have already turned to sources outside the evangelical church to find answers. The growing popularity of Henri Nouwen and Thomas Merton demonstrates the



hunger for more than what is now being offered in many evangelical circles.<sup>1</sup> As Sam Metcalf, president of Church Resource Ministries, observes:

One of the interesting phenomena that we see among the emerging generation of leaders in our post-modern world is a renewed interest in the liturgical. What I have noticed is a fascination, search, and even longing for a sense of historicity, rootedness, and tradition. There is too often a shallowness and even triteness that characterizes Western evangelicalism. Awe, grandeur, and a sense of transcendence gets lost sometimes in our groping for relevance.<sup>2</sup>

It seems that even among those who have walked with God for a long time, it is still uncertain territory knowing how to move into deeper communion with Him. We are hungry—not for more to do, but for more of God Himself. The generic “one size fits all” formula for spiritual growth simply isn’t cutting it. Serving as a pastoral counselor and spiritual director, I’ve observed that there is a real need for permission among those who are serious about Jesus to meet Him in ways that don’t exactly correspond with how others are meeting Him in their homes or communities of faith. In fact, this theme continually emerges in my conversations: “I want to connect with God more deeply, but I don’t know how. And the way someone else does it isn’t working for me. Can you help?”

Thankfully, there is help for these people. Our God—who is so vast and broad and wide—*does* want to meet us, and He seems intent upon doing that in a variety of ways. We don’t have to worry when the book our friend finds helpful doesn’t help us. Nor do we have to wonder why we feel most alive having a hearty discussion about theology in our Sunday school class while others prefer sitting in the congregation singing hymns. Because God created us differently, judgmental thoughts and misunderstandings don’t have to accompany disparities between Christians. Yes, part of these differences in our spiritual wiring can be attributed to spiritual gifting, but when it comes to enjoying God, some things cannot be explained simply by the spiritual gift categories.

## THE “ONE GOD, MANY RELATIONSHIPS” PHENOMENON

While “wiring” may be a catchword born of modern thinking, the idea of nuanced differences in knowing the one true God has been evident throughout Christendom. What moves one person toward loving and serving God is often very different from another’s approach, and some have described these differences as the “one God, many relationships” phenomenon,<sup>3</sup> recognizing that what inspires, fills, and provokes us spiritually is often not the same. Bill Hybels discusses this in his book *Courageous Leadership*:

Years ago I began to notice that various leaders whom I respected went about their walks with God in vastly different ways. The variety was stunning to me. I started keeping a mental list of all their different approaches. Then I came across a book called *Sacred Pathways*, written by Gary Thomas, which further pushed my thinking on this subject. . . . Sacred pathways are like doors that open into a room where we can feel particularly close to God. Just as different leaders have many different personalities and combinations of gifts, so they have many different spiritual pathways.<sup>4</sup>

I, too, have become aware of these differing spiritual pathways in my work. But spiritual variations took on new texture and meaning during my doctoral work in spiritual formation. As I began surveying ministry leaders for my doctoral project, discussing with them their spiritual preferences—their most fundamental, natural, and intrinsic ways of knowing and loving God—I began to see that greater spiritual passion resulted when people were pursuing God in ways they enjoyed and found most life giving. Often these spiritual preferences were not given expression; instead, people seemed to be doing what they were taught to do, almost afraid of what they enjoyed. When this occurred, I noticed that spiritual satisfaction declined, as did a person’s sense of closeness to God. Even spiritual hunger waned when a person was not relating to God as he or she was wired to do. The relationship I saw between spiritual preferences and spiritual practices intrigued me as well, especially when I noticed that by matching preferences with practices, a person’s passion for God might actually increase.

I also found that many times people need to be *invited* to do what they enjoy most in their relationship with God. Without that permission—that freedom—Christians can become stuck in old patterns, even though these patterns are not working for them. Thus, I saw the importance of activating that which flows most naturally from our hearts to God's, namely, knowing our spiritual temperaments and how we are uniquely wired.

## THE SPIRITUAL TEMPERAMENTS

When we talk about the spiritual journey, we don't often hear about "spiritual temperaments." We may hear folks discussing their spiritual gifts or how their personalities affect their prayer lives,<sup>5</sup> but we find little language to explain the most central issue of our lives—how we most deeply love and connect with Jesus. While one person may recognize that his heart for God grows stronger when he is taking a stand against evil, and another might sense that her passion for God rises most while she is sitting in a cathedral before a life-size statue of her Savior, we may not realize that these differences are not arbitrary or random; they are the result of our spiritual temperaments.

When we use the language of spiritual temperaments to describe our spiritual preferences, we are talking about how our inclinations and distinctions fall into identifiable categories, groupings that help us understand others and ourselves more readily. Gary Thomas, the originator of the spiritual temperaments concept, has described these innate spiritual pathways in his book *Sacred Pathways: Discovering Your Soul's Path to God*.<sup>6</sup> He discusses nine ways to draw near to God:

- The Activist—loving God through confrontation with evil
- The Ascetic—loving God through solitude and simplicity
- The Caregiver—loving God through serving others
- The Contemplative—loving God through adoration
- The Enthusiast—loving God through mystery and celebration
- The Intellectual—loving God through the mind
- The Naturalist—loving God through experiencing Him outdoors
- The Sensate—loving God through the senses
- The Traditionalist—loving God through ritual and symbol

I used these descriptions in my own doctoral work and found them to be helpful and enlightening. The Naturalist, for example, senses God’s nearness when he or she is outside, while Ascetics find their love for God most stimulated in a simple environment of silence and solitude. Of course, the ways people relate to God may surpass these nine, but the categories provide a good starting place for assessing our spiritual wiring. Each of these spiritual temperaments will be described in detail later, in chapter 3.

### ON YOUR OWN

*Consider the following questions about your own knowledge of spiritual temperaments:*

List all the things that you currently know about spiritual temperaments. Where did you learn these things, and how has this knowledge affected your own connection to God?

What would you like to learn about spiritual temperaments?  
How do you think gaining this new knowledge will affect your connection to God?

### Answering Some Basic Questions

Since the concept of spiritual temperaments has not been widely discussed, let’s look at a few common questions.

*What exactly is a spiritual temperament?*

A spiritual temperament is the way we best relate to God, namely, our most natural and meaningful approach to connecting with God, knowing God, and loving God. A spiritual temperament serves as an entry point into greater awareness of Jesus—His presence and His love. It is that place where we almost effortlessly find what some have referred to as our “sacred space.” Our spiritual temperaments influence where and how we are quieted inside, and where and how we most often

sense God speaking to us, refreshing us, and stirring our passion for Him. We might say it is where we most often hear “the gentle invitation of Jesus to dwell with Him.”<sup>7</sup> Our spiritual temperament serves as our “default mode” spiritually, the style we fall back on when we want to be with God and are not intentionally pursuing Him another way.

Just as one person may prefer football to golf, or skiing to mountain biking, so a spiritual temperament is a preference in the spiritual realm. While a personality temperament identifies our preferences when interacting with people and the world around us on a horizontal plane, a spiritual temperament identifies how we interact with God and the spiritual realities on the vertical level. Unlike other mere preferences, however, when we neglect our spiritual temperaments, we often feel dry and lifeless spiritually.

It's important to note that spiritual temperaments are not intended to be neat little boxes that conveniently explain everything about us. Instead, they are ways to help us understand how and why we do things a certain way. They are simply pieces of the puzzle of our complex makeup and are not meant to function as permanent labels that completely define us.

### ON YOUR OWN

*Consider the following:*

How do you respond to this question raised by Henri Nouwen:  
“Where is it that you most often hear the gentle invitation of Jesus to dwell with Him?”

#### *Do we choose our spiritual temperaments?*

Just as our personalities seem to come as part of the birth package, so our spiritual temperaments seem to be God-given, not something we select. Indeed, we see differing spiritual temperaments within the same family, and spiritual preferences can be observed in a child even at an early age. As soon as spiritual likes and dislikes appear, a spiritual tempera-

ment may be revealing itself. But throughout life, we all have choices, and these choices play into the equation of who we become, even in the spiritual realm. For example, though I may enjoy praying in solitude, it is my choice whether to join a monastery or simply become a member of a prayer group in my local church. Although initially my preferences may have been innate, my choices—along with the choices of others who influence me—will certainly play a role in the person I become.

*Why does God give us spiritual temperaments?*

I like to think of a spiritual temperament as a genre, a way that God is using to tell His story to us. As Ken Gire explains in his book *Windows of the Soul*, in the beginning of time there was God and humankind. Then came a great temptation, a great Fall, and a great hiding.<sup>8</sup> Perhaps God knew that we would continue to hide unless He found a way to communicate with us, to break into our distracted lives and penetrate our hearts with the reality that we are loved by Someone outside ourselves, Someone who is constantly watching and waiting for us to step into life with Him. So He crafted a way to remind us that He is always there, desiring to connect, and then He hardwired that reminder into our souls.

Do you ever find that no matter what your relationship with God is like at the moment, the sight of a mountain range or the vastness of the ocean can literally stop you in your tracks and take your mind to the One who created this beauty? Or maybe the face of a child becomes a reminder of God's love, or some majestic piece of music calms your soul, directing your thoughts heavenward. We need these cues—prompts that stir our hunger for the divine, unseen realities—to point us to the Lord.

*So God uses our spiritual temperaments to draw us to Himself?*

Yes. In the beginning, humankind was created with a deep hunger for God and a propensity to worship Him. But in our fallenness, our hunger became obscured, our propensity to worship clouded. While the world continues to distract us from our God-hunger—especially as we worship at the throne of the created rather than the Creator—God offers a higher invitation. In the midst of our busy, cluttered lives, His clarion call can still be heard: “I am here. Come to Me. Draw close to

Me and let Me love you.” Through our spiritual temperaments, God keeps reaching out to us, even when our hearts have become dull and we have gotten lost in our overcommitment. He is unmistakable in these moments as we find ourselves involuntarily ushered into His presence. Something in us is quieted and hushed, and suddenly we are aware that He is there.

*Do those who don't know Jesus have spiritual temperaments?*

I'm not sure I can fully answer that question. But I do know that long before I came to Jesus, I was drawn to a God of beauty whose name I didn't know. When I walked along the beach, I knew that there must be a Creator behind all the beauty and vastness of the creation, and this Creator was surely more powerful than I. Intuitively I recognized that this God must desire some sort of response from me. Perhaps God was, even then, using my spiritual temperament to invite me to see the Unseen. Perhaps it is through our spiritual temperaments that we find ourselves involuntarily responding to the Transcendent, and in turn, getting a glimpse of the Savior who waits for us all our lives.

*Why do so many differing spiritual temperaments exist?*

The Lord of creation—whose universe displays an endless breadth of diversity—gave His children many ways of enjoying Him and expressing love for Him. In creation, we see that God did not create just one type of anything, whether it was a flower or a fingerprint or an animal or a solar system. Why, then, should we expect there to be only one way for God's people to love and worship Him?

Likewise, those who physically walked with Jesus didn't all love Him identically. While John the Beloved enjoyed spending time in reflection with Jesus (see John 13:23), Peter was a man of action who, at times, was bold to confront the evil threatening his Lord (see John 18:10). Andrew seemed to be the practical type who wanted to serve Jesus by helping feed the hungry (see John 6:8-9), while James was indignant about those who did not receive his Master, offering to call down fire from heaven (see Luke 9:54). When it comes to loving God, there are certainly a lot of ways to express that affection.

In addition, God is so vast, so deep, and so broad that it takes

many expressions of love to affirm the multiple facets of His Person; just *one* picture is not enough! In fact, when it comes to worshipping God, even multiple venues fall short of His magnificence and beauty—whether dancing before Him, serving the poor, or experiencing Him in nature. Indeed, our spiritual hunger is greater than just one expression can accommodate.

And God Himself doesn't come in the same way to all those who seek Him. He humbles Himself and meets us where we are, calling astronomers from the East through a star and a Scripture (see Matthew 2), while sending a whole host of angels to sing His Son's birth announcement to some shepherds (see Luke 2). God is never contained in our little boxes.

Each spiritual temperament displays a distinct aspect of God's character—His justice, His care, His beauty, and His changelessness. Together we are like a diamond, each showing the world a distinct facet of who God is through our unique expressions of love for Him. It's almost as if God has many "love languages."<sup>9</sup> His heart is moved when each of us speaks to Him in the language of the heart, whether that be quiet meditation or robust song or speaking out against tyranny to defend the poor. Each language thrills God's heart a bit differently.

### *Do most people have only one spiritual temperament?*

None of us function with only one spiritual temperament, but we all have a primary way that we find most meaningful when relating to God—one or two ways that help us encounter Him *best*. I use three terms to divide the temperaments into subsets, depending upon the strength of each spiritual temperament: Our *passionate* temperaments are those that are strongest and stir our passion for God most readily; our *pleasurable* temperaments are those that we enjoy and that nurture our relationship with God; and our *potential* temperaments are those that are relatively unused and undeveloped, almost foreign to us. The ways the spiritual temperaments interact with one another also create configurations that help define who we are.

### *Can my spiritual temperaments change over time?*

Just as people's tastes in food change with time as they grow and age, so differing experiences can modify our spiritual temperaments. Although a



person will most likely retain the same core temperament, the strength of his or her preferences can certainly shift, especially as new spiritual experiences are added and new practices utilized. Thankfully, we are never limited by our preferences when it comes to knowing and loving God!

Though I have maintained the same two passionate spiritual temperaments throughout the time I have known the Lord, my other spiritual preferences—those falling within the pleasurable and potential ranges—seem to be more seasonal in their strength. For example, when I was a new Christian, my activism was higher. When I went through a time of near burnout in ministry, my Naturalist temperament became more prominent because I needed to get away from the people part of ministry and just be nurtured by God in the outdoors. I have found that my secondary preferences seem to evolve somewhat during different stages of life, while my primary spiritual temperaments remain the same.

Interestingly, some people conclude that as we age, we tend to find our “true home” with God in terms of how we most prefer to know and love Him. It is conceivable that when we were younger, we were more influenced by our families’ preferences or the style of loving God prescribed by our communities of faith. But over time, we become restless and less willing to bother with anything that does not really bring deep, authentic connection with Jesus. I have seen this same phenomenon among young people, too. Unwilling to simply go through the motions, they want to relate to God in ways that truly fit them and bring a genuine spiritual bond, in spite of what they have been taught or shown by others.

*Will knowing my spiritual temperament help me in my intimacy with Christ?*

Knowing ourselves—including the preferences and inclinations we have in seeking God—is an important way we honor the Lord, who made us. Coming to God authentically, “as we are,” is essential. James Houston, renowned author, professor, and spiritual director, says that when we come to God, we must always begin where He is creating desire for Himself within us. I have a friend who likes to sit by the fireplace and pray, especially when her baby is asleep and her husband is out of the

house. She senses God's presence in these moments, and her desire to be with the Lord is often strongest then.

Houston goes on to say that we can't simply meet God as others meet Him, because God will only meet us in the "authentic place"<sup>10</sup>—that place within ourselves that is unprocessed, candid, and sincere. In other words, God will meet us when we come to Him authentically, with honest and open hearts. And we can be certain that He will meet us when we come to Him in an unsimulated, genuine way.

### ON YOUR OWN

*Consider the following questions:*

Describe a time when you felt especially close to God. What were the circumstances surrounding that connection?

In what kind of setting do you most enjoy communing with God?

I like to think of the "authentic place" as that home in my soul where I can truly be myself with God—with nothing feigned—and let what is in my heart flow to Him naturally. Because God loves me unconditionally, I can afford to be honest with Him about my true identity. I can share my feelings and thoughts openly, and my spiritual temperament permits me to love God from that authentic place where I take delight in being with Him.

*But what if I haven't known my spiritual temperament all these years?* Many people have worshipped and loved God in ways that best suit them for as long as they have known Jesus, yet they've done this almost intuitively. Others have stayed closer to the tradition in which they were raised, trying to live out their spiritual lives "by the book." But as we continue in our spiritual journeys, we sometimes find ourselves in a

place where things sort of stop working for us spiritually. It is then that greater self-awareness becomes vital.

A problem results, however, when self-awareness is not permitted and one's spiritual temperament is not affirmed as a gift from God—first by the individual and then by the body of Christ. As John Colborne says:

If being spiritual is limited to the practice of the spiritual disciplines in ways narrowly defined by specific practices carried out in specific ways, we will continue to frustrate people who are doomed to seek spirituality in ways completely unnatural to them. Such an approach fails to recognize that God has made us all in his image, as spiritual beings with the capacity to grow and express our spirituality in many different ways.<sup>11</sup>

In other words, while spiritual disciplines are important, listening to your inclinations and desires is also essential in guiding you deeper into knowing and loving God.

*Is the ultimate goal to know and understand my spiritual temperament?*

While understanding one's spiritual temperament is crucial, it is not the ultimate objective. This is not about narcissism, self-actualization, or the kind of spiritual self-absorption that occurs when we make ourselves the center of the equation. Rather, it is about knowing ourselves so that we can not only feed our own souls but also "know God in a new way, love him with every cell of our being, and then express that love by reaching out to others."<sup>12</sup> The spiritual life is not simply about what goes on inside of us; it is about loving God and those around us. As Jesus said, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself" (Luke 10:27, NASB).

The ultimate goal, then, is to know the Father as the Son knows Him, to trust the Father as the Son trusts Him, to love the Father as the Son loves Him, and to allow His Spirit to fill our lives so that we grow into the "measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:13, NASB). That is how God ultimately designed us to function in this life.

When He is our portion and we are delighting in Him, we will not be so tempted to partake of the “junk food” around us, because finding fulfillment in God is the most powerful antidote to sin.<sup>13</sup> Thus, the outcome of knowing our spiritual temperaments is a life of ongoing communion with God, which draws us “toward the love of God, the character of Christ, and daily obedience to His leading as God draws us into greater, loving intimacy with the Trinity. . . . It impacts character development, but it is more than any character trait or skill; it encompasses the believer’s whole-life response to the Triune God.”<sup>14</sup>

## IN SUMMARY

Putting it all together, a spiritual temperament is God’s *gift to you*. It is how He designed you to best connect with Him. Perhaps God gives spiritual temperaments as directly as He gives spiritual gifts, or perhaps they come, in part, via the experiences that shape our lives. However our spiritual temperaments are formed—whether by nature or nurture or a combination of both—they become God’s gift to us.

Secondly, a spiritual temperament is your *gift to God*—it is how you best express love to Him and where your passion for Him is stirred. God derives pleasure as we love Him and receive His love, and the way He made us is the way He knows we will most readily find our joy and delight in Him.

Thirdly, a spiritual temperament is your *gift to the body of Christ*. Who you are and how you best know and love God are the gifts you bring to others who are different from you. We model these gifts for those around us as we live out our faith. The body needs what you bring, just as you need what it brings. When the Bible commands us to “stimulate one another to love and good deeds” (Hebrews 10:24, NASB), this includes letting others see the way we love and serve Christ. The faith of others grows as they see us expressing our love for God.

Lastly, a spiritual temperament is your *gift to a lost world*. As others see the joy and satisfaction you derive from knowing and loving God, they will witness the reality of a God who is worth knowing, loving, celebrating, and serving. That will make others hungry for Jesus. As

you identify your spiritual temperament and claim it as God's gift, others are also blessed.

Now let's take a look at how God has uniquely wired *you!*

## FOR FURTHER REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. As you reread the excerpt below, paraphrased from James Houston's words, what do you think is meant by the "authentic place"?

*When we come to God, we must always begin where He is creating desire for Himself within us. We can't meet God as we would meet someone else, because God only and always meets us in the "authentic place."*

2. Describe *your* authentic place with God.
3. Pay special attention this week to your "authentic place," and ask yourself the question, "Where do I sense desire for God occurring?" Try to notice when, where, and what is happening when desire for God is present. Then sit with that desire a few minutes; pay attention to it and let it settle in you. Later record your experience.

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## CHAPTER 1

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- 3 Kenneth Boa, *Conformed to His Image: Biblical and Practical Approaches to Spiritual Formation* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2001).
- 4 Bill Hybels, *Courageous Leadership* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2002), 216-217.
- 5 See, for example, Chester Michael and Marie Norrisey, *Prayer and Temperament* (Charlottesville, Va.: Open Door, 1984).

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- 6 Gary Thomas, *Sacred Pathways* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), 16.
- 7 Henri Nouwen, *The Road to Daybreak* (New York: Doubleday, 1988), 8.
- 8 Ken Gire, *Windows of the Soul* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1996), 16.
- 9 Gary Chapman, *The Love Languages of God* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2002).
- 10 As a spiritual director, James Houston gave this feedback to his directee Paul Rhoads in a face-to-face spiritual direction appointment. Paul, a friend and colleague, gave me permission to share this information. Houston was the founding principal and chancellor of Regent College in Vancouver, British Columbia. One of his classic works is called *The Transforming Power of Prayer* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1996).
- 11 Colborne, "Renewal and Temperament," 2.
- 12 Thomas, *Sacred Pathways*, 34.
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 Thanks to Tom Ashbrook and Church Resource Ministries' Imago Christi spiritual formation team, 2003, for this definition.

### CHAPTER 2

- 1 Thomas, *Sacred Pathways*, 16.
- 2 Adele Ahlberg Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 15–16.

### CHAPTER 3

- 1 Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*, 215–216.
- 2 Ibid., 223.
- 3 Richard Foster, *Streams of Living Water* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2000), 137–144.
- 4 Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*, 244.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Roger D. Sorrell, *St. Francis of Assisi and Nature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 20.
- 7 Philip Rousseau, *Ascetics, Authority, and the Church in the Age of Jerome and Cassian* (London: Oxford University Press, 1978), 48.
- 8 Thomas, *Sacred Pathways*, 120.
- 9 Ibid., 133.
- 10 Ibid., 136–137.
- 11 M. Basil Pennington, *A Place Apart: Monastic Prayer and Practice for Everyone* (New York: Doubleday, 1983), 111.
- 12 Felix Duffey, *Psychiatry and Asceticism* (London: B. Herder Book Co., 1950), 60.
- 13 Thomas, *Sacred Pathways*, 123.
- 14 Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*, 221.
- 15 Thomas, *Sacred Pathways*, 164.
- 16 Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*, 221–222.
- 17 Thomas, *Sacred Pathways*, 210.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Myra Perrine has a passion for intimacy with God and has been speaking and teaching on this subject for more than thirty-five years. She has authored several workbooks to help others draw near to Jesus, and as a Transformational LIFE Coach, Myra is gifted in helping people “think outside the box.” With a doctor of ministry degree in spiritual formation, Myra is currently on staff with Church Resource Ministries, a missions organization that develops leaders to start and strengthen churches worldwide, where Myra offers pastoral care and spiritual guidance to some of CRM’s three hundred missionaries in twenty-two nations. As an adjunct professor at Azusa Pacific University, she teaches a variety of classes, including spiritual growth and leadership. She also speaks to churches and organizations on topics such as intimacy with God, leadership, and spiritual formation.

Myra and her husband, Dan, have one son and live in Upland, California. They also have two dogs, Nicholas and Ginger.