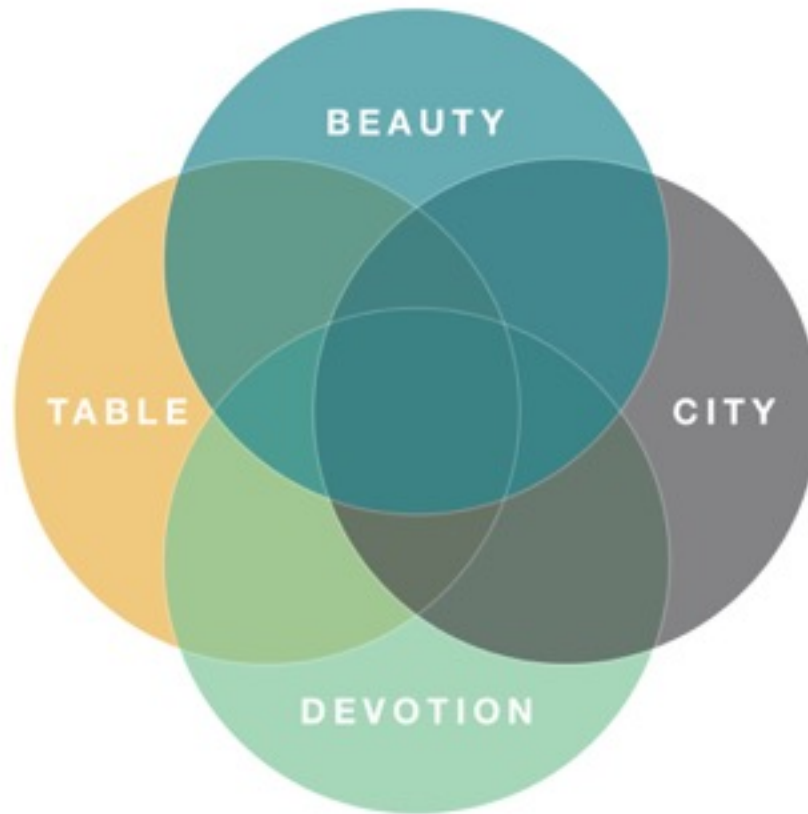


**The Inspiring Nature of the Everyday**  
*In what ways do you most naturally encounter God?*



# BEAUTY

## DO YOU SEE YOURSELF?

The Netflix app on your phone is not just a gateway for your kids to be distracted on a long car ride but also a gateway to encounter God through the stories told in film and tv. You are likely to be inspired in your own life simply by losing yourself in a story and hearing some poignant words spoken by the protagonist. You feel deeply the stories told in the arts. Your faith finds meaning in the truth and beauty that surrounds your everyday. Your Instagram feed is ripe with inspiration, giving you a greater sense of the nearness of the Divine. You may be accused of taking things too seriously or getting “sucked in” by the story of others. You are emotionally involved in the stories that surround you. Even the very word STORY is ripe with meaning, unfolding all kinds of inspiration. Beauty is a pursuit for you. Both to express it authentically and to find it in every moment of everyday. Truth is not a rigid stone like pronouncement, but a diamond in the rough that glimmers its multifaceted prism of light throughout life.

God and creativity are intertwined. You see the language of Genesis — the beginning — as the spark of creativity that is both universally other and intimately within all people. The image of God, or at least an aspect of it, is the creative expression we all have. You cringe at the distinction of some being creative and others not so much. A true hope of yours is to for everyone to see the artistry around them and within them. A soul that is free and alive is a soul that creates. We need not only a new view of God but a new view of us. We need a new theology and a new anthropology. Humans create. - Erwin McManus

The arts and the natural world are so much more than college courses or scientific hypothesis — they are realms that birth and nurture awe in our life. Science is a realm of wonder and discovery. The arts offer an expression of truth and story. Nature is the evidence of God’s otherness and nearness.

*He is the exact image of the invisible God, the firstborn of creation, the eternal. It was by Him that everything was created: the heavens, the earth, all things within and upon them, all things seen and unseen, thrones and dominions, spiritual powers and authorities. Every detail was crafted through His design, by His own hands, and for His purposes. He has always been! It is His hand that holds everything together. He is the head of this body, the church. He is the beginning, the first of those to be reborn from the dead, so that in every aspect, at every view, in everything—He is first. God was pleased that all His fullness should forever dwell in the Son who, as predetermined by God, bled peace into the world by His death on the cross as God’s means of reconciling to Himself the whole creation—all things in heaven and all things on earth. - Colossians 1 THE VOICE*

## CONSIDER.

*Do you get out in nature to find God?*

*Does holy ground for you include the art museum, the cinema, a book of poetry, and a hike through the mountains?*

*Do you have a sense of the Divine when you engage in stories? Whether they be the story of the songwriter, the story of the screen play, or the story in the art?*

*Do you consider yourself and everyone as creative?*

*Do you write poetry to express whats going on in you?*

*Do you paint or draw or create in order to speak about your inner life or the experience of others?*

*Are you sensitive to the aesthetics that surround you? Do you care about how things look? what’s being expressed?*

*Are you sensitive? emotional? particular?*

*Does faith, for you, speak to more than a spiritual aspect of life, but more of a full-bodied everyday encounter?*

*Does the “ideal church” is a creative hub of both expressing your faith and receiving truth from others art?*

*While you love so many things about Convergence ;) you are especially drawn to the way you see God in our expression of faith creatively and the discovery of truth in the creative voices of our culture.*

## DEVOTION

### DO YOU SEE YOURSELF?

You may be an old soul. Traditions and regular rhythms are a means to the Divine. You are energized by the words and symbols of the faith—both ancient and new. You find a sense of refreshment in a passage, a blog post, or a verse that you memorized as a child. You are keenly aware of your need for silence, for prayer, and for time alone. You seek moments to be alone with your thoughts, or at least to notice and affirm a word or image that inspires you for the day. Passages of scripture seem to buzz with Divine reverberation within you. Journaling or at least making mental notes about how the day has gone or how you hope the day will go is valuable time spent to you. Your bookshelf, or kindle, is full of books on prayer and the importance of being present.

You find comfort in the rituals and symbols of the faith. The cross. The dove. The ashes. The candles. Singing the benediction. Taking communion. These all provide a level of comfort you associate with Christ. You are embraced by God as you participate in any of these practices. When you think and talk of faith, you most commonly use intimate language, a kind of spiritual/relational mix of metaphors.

*I saw the Master sitting on a throne—high, exalted!—and the train of his robes filled the Temple. Angel-seraphs hovered above him, each with six wings. With two wings they covered their faces, with two their feet, and with two they flew. And they called back and forth one to the other,*

*Holy, Holy, Holy is God-of-the-Angel-Armies.*

*His bright glory fills the whole earth . . .*

*I said, “Doom! It’s Doomsday!*

*I’m as good as dead!*

*Every word I’ve ever spoken is tainted—*

*blasphemous even!*

*And the people I live with talk the same way,*

*using words that corrupt and desecrate.*

*And here I’ve looked God in the face!*

*The King! God-of-the-Angel-Armies!”*

*Then one of the angel-seraphs flew to me. He held a live coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. He touched my mouth with the coal and said,*

*“Look. This coal has touched your lips.*

*Gone your guilt,*

*your sins wiped out.” - Isaiah 6 MSG*

### CONSIDER.

*Do you see time alone with God as an invitation?*

*Do you mostly refer to the relational aspect of Christ? the nearness of God in the intimacy of contemplative practices?*

*Does prayer seem second nature?*

*Do you see God in the pages of Scripture?*

*Do practices that lead you to “step away” from life actually help you enter life more engaged?*

*Do words like “awareness” “being present” and “intimate” describe your hope for faith?*

*Does the ancient-ness of the faith give you a sense of roots within Christianity?*

*Does faith, for you, get expressed in prayer and symbols?*

*Does the “ideal church” quietly revere for “the Holy” that is both intimate and other?*

*While you love so many things about Convergence ;) you are especially drawn to the way you see God in our observation of the calendar, communion, contemplative practices, and the reading of Scripture.*

# CITY

## DO YOU SEE YOURSELF?

Some of us are inspired by the web of intricacies that make a city what it is. It is the skyline, the city lights, the energy that exudes from the life that makes the urban setting all that it is. The neighborhoods are not just names of streets and points on google maps, but they represent lives and values and a connectedness that makes the city diverse and unified. Taking a walk or riding your bike through the interchange of houses and pockets of shops, graffiti, and flower beds, people on their porches and in the parks speak volumes to your soul. Even the politics of what will come to our city and what won't, who is giving voice to the vision and who is hindering the life of our city matters to you. You know the names on the school board and in the capitol. You feel deeply the struggle of the under resourced, those in perpetual poverty, and the veterans on the streets. You are on boards. You participate in town hall meetings. You protest or at least keep up with the multiple voices on the issues of the city.

And if it isn't politics that you engage, it is the neighborhood. You know your neighbors names, you may even be on a planning committee or two. You have a strong sense of connection to your house, your neighborhood, your part of the city. You 'keep it local' and encourage others to as well.

You hear the call of God in the language of the prophets and the descriptions of the least, the last, and the lost. You see the Gospel — the Good News — as freedom for the captives and justice and shalom rushing in like rivers.

*I heard a voice thunder from the Throne: "Look! Look! God has moved into the neighborhood, making his home with men and women! They're his people, he's their God. He'll wipe every tear from their eyes. Death is gone for good—tears gone, crying gone, pain gone—all the first order of things gone." The Enthroned continued, "Look! I'm making everything new. Write it all down—each word dependable and accurate." - Revelations 21 MSG*

## CONSIDER.

*Do you sense a kind of Divine energy from our city? from the neighborhoods? from the urban core?*

*Are you keenly sensitive to the goings on in our city and you neighborhood?*

*Do you carry a sense of ownership and pride in your city?*

*Do the needs of those in the city burden you?*

*Are you concerned with spreading out resources to include the least the last and the lost?*

*Do you 'keep it local' as often as possible?*

*Do you have a philosophy of 'becoming a regular' in the places you shop, eat, and work?*

*Does community involvement inspire you?*

*Does your hope and imagination for a better city somehow connect with a sense of God's work and nearness?*

*Does faith, for you, get expressed by resourcing others?*

*Does the "ideal church" focus on service and missional efforts in the city?*

*While you love so many things about Convergence ;) you are especially drawn to the way you see God in our service of the neighborhood, our interaction in the city.*

## TABLE

### *DO YOU SEE YOURSELF?*

You are inspired by fostering relationships and encountering moments shared with groups of people. Time with a friend or even the energy of hosting a party speaks to our soul. You are renewed and revived by gathering together: at times it is the small and intimate ones that exude a sense of the Divine. In other gatherings, it is the celebration of the crowd that has formed in our home or at the bar that we find a sense of God among the low roar of interaction. And it is not just the gathering together of many that speaks to your soul — it may very well be the one on one moments that draw you to the table. If you are more singular in your connections, you may be the one who takes time to send that note of encouragement and are thoroughly shaped by receiving such notes. You remember the happenings, struggles, and celebrations of others and join in with them. You enjoy hosting and being hosted. It may not only be about the people, but also the preparation for such engagement. The cooking of meals, the creative invitations, and even the unglamorous part of hosting hasn't dulled us to the nearness of God in such moments.

You hear the call of God as you imagine Jesus sitting at the table, transforming water to wine, and even offering himself as the meal—body as bread, blood as wine. The Gospel — the Good News — is that all are welcome at the feast, both for the intimate interactions around the meal and the need to extend the table, adding chairs to make room for all.

He sat down at the table with them. Taking the bread, he blessed and broke and gave it to them. At that moment, open-eyed, wide-eyed, they recognized him. - Luke 24:30 MSG

### **CONSIDER.**

*Do you sense a unique kind of energy with interactions with others?*

*Do the words of others carry a weight or power that encourages you deeply?*

*Do you see God in the intimate talks you have with others?*

*Do you also see God in the crowd—the gathering of people together?*

*Do you see food (the preparation of, the creation of dishes, and/or the offering of) as a way to show others your affection, a means to gather people, and/or a meaningful part of sharing life?*

*Does faith, for you, get expressed in relationship?*

*Does the “ideal church” gather together regularly in both intimate and larger moments together?*

*While you love so many things about Convergence ;) you are especially drawn to the way you see God in our parties, community meals, and any kind of gathering together.*