

Personality Differences Handout, brief

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. *1 Corinthians 12:4-6*

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. *John 13:34*

- I. Reason for This Seminar
 - A. People struggle to understand each other
 - B. People struggle to relate productively
 - C. Disruptions in families, friendship, church, workplace
- II. Purpose of This Seminar
 - A. Not “put people in a box”
 - B. Understand people
 - C. Acquire a common language for discussing differences
 - D. Begin to distinguish between valuable differences and failure
- III. 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.

IV. Four Classic Temperaments

<i>Temperaments</i>	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

A. Sanguine/ Artisan – SP

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

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

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

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.

V. 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. SP – Artisan: Tactician
 - a. Best at responding to the immediate situation
 - b. Worst at solving interpersonal problems diplomatically
2. SJ – Guardian: Administrator
 - a. Best at getting people and things where they need to be, on time
 - b. Worst at devising a comprehensive long-range plan
3. NF – Idealist: Dipomat
 - a. Best at solving interpersonal problems diplomatically
 - b. Worst at responding to the immediate situation
4. NT – Rationalist: Strategist
 - 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 animals 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
- E. Annoying People
1. SP – Artisan: Spoiler
 - a. Annoyed by everyone who pursues peace and order and tries to control him
 - b. Annoyed most by SJs who insist on following the rules
 - c. Annoy everyone by raising a ruckus and disturbing the peace
 - d. Annoy most: SJs who are trying to enforce peace and order
 2. SJ – Guardian: Controller
 - a. Annoyed by everyone who doesn't follow the group rules and customs
 - b. Annoyed most by SPs who are always flaunting the rules and disturbing the peace
 - c. Annoy everyone by ordering them around
 - d. Annoy most: SPs who are his special target
 3. NF – Idealist:
 - a. Annoyed by everyone who is not sensitive
 - b. Annoyed most by SPs who are careless about the feelings of others
 - c. Annoy everyone by their introspection and moodiness
 - d. Annoy most: no one in particular
 4. NT – Rational: Plotter
 - a. Annoyed by everyone who is careless, sloppy, and short-sighted
 - b. Annoyed most by SJs who are stuck in the past and throw roadblocks to change
 - c. Annoy everyone by secretly plotting the future for us all
 - d. Annoy most: NFs who are horrified that he is plotting the future without considering the feelings of others

VI. Conclusion

A. Sin and difference

1. What looks like a character issue to you may not look that way to others
2. What may be a character flaw(or virtue) in you may not be in others
3. Don't label something a sin unless it is a clear biblical sin
4. Repent of your own sin, not the sins of others

5. Learn to identify and appreciate personality differences
- B. Strengths and weaknesses
1. Learn and be honest about your strengths and weaknesses
 2. Find your approval and security in Christ, not other people or communities
 3. Commit yourself to using your strengths to full potential
 4. Commit yourself to a life-long effort to improve your weaknesses.
 5. Enlist as partners others who have strengths that complement your weaknesses
 6. Willingly partner with those who have weaknesses that need your strengths
- C. Community roles
1. Encourage and place others in roles appropriate to their strengths
 2. Be gentle and generous with those in roles demanded of them which do not fit them
 3. Be kind and gracious, yet firm in redeploying people in positions where they are failing
- D. Pride and humility
1. People are dramatically different because God made us that way and wants us that way.
 2. Stop judging people on the basis of how *you* think, feel, & act
 3. Learn to appreciate how godliness is expressed in different personalities
 4. Learn to understand how sin is expressed in different personalities
 5. Learn to affirm godliness and correct sin in love
 6. Rejoice in Jesus' ordering of the church.

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