

Personality Seminar Handout – Ministers

- I. Understanding Personality.
 - A. Human characteristics contrasted.
 - 1. Personality: a configuration of habits that uniquely identifies a person.
 - 2. Temperament: inborn predisposition to certain habits.
 - 3. Talent: inborn predisposition to a certain ability.
 - 4. Skill: ability brought to maturity by practice.
 - 5. Experience: situations that have enabled practice of skills.
 - 6. Character: adherence to moral standards.
 - B. Biblical critique of Jung/Myers-Briggs personality theory.
 - 1. Unbelievers can discover truth because of common grace.
 - 2. Unbelievers do not see the same things believers do.
 - 3. Conclusion: unbelievers are an important source of truth, but it must always be evaluated by the scripture.
 - 4. Even when unbelievers accurately understand truth, they are unreliable as interpreters.
 - 5. I find the Myers-Briggs theory an accurate description of human personality.
 - 6. It only partly explains how to live more godly.
 - C. The Myers-Briggs Theory.
 - 1. Source of energy.
 - a. Extroverts: people.
 - b. Introverts: solitude.
 - 2. Focus of attention.
 - a. Senses: material world.
 - b. Intuition: ideas.
 - 3. Manner of thought.
 - a. Thinking: merits of the facts.
 - b. Feeling: views of others.
 - 4. Decisiveness.
 - a. Judging: push toward a decision.
 - b. Perceiving: relish the possibilities.
 - D. Temperament.
 - 1. Four classical types.
 - a. Sanguine/Artisan.
 - b. Melancholic/Guardian.
 - c. Choleric/Idealist.
 - d. Phlegmatic/Rationalist.
 - 2. Thus we are denying the uniformitarian or blank slate views of Freud, Maslow, Sullivan, Adler, etc.
 - E. Evaluation.
 - 1. There is no “good” personality. Everyone comes with significant strengths and weaknesses. The main point of this seminar is not to identify the good personalities, but to become aware of our strengths and weaknesses so that we can take them into account in doing ministry.

Temperaments:	SP – Artisan	SJ – Guardian	NF – Idealist	NT – Rationalist
<i>Life goal</i>	Impact	Belonging	Romance	Achievement
<i>Motivation to act</i>	Impulse	Authority	Intuition	Reason
<i>Emotional state</i>	Excited	Concerned	Enthusiastic	Calm
<i>Preoccupation</i>	Technique	Morality	Morale	How things work
<i>Immediate quest</i>	Stimulation	Security	Personal identity	Knowledge
<i>Secret ambition</i>	Virtuoso	Executive	Sage	Wizard

II. Four Classic Temperaments.

A. Sanguine/Artisan – SP.

1. His life goal, his long-term pursuit: impact – make a splash, command attention.
2. What motivates him: his impulses, immediate interests – he is spontaneous, impetuous.
3. His favorite emotional state: being excited – charged up by an outside excitement.
4. What he is prone to work hard at: perfecting his technique.
5. What he is seeking at any given time: stimulation – excitement, action.
6. What he secretly dreams of becoming: the virtuoso – the world’s best in performance.

The Artisan is your classic “life of the party”. He lives for fun, and everyone around him has fun, too – at least on the surface. It is more accurate to say the Artisan’s life is controlled by the drive for impact. Often this takes the form of entertainment – especially in social settings where impact is measured by popularity. But in any situation the Artisan seeks to make his mark. Thus Artisans gravitate toward performance occupations where performance is validated. When impact is not forthcoming, the Artisan may become inwardly depressed.

Artisans impulsively act. It doesn’t matter so much what he is doing, as long as something is happening. If nothing is happening, the Artisan will create some action. Thus while other temperaments may achieve greatness by patient practice, Artisans hone their skill simply by living life to its fullest. An artisan may become so lost in his action, he has no idea he has been “practicing” his craft for hours.

With their focus squarely in the present, Artisans can be unreliable in following a plan of any length. Caring little about the past, traditions are less significant to them than to other types. This willingness to dispense with conventions makes Artisans premier trouble-shooters.

B. Melancholic/Guardian – SJ.

1. His life goal, his long-term pursuit: belong to social units – family, church, club.
2. What motivates him: authority – he is obedient.
3. His favorite emotional state: being concerned – charged up when others deviate from social units or morals.
4. What he is prone to work hard at: improving the morals of himself and others.
5. What he is seeking at any given time: security – steady relationships, job, lifestyle.
6. What he secretly dreams of becoming: the executive – top authority, and able to improve the morals of everyone else.

The Guardian is the loyal “company man”. He is faithful because he knows it is right – but more because he is unable to be otherwise. As the Artisan is wired to act, the Guardian is wired to conform. The Guardian’s deep drive is to belong – and he will seek belonging in family, church, company, clubs, etc. He is highly impressed by authority figures, and tends to believe whatever they say. Guardians live in a state of perpetual concern (or worry) about everything. This is not so much a choice, but a state of being which is tied into their psyche.

The Guardian lives in the past. He admires the great men and women who preceded him and longs to live up to their standard. He fancies he can do this most effectively by being in charge, so Guardians tend to seek opportunities to control the groups they belong to. This can produce resentment from others in those groups who do not wish to be controlled by the SJ’s. With proper balance, a Guardian can be an excellent executive, but he will be weak at innovation and will tend to stifle creativity. Schools, with their rules, meritocracy, and clear hierarchy are the natural breeding ground for Guardians.

C. Choleric/Idealist – NF.

1. His life goal, his long-term pursuit: live romantically.
2. What motivates him: his intuition, gut feeling – he is intuitive.
3. His favorite emotional state: being enthusiastic – charged up by internal ideas.
4. What he is prone to work hard at: improving the morale of his group.
5. What he is seeking at any given time: personal identity – he never feels he knows himself.
6. What he secretly dreams of becoming: the sage – the one people seek for understanding themselves.

For the Idealist, life is a romantic quest. He lives for the discovery of his own true self and the wonders of those around him. He naturally forms a close bond with friends, which is usually welcomed, but can become smothering. The Idealist is constantly interested in his own inner life of thoughts and feelings. He assumes others share this view, and never quite recognizes that other personalities are perfectly happy not knowing how they are feeling at the moment. But this characteristic makes him extraordinarily sensitive. No one can comfort someone as deeply as the Idealist.

More than other types, the Idealist is prone to living in his own world. He tends to see others in black or white terms. If you have offended an Idealist, you can do no right. If you have won his heart, you can do no wrong. Evidence to the contrary, he is incapable of thinking otherwise. This makes him an easy target to be taken advantage of.

D. Phlegmatic/Rationalist – NT.

1. His life goal, his long-term pursuit: achievement – accomplish specific goals.
2. What motivates him: his reason – he is analytical.
3. His favorite emotional state: being calm – dislikes being charged up.
4. What he is prone to work hard at: figuring out how things work.
5. What he is seeking at any given time: knowledge – he never knows enough.
6. What he secretly dreams of becoming: the wizard – the one people see for understanding the world.

Rationalists are the calm, competent, reasonable ones – so much so they can appear cool and unfeeling. But underneath that calm exterior is the drive for achievement. The Rationalist must know how things work, and must accomplish something of enduring value with his knowledge.

That may take the form of a book, an institution, an edifice, etc. The Rationalist sets high standards for himself and has little tolerance for underperforming. This, coupled with his analytical bent, makes him an excellent problem-solver. Rarely will someone discover flaws in his thinking. This can make him appear arrogant and unyielding to people accustomed to a more collegial approach to life.

The Rationalist measures life by reason, including the opinions of so-called authorities. This alarms the Guardians, who implicitly trust authority. But unlike the Artisans, he is unwilling to change just for variety. Any move must be calculated to accomplish the larger goal. It is the constant focus on the larger goal which makes the Rationalist the “Big Picture” guy. He excels at understanding the whole and knows how various elements contribute or distract from the goal. On the other hand, he is chronically poor at managing the details of life.

III. Putting Personality to Work.

A. Getting along with people.

1. Distinguish between moral failing and differences in orientation and ability.
 - a. Refrain from condemning others who are different.
 - b. Learn to bear patiently with those who do not have your own strengths.
2. Don't make personality an excuse for irresponsible behavior on your part.
3. Collaborate with others who complement your own strengths and weaknesses.
 - a. Enlist others to assist you in your areas of weakness.
 - b. Willingly help others who are weak in your areas of strength.
4. Appreciate differences.

B. Leading and following.

<i>Temperaments:</i>	SP – Artisan	SJ – Guardian	NF – Idealist	NT – Rationalist
<i>Strength</i>	Tactics	Logistics	Diplomacy	Strategy
<i>Weakness</i>	Diplomacy	Strategy	Tactics	Logistics

1. Artisans.
 - a. Best at responding to the immediate situation.
 - b. Worst at solving interpersonal problems diplomatically.
2. Guardians.
 - a. Best at getting people and things where they need to be, on time.
 - b. Worst at devising a comprehensive long-range plan.
3. Idealists.
 - a. Best at solving interpersonal problems diplomatically.
 - b. Worst at responding to the immediate situation.
4. Rationalists.
 - a. Best at devising a comprehensive long-range plan.
 - b. Worst at getting people and things where they need to be, on time.

C. Mating.

1. SP – Artisan: Playmate.
 - a. Fun.
 - b. Irresponsible.
2. SJ – Guardian: Helpmate.
 - a. Responsible.
 - b. Dull.
3. NF – Idealist: Soulmate.
 - a. Deep, meaningful.
 - b. Introspective, moody.
4. NT – Rational: Mindmate.
 - a. Interesting.
 - b. Distracted.

D. Parenting.

1. SP – Artisan: Liberator.
 - a. Goal: let the little tykes enjoy life.
 - b. Tendency: permissive, indulgent.
2. SJ – Guardian: Socializer.
 - a. Goal: shape the little brutes into civilized human beings.
 - b. Tendency: controlling.
3. NF – Idealist: Harmonizer.
 - a. Goal: form close bonds with the little cherubs.
 - b. Tendency: smothering, over-involved.
4. NT – Rational: Individuator.
 - a. Goal: let each child develop his own individual interests and abilities.
 - b. Tendency: neglectful, under-involved.

IV. Personality in Ministry

A. Sanguine/Artisan – SP.

The Artisan pastor is the life of the party. He easily attracts people because he is the most fun person in town. The challenge comes in knowing what to do with them once he has them. As the personality that seeks excitement, the Artisan is the natural pioneer. He can go “where no man has gone before” and succeed more than any other type. Artisans are the world-class crisis managers, and will be adept at rescuing a sinking ship. But they will struggle with the predictable regularity of a stable ministry, and may stir things up just to relieve the boredom.

1. Preaching

The best orators are Artisans, which is not surprising since they love to perform. A quick look at some Artisan leaders reveals men who were outstanding speakers: Franklin D. Roosevelt, Theodore Roosevelt, John F. Kennedy, Ronald Reagan, Winston Churchill. The Artisan pastor has the natural inclination to be an outstanding preacher, if he develops that gift. But while the Artisan pastor may excite and inspire, he will not naturally do so with deep content. This can leave people later wondering why they were so impressed with his sermon. Although it does not excite them, Artisan preachers need to do the work of solid exegesis in order to have real, lasting fruit in their ministry. Artisan preaching is like a serving of hot wings. It leaves you feeling excited and inspired. Examples: John Stone

2. Bible studies

No one will attract a small group like an Artisan, but neither will anyone get bored so quickly as the Artisan Bible study leader. People will flock to his Bible study because they know it will be fun and exciting, and they are right – at least at first. But unless each meeting features a personality clash or an emotional melt-down, the Artisan himself will soon tire of the patient study of a text. He will look around and conclude, “We’re all good here,” and lose interest. Then he will be tempted to inject some conflict to make things interesting. A little excitement is a good thing, but here is where the Artisan must discipline himself to the solid ministry of the word among his people.

3. One to one

The Artisan pastor will thrive on one to one meetings with people who are struggling with problems – the more bizarre the better! He will be amazingly insightful and helpful to people in crisis. His difficulty will be in the weekly discipling of people who are steadily growing in their faith.

4. Leadership development

Artisans are unparalleled intuitive speakers and crisis managers. They are not conscious of *how* they succeed – they just do. This makes it a challenge for them to develop leaders. They tend to look for people like themselves, and have trouble seeing the potential in others who need training and cultivation. And they do not take well to the grind of training. On the other hand, they will be less reluctant to take a risk with new leaders. After all, an occasional crisis is a good thing!

5. Administration

Artisans are quite willing to do the administrative work asked of them – until something more exciting comes along. Then threats or bribes would not force them into the office. And if things become chaotic they are not concerned. They love a crisis and can always rescue a disaster in the making! The mature Artisan will recognize that the opportunity to do what he loves comes at a price, and make sure to cover the minimum administrative work required.

B. Melancholic/Guardian – SJ.

Guardians are natural CEOs. They love to be in charge, and are very effective at running organizations. The Guardian pastor will excel at leading an existing ministry. He will embrace the people, the traditions, and the policies, and keep things running smoothly. He is less effective at displaying pastoral warmth and insight, but his real Achilles heel is innovation. New and different makes him uneasy, and true change scares him. Guardians are wonderful leaders until things start to go wrong. Then they circle the wagons and fight the inevitable need for change.

1. Preaching

Guardian pastors recognize the importance of solid preaching and will work until they are effective communicators. They understand that there are principles of sound preaching, and will discover and apply those in their sermons. Guardian sermons will be theologically correct, well organized, and clearly delivered. What is missing is novelty and excitement. Rarely will a Guardian stir a congregation, but neither will he disturb. Guardians improve their sermons as they learn to convey more fully the warmth and excitement of scripture. Guardian preaching is like a bowl of vegetable soup. It leaves you feeling satisfied. Examples: Rod Mays, Bryan Chapell, David Sinclair

2. Bible studies

With their love of community, Guardians embrace the importance of small group ministry. They have little difficulty gathering a group, especially the extroverted Guardians. They will put in the time to understand the passage of scripture. Their chief difficulty is in fostering real conversation. SJs are guardians of the tradition, and they are determined that everyone understand and accept the truth – and *they* are the ones who know it. Their drive for the “right” answers tends to impede the exploration of the passage, hampers real discovery, and can lead to boredom. As Guardians learn to appreciate the discovery process and enjoy seeing people learn for themselves, they become better Bible study leaders.

3. One to one

Guardians are very effective at working through a program with people. It may take them a little longer than some to diagnose root issues, but when a course of discipleship is set, they will follow through with thoroughness. Guardians and Idealists are the most gifted at one to one ministry.

4. Leadership development

With their conviction that they know what is right and best, Guardians are very motivated to teach others how to lead. They are superb at working through a training process. Their weakness is a tendency to push everyone through the same grid. They cannot understand that people are fundamentally different, and therefore will lead in different ways. So although they will be among the best trainers, they will often be frustrated that their disciples did not turn out like themselves.

5. Administration

Nobody can administrate like an SJ. The SJ pastor will run a smooth and efficient ministry. A list of Guardian leaders reveals people who are not known for innovation, but stayed the course through difficult times: George Washington, Harry Truman, Gerald Ford, Queen Victoria, Queen Elizabeth II. The Guardian pastor will at times need to remember that a well-oiled ministry organization is not the highest priority in the church.

C. Choleric/Idealist – NF.

When life hits hard with trouble or disappointment, people look for someone who understands and cares about them – and they expect their pastor to be such a person. No one communicates care and understanding like Idealists. Other types may in fact care as much or more deeply for their people, but warmth, love, and care emanate from Idealists like no other types. Nor are any other types as passionate about their core beliefs. Idealists are the ones who will rally to the lost cause and tend to care more about standing by their convictions than the compromise that may advance their cause. These qualities make them very attractive, but unless they develop the ministry skills of preaching, leading, and administration, their ministry will never grow beyond a small cluster of faithful devotees. A list of public Idealists shows people of great conviction and beloved by their followers, but unable by themselves to implement the change they so passionately desire: Mohandas Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, Vladimir Lenin, Mikhail Gorbachev, Princess Diana. Notice that there are no presidents of the United States on this list.

1. Preaching

Idealist pastors long to connect with their people, and this shows in their preaching. Sermons from Idealists tend to reach out and embrace the congregation with warmth and stir the people with passion. Idealists are not so concerned about theological accuracy, and this can get them

into trouble if they are not careful. Crisp organization is not a strong point either. But if they overcome these weak areas, no one can preach like an Idealist. Idealist preaching is like a plate of fettuccine alfredo. It leaves you feeling loved and passionate. Examples: Joe Novenson

2. Bible studies

Idealists are best of all the types at reading people. In a Bible study, they are keenly aware of how everyone is responding. They are not so focused on the text, however. So they are very effective at drawing out the thoughts and feelings of those present, but are less successful at connecting them to the text at hand. Idealists can be superb Bible study leaders, but they have to work consistently on a solid understanding of the text.

3. One to one

Along with the Guardians, Idealists are the best at one to one ministry. Here their personal insight and pastoral touch minister deeply. Their strength is in diagnosis and comfort; their weakness is in developing and following a program for change. If the Idealist pastor learns how to transfer his insight into action, and disciplines himself to follow through, he can have a powerful effect on his followers.

4. Leadership development

Idealist pastors will burst with pride as their followers learn to lead. The problem is with the discipline of training. In fact, Idealists are so fond of their followers, they will tend to think they are wonderful leaders no matter how great or awful they may be. Furthermore, the Idealist tendency to see people as either “good” or “bad” will cause them consistently to misjudge the leadership potential of others, exaggerating some and minimizing others. Idealists need non-Idealist types to help them evaluate people fairly. Then if they can discipline themselves to stick to a clear leadership development plan, they can have solid success.

5. Administration

Administration is the waterloo of Idealists. They are conceptual thinkers, people-oriented, and passionate about causes. There is nothing in them to want to do administration. But it has to be done. This is a discipline that has to be mastered or it will cripple the Idealist ministry.

D. Phlegmatic/Rationalist – NT.

Rationalists are builders, and the chief strength of the Rationalist pastor is in building a ministry, whether a church, campus fellowship, school, or discipleship program. No one sees the big picture like a Rationalist, and no one can conceive a project from beginning to end like he can. Rationalist pastors convey vision for ministry growth and lay out a strategy for accomplishing that growth. The towering weakness of Rationalist pastors is that, as pragmatic thinkers, they tend to be oblivious to the feelings of people – and if they become aware of such, they are inclined to pay scant attention. The life-long challenge for the Rationalist pastor is in developing sufficient relational skills to accomplish the things he cares so deeply about. Rationalist leaders include Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, Dwight D. Eisenhower, Ulysses S. Grant, William Tecumseh Sherman, Douglas MacArthur, and Margaret Thatcher. Notice which side the Civil War leaders represent. No one loved Grant or Sherman like their men loved Jackson and Lee. But loyalty and passion alone are not sufficient to win.

1. Preaching

Sermons of a Rationalist pastor will be deep and comprehensive, and he likely will overprepare. He will delve deeply into his topic and cast the message in the context of the big

picture. The Rationalist pastor has the opportunity to inspire his people with a vision of the Kingdom from paradise to parousia, but will be severely hampered by a struggle to connect with the congregation. His people will be impressed by his content, but will question whether he knows their struggles or cares about them. The Rationalist pastor needs to spend less time in the study, more time mingling with his people, and work harder on his delivery. Rationalist preaching is like a protein bar. It leaves you feeling equipped. Examples: John Stott, James Boice, Tim Keller

2. Bible studies

As conceptual thinkers, Bible studies are what Rationalist pastors do best. They revel in the exploration of the text, and enjoy the contributions of a myriad of voices. The chief weakness of Rationalist Bible study leaders is in connecting with the people. They will struggle to gather the group, and will not excel at developing relationships. If they can partner with someone who is strong in relationship building, the Bible study can flourish.

3. One to one

Rationalists are competent in one to one ministry, but it does not excite them greatly. However, this is the context in which they can develop best their relational skills. Whereas Idealists intuitively understand people, one to one meetings are where Rationalist pastors can work on developing an understanding of the people in their ministry. If this opportunity is not seized, the other aspects of ministry will suffer greatly.

4. Leadership development

Since building a ministry depends on developing leaders, Rationalist pastors are strongly motivated to do this. What they lack in personal insight and warmth they make up in commitment and perseverance. Rationalists understand more than other types the uniquenesses of others and work to develop leaders in ways suitable to their individual gifts. With a solid grasp of the big picture, Rationalist pastors are excellent at deploying people into vital avenues of service. Their biggest challenge is loving and affirming people so that they do not feel like a cog in the machine.

5. Administration

Rationalists have an organized mind, but they prefer to work with concepts rather than things. They are capable of good administration, but they do not like the work. Being thinkers, Rationalist pastors can, and must, come to see that the success of their great hopes and grand plans depends on good administration.

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