

Personality and Piety (1/3)

Creation Gifts (*Who is that? Who am I?*)

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Introduction:

Understanding Myself

I decided to be a servant of the King of kings, Jesus Christ, in Feb. 1971. I have been preaching the Gospel for almost 39 years.

During the last 40 years of my life, I have been presented with several tools to help me understand who I am and how God made me. How God made me is a gift, a creation gift.

- I have taken tests to determine what my spiritual gifts are.
- I have been given and voluntarily taken many different personality tests.
- I have studied and preached about the diversity of pathways that people take, as they seek to worship God in ways that are most meaningful to them personally.
- I have taken a survey that helped me understand my talents and the unique individual that God created in me.

All of these have helped me to understand who I am, and how God made me. These, along with listening to the Spirit of God as I walked the pathways of my daily life, have helped me to understand myself, how to function in this world and in the Kingdom of God.

We cannot possibly accomplish all of that in the short time we have together this morning. However, there are 4 things we can look at that will help us in understanding how our personality plays a big role in the Kingdom of God.

There are four essential preferences that shape the way we relate to and process the data we receive from the world around us. Knowing these 4 essentials helps us to understand our personality.

- How I focus on the world outside of myself
- How I process data or receive information
- How I make decisions
- How I handle the flow of life

Understanding these 4 things show us the basic structure of our approach to life. See how many of these traits you can identify in yourself.

Personality Traits (4)

How do you focus on the world outside of the self:

Extraverted: (16%)

- Gregarious
- Assertive
- Talkative
- Social/outgoing
- Like groups, parties, etc.
- Energized by interaction
- Expressive & enthusiastic
- Volunteer personal information
- Distractible
- Have many friends
- Easy to approach

Introverted: (84%)

- Energized by time alone
- Private

- Keep to themselves
- Quiet
- Deliberate
- Internally aware
- Fewer friends
- Prefer smaller groups
- Independent
- Not socially inclined
- Enjoy solitude
- Think before speaking

Preference for processing data or receiving information:

Sensing: (95%)

- Concrete
- Realistic
- Live in the present
- Aware of surroundings
- Notices details
- Practical
- Go by their senses
- Factual

Intuition: (5%)

- Future-focused
- See possibilities
- Inventive
- Imaginative
- Deep
- Abstract
- Idealistic
- Complicated
- Theoretical

Preference for making decisions:

Thinking: (63%)

- Logical
- Objective
- Decide with their head
- Want truth
- Rational
- Impersonal
- Critical

- Thick-skinned
- Firm with people
- Driven by thought

Feeling:(37%)

- Decide with heart
- Dislike conflict
- Passionate
- Driven by emotion
- Gentle
- Easily hurt
- Empathetic
- Caring of others
- Warm

How about handling the flow of life:

Judging: (89%)

- Decisive
- Controlled
- Good at finishing
- Organized
- Structured
- Scheduled
- Quick at tasks
- Responsible
- Like closure
- Make plans

Perceiving: (11%)

- Adaptable
- Relaxed
- Disorganized
- Care-free
- Spontaneous
- Change tracks midway
- Keep options open
- Procrastinate
- Dislikes routine
- Flexible

When we look at all the different possible personality combinations that confront us in being part of a community, we should

not be surprised when we run into difficulties sometimes.

Paul was one of the greatest leaders in the first century church because he understood how diversity could be both a good thing, and a bad thing, in the church.

In many of his epistles to the churches, he taught about this important topic. This morning we are going to look at what he had to say to the church at Corinth.

I. Created, Not Developed

A. One Body

In this section of his letter, Paul makes a statement about the importance of unity in the church, the Body of Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:12 (NASB)

12 For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ.

In other words, there is one body, which has many members that are made a whole body by Christ. He goes on to explain...

B. Many Members

1 Corinthians 12:14-21 (NASB)

14 For the body is not one member, but many.

15 If the foot says, "Because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body," it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body.

16 And if the ear says, "Because I am not an eye, I am not a part of the body," it

is not for this reason any the less a part of the body.

17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be?

18 But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired.

19 If they were all one member, where would the body be?

20 But now there are many members, but one body.

21 And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; or again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you."

Mulholland says, "Just as each cell in our physical body depends on the body for its life, and the well-being of the body depends upon the wholeness of each individual cell, the individual Christian can be whole only through interdependent interaction with the other members of the faith community." (3)

One of the ways modern mankind has expressed this idea has been in using the phrase, "no man is an island".

For example, in the early 1600's John Donne wrote a poem whose title is made up of those words.

No man is an island

No man is an island entire of itself;
every man is a piece of the continent,
a part of the main;
if a clod be washed away by the sea,
Europe is the less, as well as if a
promontory were,
as well as any manner of thy friends or of
thine own were;
any man's death diminishes me,
because I am involved in mankind.

And therefore never send to know for
whom the bell tolls;
it tolls for thee.

-- John Donne (5)

Artist Joan Baez wrote the lyrics to a
song by that title.

No man is an island,
No man stands alone,
Each man's joy is joy to me,
Each man's grief is my own.

We need one another,
So I will defend,
Each man as my brother,
Each man as my friend.

I saw the people gather,
I heard the music start,
The song that they were singing,
Is ringing in my heart.

No man is an island,
Way out in the blue,
We all look to the one above,
For our strength to renew.

When I help my brother,
Then I know that I,
Plant the seed of friendship,
That will never die. (6)

In other words, "We really do need each
other", and the church is no exception.
That's what Paul wants the Body of
Christ to understand.

Problems come in relationships when we
begin to think that our personality traits
are superior to the personality traits of
others.

Our personality traits are not superior,
they only define our uniqueness as we

function, as a necessary part, among
many other necessary, and unique parts
of the Body of Christ. This also would
apply to partners in a marriage.

I think that is what Paul is trying to deal
with in this passage in 1 Corinthians 12.
The Body of Christ is made up of all
kinds of personalities, which have a
broad mixture of these different
personality traits.

When we miss this Biblical principle of
unity, the local church, the family, and the
Body of Christ, suffers.

But, what is Paul's teaching about how
this kind of closeness and unity can be
accomplished? Look at verse 13.

C. One Spirit

1 Corinthians 12:13 (NASB)

13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized
into one body, whether Jews or Greeks,
whether slaves or free, and we were all
made to drink of one Spirit.

Our intimacy with the Holy Spirit is the
key element in the unity and health of the
church and the family. But, sometimes
there seems to be a conflict in what the
Spirit seems to be communicating to
different individuals in the church or at
home.

This happens when we do not take into
account all the different elements that it
takes to make the Body of Christ unified,
and ultimately healthy.

For example, the Holy Spirit may clearly
communicate something that needs to be
done, but if we do not take other factors

into consideration, our actions can result in disaster.

We must not only consider what we think the Holy Spirit is telling us, we must also consider the way in which we will try to accomplish that task.

If it has to do with interacting with other people, either directly or indirectly, we need to consider factors like the personalities involved. Then we must proceed with caution.

We must also consider how we proceed in light of the way Christ handled similar situations in the Bible.

This is one of the reasons all of us need to be intimately familiar with the Scriptures.

So if we are to look to Christ and the Scriptures for our example, let's take a look at some of Christ's original disciples and see what kind of personality traits they had, and how Christ worked with them.

II. The Diversity of the Twelve

A. The Original 12 (an overview)

Did you know that among Jesus' original 12 disciples, there were two named Simon, two named James, and two named Judas?

I never noticed that before. But, don't let the similarity in their names entice you to believe that the original 12 disciples were all pretty much alike.

It would take an extensive study to dig out the details to show their different

personalities. We don't have that kind of time this morning.

However, by looking at some of the same events that different disciples were involved in, it gives us a glimpse of the diversity of the men Jesus chose to follow Him.

B. Personality Traits Revealed

1. Coming to Christ

For example, if you look at the way some of the disciples came know Jesus.

Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, was a disciple of John the Baptist. He heard Jesus speak one day and decided to follow Him. ~~(He left the old church. Don't we call that church hopping these days?)~~

Convinced that Jesus was Messiah, he went and got his brother Peter and brought Him to Jesus. (John 1:40-42)

Philip, who was from the same town as Andrew and Peter, went and found Nathanael and told him about Jesus.

Unlike Peter who just got up and followed Andrew to go see Jesus, Nathanael blurts out, "can any good thing come from Nazareth?" (John 1:43-51)

2. Feeding 5,000 People

The feeding of the 5,000 is another good example where we see this diversity in the personalities of the disciples.

Seeing the hungry crowd, Jesus turns to Philip and asks him, "where can we buy bread to feed all these people?"

Philip says that 200 denarii, the equivalent of 8 months wages, would not even be enough to give everyone a little to eat. Impossible to buy enough for all of them Lord.

Andrew, on the other hand, mentions that there is a boy with five loaves of bread and two fishes. That was not really much food in such a large crowd.

Philip thinks about money as the solution; Andrew on the other hand sees a little food. Now most people would not even have brought this little bit of food to Jesus as a possible answer, but Andrew does. [\(John 6:4-13\)](#)

Philip is mentioned 14 times in the New Testament. Andrew is mentioned 12 times, Thomas 11 times, and Nathanael 10 times. But, Peter is mentioned 160 times. Does that tell you anything about his personality?

The point is that these men who followed Jesus were different in their approach to life because God created them with different personalities. But, Jesus used all of them in His Kingdom.

It does not matter what kind of a personality you have, God created you like that and He has a place for you in His Kingdom.

3. Pentecost

There was one thing that 11 of the disciples, along with about 109 other followers, had in common that was very important. In spite of the diversity in their personalities, they were in the upper room on the day of Pentecost.

The common thing that united them was their relationship with Jesus Christ and His command for them to wait and receive the Holy Spirit.

You see Jesus knew that problems and misunderstandings would come up between the leaders of the church and in the church itself.

Jesus knew that the only thing that would hold the church and its leadership together was the power of the Holy Spirit that all of them would have in common.

Jesus knows that for the 21st Century as well. Please stand with me for a closing prayer.

Prayer:

Oh God, my King, I pray that you will enable each individual at Mt. View to recognize, and be thankful for, the diversity of personalities, gifts, and talents You have created in each of us.

Help us to recognize this diversity as Your plan for a unified body of believers, that You have brought together to accomplish Your good pleasure, here in this corner of Tucson, Arizona.

Help us to learn from Your Word, that we might be unified, determined and steadfast in loving each other and the world around us.

I pray these things in the name of Your one and only Son, Jesus Christ, my King.

Resources:

1. NASB - New American Standard Bible (NASB). Cedar Rapids: Laridian, 2002.
2. CWS-NT - AMG Complete Word Study Dictionary - New Testament (CWS_NT). Cedar Rapids: Laridian Electronic Publishing, 2007.
3. Mulholland, M. Robert Jr., Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation, Downers Grove, Illinois, InterVarsity Press, 1993.
4. www.mypersonality.info/personality-types/
5. <http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/no-man-is-an-island/>
6. <http://www.sing365.com/music/lyric.nsf/no-man-is-an-island-lyrics-joan-baez/5adcd449cf2a36f948256c9c0022dbaa>

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