

Discovering Yourself Tools

God created all people in His image, yet He made each of us unique so that we reflect His image in a way that no-one else can. The problem is that many people do not really know themselves very well. Not only do we need to grow in knowing and experiencing God, we also need to grow in knowing ourselves more deeply. In fact, Christians throughout the centuries have discovered that we must grow in both these areas together, or we will never get very far in either.

Help me know Thee, O God, help me know myself, that is all! (Augustine)

Know yourself and you will have a wholesome fear of God.... Without knowledge of self, we have no knowledge of God. (Bernard of Clairvaux)

Our wisdom, in so far as it ought to be deemed true and solid wisdom, consists almost entirely of two parts: the knowledge of God and the knowledge of ourselves.... The knowledge of God and the knowledge of ourselves are bound together by a mutual tie. (John Calvin)

(Quotes from The Emerging Journey, Stage Two, Vantagepoint3, 2009, pages 12-13)

The following are several tools that can help us begin to go deeper in knowing who we truly are. This road into greater self-discovery takes courage and persistence to travel, yet the reward is great as we will experience increasing freedom to be ourselves and increasing awareness of our Creator's love for us and His desire to see us become all He has created us to be.

Participate in one or more of the tools below, and be sure to have 2-3 friends do them as well and meet with you to discuss what you have discovered about yourselves.

Level 1

Option 1

Ask 2-3 friends to commit to going through Soul Searching by Mindy Caliguire together. There are 4 sections to the book. Read through 1 section on your own (takes about 10 minutes 3-4 times a week), and meet once a week to go through the Group Discussion at the end of the section. On the fourth week, evaluate what you learned and decide on your next step of growth together.

Option 2

Ask 2-3 friends to go through Growing Up: A Lifelong Journey, a guided discussion that explores knowing more of who God is, who you are and what God's call is on your life. There are 8 "conversations" – go through the reflection and questions on your own and then meet to discuss together.

* Most resources are available through the Appleseed Resource Centre (library or bookstore).

Level 2

Read through Sacred Pathways: Discover Your Soul's Path to God by Gary Thomas with 2-3 others (or with your small group) to investigate how you naturally connect with and experience God. This greater self-understanding can lead to a much richer, deeper relationship with God, since this tool helps reveal how He has uniquely wired you to know and worship Him. There are 9 pathways presented – you may want to read and discuss two at a time. A free study guide is available at <http://www.garythomas.com/study-guides> .

Level 3

Option 1

With 2-3 friends, read David Benner's book The Gift of Being Yourself. Start by reading chapters 1-2 on your own, and then meet to share your observations, questions, concerns and highlights. Then read chapters 3-4, and investigate which of the nine Enneagram types you might be (page 69) as this could reveal your core sin pattern. Finish reading chapter 5-6 with a special focus on discovering how to move towards becoming your "true self" more, and share with one another what you have learned.

Option 2

The Enneagram is not a Christian tool per se, but some Christians believe it can be very helpful in understanding our selves and our core sin patterns to a greater degree, which can encourage a greater trust in God and freedom to be our true selves as He created us to be. There are many resources available for those who want to explore the Enneagram types further, including online tests to determine your type. These resources do not necessarily reflect the views of Centre Street Church, but are tools that may be helpful to you.

- Go to www.enneagramcentral.com and click on "Free Style Test" in the top, left corner. Take the test and prayerfully reflect on the results with others to learn more about what your tendencies might be in regards to living out of a "false self".
- Go to www.enneagraminstitute.com and click on "Free RHETI Sampler" in the left column (a 10-minute online test).
- Check out the book Enneagram: A Christian Perspective by Richard Rohr and Adreas Ebert to hear how they feel the Enneagram can be helpful for Christians.

Growing Deeper Resources

Enneagram: A Christian Perspective by Richard Rohr

Merton's Palace of Nowhere by James Finley