

Personality Differences Seminar

Session One

Read 1 Corinthians 12:1-7

- There are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit;
- There are varieties of service, but the same Lord;
- There are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:8-11

- All these gifts and ministries are given to the church by the Spirit
- Everyone has a gift of the Spirit
- These gifts and ministries are to be used for the common good
- The Spirit has each person the gifts He particularly wants him to have

Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-17

- Just as the body has a variety of limbs and organs, so the church has a variety of gifts and ministries
- Just as a body cannot function without all its organs, so the church function without different gifts
- The problem is that members of the church want everyone else to be just like them

Read 1 Corinthians 12:18-26

- The body cares for all its different members, especially the weaker ones
- The church should nurture all its different member, especially the weaker ones

Read 1 Corinthians 12:27-31

- God wants people to serve in different ways.
- Do not resent or oppose Christians who serve differently than you

I. Reason for This Seminar

A. People struggle to understand each other

1. Miscommunication of facts
2. Miscommunication of emotions
3. False attribution of motive
4. False attribution of guilt

B. People struggle to relate productively

1. Miscommunication impairs friendships and employment
2. Ineffective recruitment
3. Ineffective training
4. Ineffective delegation
5. Ineffective supervision

C. Disruptions in families, friendship, church, workplace

II. Purpose of This Seminar

A. Not “put people in a box”

B. Understand people

1. How people see and understand the world
2. (We all instinctively assume everyone sees and understands the world the way we do)
3. How people make decisions
4. Why people act the way they do

C. Acquire a common language for discussing differences

D. Begin to distinguish between valuable differences and failure

E. A “conversation-starter”

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.

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

E. Sanguine/Artisan

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

F. Melancholic/Guardian

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

G. Choleric/Idealist

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

H. Phlegmatic/Rationalist

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

IV. Putting Personality to Work

A. Perception workshop

Divide into groups of four or five

1. Select one person in your group
 - a. Everyone guess his temperament
 - b. Describe specific situations which support your guess
2. Let him share his Myer-Briggs profile and temperament
 - a. How well did this describe you?
 - b. Do you think you are unlike this in any way?
 - c. Describe some situations which demonstrate or contradict this profile
3. What *motivates* you? What makes you feel like getting involved? What encourages you to stay involved?
 - a. Describe a situation in which you felt motivated
 - b. Do the rest of you see this motivational pattern in him?
Give examples
4. Did he persuade the rest of you to adopt his view?
5. Move to the next person

Session Two

Read John 14:34-35

- Paul spent a whole chapter emphasizing that it was God's idea that all Christians be different. In fact, He's the one who made us that way. Therefore, instead of trying to make everyone like ourselves, we should nurture each other, especially those who are weak and struggling. Paul ended the chapter saying there is an excellent way, and that way is love.
- You almost get the impression that Paul had been reading John's gospel when he wrote the letter to the Corinthians. In fact we can be sure that Paul got his ideas from the same place as John – from the Holy Spirit. In this passage in John's gospel we read that Jesus gave a new commandment to his disciples. Curiously, it was not to preserve pure doctrine, or to worship correctly, or to live holy lives – although Jesus certainly taught those things. Jesus' highest priority for his disciples was that they love each other. This so captivated John that he kept bringing it up in his letters.

Read 1 John 2:7-11 and 2 John 1:5

- Some churches excel in theology, some excel in worship, some excel in service, some in evangelism – but all churches have a terrible time loving people while being faithful to our calling as Christians. And a big part of the problem is confusing sin with personal difference. We have a natural tendency to label personality differences as moral failings, and to excuse moral failings in people who are like us.

V. Review

A. Reason for the seminar

1. People struggle to understand each other
2. People struggle to relate productively

B. Purpose of This Seminar

1. Understand people
2. A “conversation-starter”
3. Begin to distinguish between valuable differences and failure

C. Temperament: Four classical and Myers-Briggs clusters

1. Sanguine/Artisan – SP
 - a. Actor
 - b. Action-oriented
2. Melancholic/Guardian – SJ
 - a. Belonger
 - b. Community-oriented
3. Choleric/Idealist – NF
 - a. Sensitive/romantic thinker
 - b. Identity/feeling-oriented
4. Phlegmatic/Rationalist – NT
 - a. Analytic thinker
 - b. Achievement-oriented

VI. Putting Personality to Work (continued)

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
3. Collaborate with others who complement your own strengths and weaknesses
 - a. Enlist others to assist you in your areas of weakness
 - b. 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

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 & 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 up 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

F. Teamwork workshop

Return to your discussion group of the first session

1. Select one person in your group
2. What sort of things do you *like* to do? What are your *strengths*?
Give examples
 - a. Have the rest of you seen these strengths in this person? If not, why not? Give examples

- b. Have you had an opportunity to use these strengths in ministry? Give examples
 - c. What roles in a group are most suited to you?
- 3. Which *roles* in a group are least suited to you? Give examples
 - a. Have you felt obligated to do these things anyway? Give examples
- 4. What sort of people do you naturally *work well with*? Examples
- 5. What sort of people naturally *complement* you? What sort of people are strong where you are weak, or weak where you are strong?
 - a. Have you had opportunity to work with such people in ministry?
 - b. How did it go? Did you get along, or did you conflict? Give examples
- 6. Move to the next person

VII. 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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