

Discover Your Soul's  
Path to God

# SACRED PATHWAYS

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STUDY GUIDE

## A Study Guide for Sacred Pathways

"This study has been prepared by Adalee Lewis and is offered for your benefit. It has not been written by Gary Thomas, nor have the suggested books been compiled by him. It is a labor of love offered by a reader to those groups who might appreciate a headstart in their own effort to study Sacred Pathways in a group format."

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## Chapter Six

## CAREGIVER

Loving God by Loving Others

### DESCRIPTION

"Caregivers serve God by serving others. They often claim to see Christ in the poor and needy, and their faith is built up by interacting with other people. Such Christians may (consider) the devotional lives of contemplatives and enthusiasts (to be) selfish. ...caring for others...recharges a caregiver's batteries." (27)

"Mother Teresa ...looked behind the eyes of the poor, the sick, and the needy, and said she saw the image of God. She learned to love God by loving others." (135)

"For caregivers, giving care isn't a chore but a form of worship. Martyrs need not apply."(135)

"Some Christians will have a particular gift and calling for (caregiving). These acts of mercy are a very practical way for them to show their love for God, but also to grow in their love for God. Caregivers may hear God more clearly when they change an adult's diaper than when they sit quietly in prayer." (149)

"Caregiving is not a license to judge others who serve God in different ways...all Christians are called to care for others...there are different ways this obligation can be fulfilled... it is not for us to judge the validity of someone else's worship." (146)

### CAUTIONS

"Caregiving as a temperament means we express our love to God by reaching out to others; it's the picture of a heart overflowing with love and spilling out onto those around us. Caregiving as a disease is actually an act of taking; it's an act of deception, loving others so that they will love or need us in return." (147)

"Activists and caregivers may have more in common than you might think... both can work together - one to help solve the underlying problem, the other to give comfort until the problem is addressed." (147)

## WELL KNOWN CAREGIVERS

Henri Nouwen, Mother Teresa, Mordecai,

## SCRIPTURES TO PONDER

Esther. 2:11; 4:1; 4:13-14; 8:7-8; Ezek. 16:49; Story of the Good Samaritan; I John 3:14,17; Phil. 2:4; Heb. 6:10; Jas. 1:27; I Pet. 4:9-10; Mt. 25:35-36; Jas. 1:27

## SONGS TO ENHANCE WORSHIP

All My Wounds Cry  
 Blest Are They  
 Come, Ye Disconsolate  
 Faithful Men  
 Faithful One  
 For This I Have Jesus  
 Give Thanks  
 He Gives Us More Grace  
 In His Time  
 It Is Well With My Soul  
 It's Not By Might  
 Lord, Speak to Me that I May Speak  
 I've Got a River of Life  
 Meekness and Majesty  
 Oh, Master, Let Me Walk With Thee  
 Only In God Is My Soul At Rest  
 Precious Lord, Take My Hand  
 Rock Of Ages  
 The Servant King  
 The Servant Song  
 Trust His Heart  
 We Are An Offering  
 You Are My All In All

## SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

1. "Adopt" someone - a prisoner, neighborhood child or elderly person; Open your home to students, neighborhood kids
2. Help a friend through a crisis, counsel at a crisis pregnancy center
3. Work in the inner city, e.g. Mission Year (Bart Campolo)
4. Help someone battling substance abuse
5. Volunteer on a rescue squad, work in a soup kitchen

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What are some of the ways in which you have served others? What motivated you to help them?
2. What “return” (positive or negative) do you receive when you help others? These can be spiritual, emotional, etc.
3. How do you feel about people who are not actively ministering to the poor, sick, etc.?
4. Do you ever minister to others out of your own need? Or because you feel you have to? Or don’t know how to say, “No”? Contrast that experience with a time when you freely helped someone out of a desire to minister to him/her.
5. Think about your relationships. Do you have relationships with people who do not “need” you? If not, how might you begin to develop friendships outside your circle of ministry?

## RESOURCES

Mother Teresa, Becky Benenate, Joseph Durepos. *No Greater Love*. (2003) Group West. ISBN: 1577312015

Nouwen, Henri J. M. *Can You Drink the Cup?* (1996). Ave Maria Press. ISBN: 0877935815

Sjogren, Steve (1993). *Conspiracy of Kindness*. Ann Arbor: Servant.

Wuthnow, Robert (1991). *Acts of Compassion*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

