

“Jesus is the Light of the World”

Metropolitan Spiritual Churches of Christ, INC

Mid-Year Conference 2022

Birmingham, AL

Doctor

Lawyer

Teacher

Firefighter

The Pastor as a Person

“And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.”
Jeremiah 3:15

Father

Mother

Son

Daughter

Facilitated by

Bishop Antonio P. Gibson, Pastor

New Experience Spiritual Church of Christ
Pontiac, MI

Nurse

Police Officer

Politician

Librarian

Manager

Plumber

Custodian

Cashier

Mentor

Accountant

Bus Driver

Chef

These are our Professionals in the World: They are also Pastors!

Introduction

For a pastor, the deepest levels of satisfaction and intimacy in a church occur when others begin to see the pastor as a person—a person with hopes and dreams, loves and fears, joys, and tears. This revelation is not easily obtained in the Church; and the becoming is often hidden behind many masks, false identities, and plagiarized identifications.

For these reasons and more, not every **pastor** becomes a **person**.

Some pastors choose to remain incognito or disguised behind thin layers of superiority (or inferiority), behind cardboard and cliché, always dressed up in the costumes of resident sage, spiritual guide, exemplar of the faith.

These pastors rarely become persons, however, at least not their own persons; and even in the best of circumstances, they are forced to live one of two lives: **the character or the actor**. In time, they scarcely can distinguish one from the other; neither the character nor the actor captures the essence of his or her personhood.

Other pastors cannot break free of the costumes their congregations force them to wear. These costumes are binding, humiliating, often funny. Wherever they go, whoever they are or hope to be, these pastors always must wear the official face, the accepted expression, the look that others expect them to wear.

They must speak the words others expect them to speak. Their attire is limited, and they essentially are avatars, walking the church beat, mere representations of the overblown images and stereotypes that must be fulfilled. These pastors are often miserable in their shackles yet cannot bring themselves to break free. If they are lucky, they will die young. Many only can dream of becoming persons.

Still other pastors attempt to masquerade as priests, bishops, apostles, prophets, etc. but they know they are persons; the game begins to eat away at the seams that are holding their costumes together. They are moth-ridden, torn, and in time their costumes begin to drop away in tattered swatches, exposing them for who they really are or want to be; but they are embarrassed by being a person, and some would rather dress the part again instead of exposing their vulnerabilities.

It is difficult to be a pastor who is a person. Often, it is more difficult to find a church that will allow a person to be a pastor. Many congregations prefer the masquerade, the slight-of-hand artist, the hall of mirrors.

Pastors who become persons in the church are rare, but when other persons accept the pastor as a person, all are set free. The people realize they have a person in their midst. This is a person who feels, who cares, who is real - not an imaginary hero or a quick-change-artist. Many people - especially those whose lives have been exposed or destroyed - will come to a person for help. A person might understand, might actually listen. A person would not offer platitudes or scripted lines. A person might cry, laugh, sit in silence, or show up for a party wearing blue jeans and totting a gag gift. A person would be real.

Some pastors dry up, or are used up, before they can become persons. This, of course, is sad because all pastors have the potential to become persons. Yet, some pastors discover too late they never have been persons. Others only become persons after they quit being pastors, but the lucky ones become persons early—and just keep becoming better people as they pastor.

When the pastor becomes a person there are frequently other people in the church who decide to become persons, too. Some people will make the decision to change out of their masquerades and costumes, remove their masks, allow others to see their scars—which are real, not pasted on for show—and they will walk the earth, upright, and look at themselves in the mirror. Some will admit, after years of denial, that they are real persons, loved by God, and who are tired of living a lie.

Pastors who become persons can have this effect on others. People can see other persons standing in front of them. Sometimes they call the person pastor, priest or reverend; but they know a person when they see one. People who are hurting, elated or full of pain always will trust another person.

When pastors discover they have become persons in the eyes of their people, it is a wondrous thing. It is freeing, and freedom is elation. Pastors who become people go from grace to grace, from strength to strength. A person has no greater calling in life than to become a person, a person of worth, a person of substance, a person uniquely created in God's image.

Pastors who become persons eventually put away their masquerade costumes and get on with the business of living, which always is littered with reality. Persons get their hands dirty in the soil, but also soil their hands in other people's dirt. Persons like to watch beautiful flowers grow, as well as like to tend the beauty in other people's lives. Persons don't make swift judgments about other people, but know people are flawed. They are not repulsed by these defects. Persons don't stand at a distance. They kneel, plant and water. Persons look like anyone else. They are real. They are not acting their respective parts.

Pastors who become persons have no need for masks. They can reveal their scars without fear of judgment or hostility. They are willing to gaze upon other people's scars and apply balm as needed. Sometimes they encourage people to get back on the bike, despite the abrasions.

Pastors who become persons know who they are, and they want to help other people become real, too. It is difficult work, hard work, but fulfilling. Only a real person can do it.

Apart from our own family relationships few relationships in life are as meaningful and as potentially productive as that of the pastor/preacher and the people. It does not take long for the pastor to realize that life is about relationships and personalities play an important role in the building of positive productive interpersonal relationships.

Effective preachers realize that there are three traits that are imperative in influencing others and leading people. Pastors who influence others know where they are going.

They know why they are here, and they know who they are. Many of us called to preach struggle with this last trait. While we may know where we are going and why we are here, some of us often find ourselves trying to be someone we are not. God has gifted each of us with not only our own unique DNA but our own unique personality as well. Some are extroverted. Others are more introverted. Knowing who you are and allowing God to use you through the person He made you to be is a liberating experience.

While we are each gifted with different personalities, there are some common principles we can all incorporate into our leadership abilities. I call these the "Be-Attitudes" of pastoral leadership, and no matter whether we are out-going in our personalities or more reserved, each of us can put them into use as we seek to be winsome in our work and witness with others. To begin with:

BE APPROACHABLE...People in the pew need to know they have a pastor who is approachable. This can be achieved as much through attitude as through action. "By insolence comes nothing but strife, but with those who take advice is wisdom." [Prov. 13:10](#)"A rebuke goes deeper into all man of understanding than a hundred blows into a fool." [Prov. 17:10](#)

BE AFFIRMING...People need encouragement and perhaps the greatest motivating factor you can exhibit is in giving a simple pat on the back. Our Lord went around affirming people. He met a woman taken in adultery and after turning away her accusers told her He did not condemn her but that she should go and sin no more. While the disciples in Bethany rebuked the woman with the alabaster box, Jesus told her she had done a beautiful thing to Him.

Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

BE APPRECIATIVE...Learn to say thank you. Show your appreciation to others openly and often. It takes so little to be above average at this point.

1 Corinthians 12:21–26 The eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you,” nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.” 22 On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, 23 and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, 24 which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, 25 that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. 26 If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.

BE ATTENTIVE...Know as many of your people's names as possible. No matter what your personality type we can all be more attentive. There is something endearing about hearing your name mentioned from someone like the pastor for whom you have such respect. Jesus said, “My sheep hear my voice and I know them” (John 10:27). Your sheep hear your voice every week and you need to know them.

BE ACCURATE...In relationships, and in all of life for that matter, honesty is always the best policy. We never have to be afraid of the truth. It has its own way of always winning in the end.

BE ACCOUNTABLE...Perhaps more pastors lose their leadership because of a lack of accountability than anything else. By our very nature, we all need someone to whom we are accountable.

Yes, life is about relationships and there are only three in life. There is an outward expression. This is the relationship we have with others at home, the office, in the church and in the social arena. There is an inward expression. This is the relationship we have with our selves. It is difficult to “love our neighbor as we love ourselves” if we have little self-worth or self-love. Finally, there is the upward expression, the relationship we have with God through Jesus Christ. And the bottom line? We will never be properly related to others until we are properly related to ourselves, and this never takes place until we are properly related to the Lord Jesus and find our self-worth in Him. God has gifted you with your own personality. Embrace it. Never try to be someone you are not. You are unique and indescribably valuable to Him. Get out there among your people and be affirming, appreciative, attentive, accurate, and don't forget to be accountable. There is something

you can do that no one can do quite like you can...and there is someone to be reached that no one can reach like you can.

We all need to understand that all Pastors are **Human**.

Question: What does it mean to be human?

God has made humans different from all other created beings. Humans have a physical body and a spiritual component: a soul and/or spirit. Part of this immaterial aspect is the possession of intellect, emotion, and a will. Human beings are created in the image of God ([Genesis 1:27](#)). Human beings are different from angels, which have no physical body, and animals, which do not reflect the *imago dei*.

To be human means to bear the image of God. We are not divine, but we reflect divinity. God has a mind, emotions, and volition. As image-bearers, we, too, have intellect, emotions, and a will. We possess creativity, inventing, fabricating, synthesizing, making music, and creating all types of artwork. We possess the gift of language, relating thoughts from one self-aware mind to another, learning thousands of words and coining new words when we need them. We are driven to name and classify the animals, just like our father Adam did ([Genesis 2:19– 20](#)). Because we are created in the image of God, we have a basic dignity and inherent significance.

To be human means to have a purpose. God's stated assignment to Adam and Eve was to "be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground" ([Genesis 1:28](#)). We still fulfill this purpose when we domesticate animals, use natural resources, shape nature, and carve out an existence even in the harshest environments. But we are more than tenders of the planet. Our purpose includes knowing God and having a relationship with Him. Our highest purpose is to glorify God: "All things have been created through [the Son] and for him" ([Colossians 1:16](#)).

What/who is a Pastor: The primary position of leadership in a local church is that of [pastor/elder/overseer](#). The three titles seem to be used interchangeably, but each word may emphasize a certain aspect of the position. The word *pastor* is really the word for "shepherd" and may emphasize caring for and feeding the flock. The word *elder* may emphasize wisdom and respect. The word *overseer* (or *bishop*) emphasizes leadership and authority. The qualifications for this office are found in [1 Timothy 3:1–7](#) and [Titus 1:5–9](#).

The biblical pattern is that there are several pastors/elders/overseers for each congregation, even though there may be one pastor who does most of the day-to-day work of teaching, preaching, counseling, etc. ([senior pastor](#), lead pastor, [teaching pastor](#)). When

this is the case, the other elders are there to hold him accountable and to provide wisdom and balance so that all leadership and authority is not centered on one man. concerning the role of the pastor, the Bible says a great deal. The primary terms that describe the role of the pastor are “elder,” “bishop,” and “teacher” ([1 Timothy 3:1-13](#)). “Elder,” or *episkopos* (from which we get our word *episcopal*) refers to the oversight of the believers, and it involves teaching, preaching, caring, and exercising authority where needed. The elder also serves in the church as leader and teacher. In [Titus 1:5-9](#), Paul urges Titus to "appoint elders in every city." They will teach and lead the congregation in their spiritual development. Also, in [1 Peter 5:1-4](#), Peter addresses his "fellow elders" and tells them to "be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve" (v. 2).

Role of senior pastor

The Bible doesn't address that title specifically. It has come into existence as the church has grown and required additional staff. The title of senior pastor refers to the person who primarily leads the church, generally doing the majority of the preaching and teaching in the pulpit at the services and overseeing the administration of the church. Some larger churches may even have an executive pastor who oversees the day-to-day operation of the church, while the senior pastor then would be responsible for working with the church board, along with the preaching, teaching, and counseling ministries that go with the role of pastor.

Every church, whether large or small, needs a pastor who will shepherd, lead, feed, and guide the people to spiritual growth and service for the Lord Jesus. In larger churches, a senior pastor often shepherds the pastoral team in addition to shepherding the congregation. As a result, a senior pastor should be held to an even higher standard of agreement to [1 Timothy 3:1-13](#) and [Titus 1:6-9](#) than other pastoral roles.

Question: What are the biblical qualifications for a Pastor?

[First Timothy 3:1-7](#) contains the biblical qualifications for a pastor: “Here is a trustworthy saying: Whoever aspires to be an overseer desires a noble task. Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him, and he must do so in a manner worthy of full respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.”

We also find the biblical qualifications for a pastor in [Titus 1:5–9](#): “The reason I left you in Crete was that you might put in order what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you. An elder must be blameless, faithful to his wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. Since an overseer manages God’s household, he must be blameless—not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather, he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.”

Putting the two lists together, we get the following qualifications of a pastor:

- He must be a person of integrity and worthy of the respect of those both inside and outside the church (above reproach, respectable, blameless, upright, holy, loves what is good, have a good reputation with outsiders).
- He must have self-control (be temperate, disciplined). This encompasses many of the things that come later in the list.
- He must not misuse alcohol by getting drunk (not given to drunkenness).
- He must be hospitable. He must be able to welcome people into his home and his life. He is not “stand-offish.”
- He must be able to deal with people in a respectful way (not violent, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not overbearing, not quick-tempered).
- He must be a good husband (faithful to his wife) and a good father (a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him, and he must do so in a manner worthy of full respect. If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God’s church?) In some circles this is interpreted to mean that a pastor must be married and have more than one child, but most interpret this to mean that, *if* a man is married or has children, then he must be a good husband and father.

At the time Paul wrote, it would have been rare for an adult man to be single or childless. Elsewhere, Paul extolls the value of being single in serving the Lord, and he himself was single, so it is doubtful that being married with children is a qualification for church leadership (see [1 Corinthians 7](#)).

When a pastor becomes a person, he or she must know these 10 things:

1. I am not the size of my church

My self-esteem is in Christ. Big church or little, it has nothing to do with my calling, my abilities, or my faithfulness. Zechariah 4:10 “Do not despise these small beginnings, for the Lord rejoices to see the work begin, to see the plumb line in Zerubbabel’s hand.” Psalms 127:1 “Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city the guards stand watch in vain.”

2. Theological degrees do not open doors for me

The Holy Spirit does that. True, the lack of a seminary education might close a few doors, and a good theological education will better prepare me for what to do when the Spirit does open one, but no degree is going to work magic for a pastor.

James 1:5-6. If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. 6 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. And Isaiah 11:2 the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.

3. The ministry is not a career, but a calling

We do nothing to “enhance our career,” but do a thousand things to “fulfill our calling.”

[Romans 11:29](#) For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. [Jeremiah 1:5](#) “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born, I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.”

4. There is no substitute for physical presence

A pastor needs to actually be with people in their crisis. Not a phone call, not a text message, nor an assistant. Be there! [1 Peter 5:2-3](#) Shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock.

[1 Timothy 3:1-16](#) The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. Therefore, an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his

children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? ...

5. Don't believe every word of praise nor every bit of criticism

Equilibrium is a good thing, and that is found in Christ alone. "Looking unto Jesus." Philippians 4:8, KJV: Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things *are* honest, whatsoever things *are* just, whatsoever things *are* pure, whatsoever things *are* lovely, whatsoever things *are* of good report; if *there be* any virtue, and if *there be* any praise, think on these things.

6. Stay away from writing negative letters or emails. [Matthew 5:22](#)

But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire. Hard things should be dealt with in person or by phone. An email can outlive a crisis and a harsh letter can be an instrument in the hands of people with an agenda.

7. This ministry of the Lord is not about me

As the Lord said to Samuel, "It's not you they've rejected, but Me" ([1 Samuel 8:7](#)). Get over yourself.

8. Often, how people treat their pastor is a function of their relationship with Christ

Stella, a lovely senior lady, told me, "I have always loved all my pastors." Later, reflecting on that, I thought of Bill who had always opposed his pastors.

Stella loved her pastors not for what was in them but what was in her. Bill opposed his pastors not for what was lacking in them but what was lacking in him.

9. A small gift given sacrificially will inspire far more giving than one huge amount from a wealthy member

Case in point: The widow of Mark 12. She left the temple that day not knowing the Lord had used her faithfulness as an object lesson or that her sacrificial gift would inspire God's people to give generously for 2,000 years.

10. When He begins to do something great, the Lord loves to start small with ordinary people.

The only question for us is whether we are humble and available. Think about the parable of the mustard seed in [Matthew 13:31-32](#) and Paul's word in [1 Corinthians 1:26](#).

Pastors are not perfect

The saying “to err is human; to forgive, divine” is not found in the Bible, so, in that limited sense, it is not a biblical saying. However, the sentiment may have a biblical basis, depending on the way one applies it. Since it is a “free-floating” proverb with no context, different people might interpret or apply it in different ways.

The modern saying has its origin in the work of English poet Alexander Pope. In his *Essay on Criticism, Part II* (1711), Pope wrote,

“Ah ne'er so dire a Thirst of Glory boast, nor in the Critick let the Man be lost!
Good-Nature and Good-Sense must ever join. To err is Humane; to Forgive, Divine.”

The first phrase of the proverb, “to err is human,” is certainly a biblical concept. Human beings have limited knowledge and are prone to make mistakes. Even a person with the best of intentions can make a mistake and hurt those around him. Well-meant actions can make a bad situation worse. Scripture and human experience attest to the frailty and inability of human beings. Error is a quintessential human characteristic.

The second half of the proverb, “to forgive, divine,” is also a biblical concept. Forgiveness is not a natural human response to an error or injury. When a human being responds to an error with anger, he is responding with normal human tendencies. [Galatians 5:18–21](#) lists the normal characteristics of a person living in the flesh, that is, living a normal human life according to normal human urges, tendencies, and priorities: “Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these.”

A number of the sins listed in [Galatians 5](#) are normal responses to an error. For example, someone is cut off in traffic. No malice was involved—one driver simply didn't see the other car—but enmity, strife, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, and divisions result. These are all the opposite of forgiveness. To err is human, and so is responding in anger or trying to even the score. A corollary might be “it is human to err and then to deny, cover up, and blame someone else.”

Pastors are not perfect and should never be put on a pedestal

A Christian pastor's role is not to stand on a pedestal but to teach God's Word through preaching and discipling and to lead the church as a shepherd leads his sheep. This analogy of a shepherd and flock is seen in [John 10](#), where Jesus presents Himself as the [Good Shepherd](#) ([John 10:11, 14](#)). A shepherd cares for his sheep; he has spent time

with them and knows them. Jesus used the two-way relationship between shepherd and sheep as an example to show the importance of a leader who wants the best for his followers.

As Jesus was preparing His last instructions for His disciples after His resurrection, He gave Peter specific instructions: “When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, ‘Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?’ He said to him, ‘Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.’ He said to him, ‘Feed my lambs.’ He said to him a second time, ‘Simon, son of John, do you love me?’ He said to him, ‘Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.’ He said to him, ‘Tend my sheep.’ He said to him the third time, ‘Simon, son of John, do you love me?’ Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, ‘Do you love me?’ and he said to him, ‘Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Feed my sheep” ([John 21:15–17, ESV](#)).

There are pastors who do not believe

In a word, “Woe!” “Woe to you, you hypocrites...woe to you, blind guides...” ([Matthew 23:14-16](#)). “Woe to the shepherds who only take care of themselves...” ([Ezekiel 34:2](#)). “These men are blemishes at your love feasts, eating with you without the slightest qualm—shepherds who feed only themselves. They are clouds without rain, blown along by the wind; autumn trees, without fruit and uprooted—twice dead. They are wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame; wandering stars, for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever” ([Jude 12-13](#)).

It is the height of hypocrisy to teach a message you do not believe. It is dishonoring to God for anyone—especially pastors—to consider the Christian message a psychological [crutch](#) for unintelligent and needy people. [Proverbs 6:16-19](#) declares, “There are six things the LORD hates, seven that are detestable to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, a false witness who pours out lies, and a man who stirs up dissension among brothers.” If the Christian faith is a lie, it is not a “useful psychological crutch.” Rather, it is useless, vain, empty, futile, and pitiful ([1 Corinthians 15:14-19](#)).

Now, there are also pastors who truly know and love the Lord and yet are struggling through a time of doubt. This is fairly common and understandable, as pastors deal with a tremendous amount of stress and are subject to heightened spiritual attack. This article is not directed towards believing pastors who struggle with doubt. For pastors in such a trial, the prayer should be “I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief” ([Mark 9:24](#))! If the doubts become persistent, the pastor should probably step down until spiritual renewal occurs. A pastor in such a situation deserves our prayer, comfort, encouragement, and empathy.

Bi-vocational Pastors

The demands of church ministry—sermon preparation, teaching, outreach, hospital visitation, counseling, administration, etc.—fill up their days and leave scarce room for anything else. Other pastors, however, find that they must take an outside job to supplement their livelihood and make ends meet. These are the bi-vocational pastors.

A bi-vocational (“dual-occupation”) pastor is usually shepherding a church of smaller size or serving in an area with a depressed economy. The fact that his congregation is unable to provide him a living wage is what forces him to be a bi-vocational pastor.

The call to the ministry is still there, and the pastor heeds the call; it’s just that practical concerns, such as putting food on the table, require him to take a second job and serve the congregation as a bi-vocational pastor. Some might see an argument against becoming a bi-vocational pastor in the example of the early church. In Jerusalem, as the church was growing rapidly, the apostles found themselves caught up in the daily tasks involving the feeding of the needy in their congregation. They made a decision, calling the people together and saying, “It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word” (Acts 6:2–4). This passage reveals the apostolic priorities in ministry (prayer and teaching the Word), and it emphasizes the need for pastors to share the ministerial burden with others, but it contains no prohibition against being a bi-vocational pastor.

The Pastor as Person have their on personality

People have unique personalities that make them who they are. There are many different types of personality traits, including some that are positive and some that are negative. Whether you're looking to choose personality traits for characters in stories you are writing or you're simply looking to find the right words to describe aspects of your personality or someone else's, you'll find what you're in search of here.

Question: What Does Personality Trait Mean?

A **personality trait** is defined as something about a person that impacts how they tend to think, feel and behave on an ongoing basis. Personality traits are characteristic of enduring behavioral and emotional patterns, rather than isolated occurrences. Anyone can occasionally have a bad day, get irritated and make a snappy remark.

This happens in isolation, it doesn't reflect a personality trait. However, when someone's typical behavior is to snap at people rather than communicating politely, then "snappiness" is likely a personality trait that person has.

Examples of Positive Personality Traits

Positive personality traits manifest themselves in many ways. When a person's regular behavior exhibits the same positive attributes time and time again, the associated behaviors become definitive of [their character](#). In the examples below, the bold terms represent [descriptive words](#) commonly used to convey the positive trait mentioned.

- Being honest and taking responsibility for your actions are admirable qualities. *Honesty is truthfulness. An honest person has the habit of making accurate, trustworthy statements about life, self, others and God. An honest person represents himself just as he is and tells others the truth about themselves. Honesty is not “expressing everything that goes through your mind.” That’s transparency, and a person can be honest without being transparent. However, no one can be consistently honest without a commitment to the truth. Honesty will, at times, hurt someone’s feelings, but that does not mean that dishonesty is preferable. Honesty as a character quality is a sign of the Spirit’s work in a person’s soul. God cannot lie ([Hebrews 6:18](#)); therefore, His presence in a person gives rise to truthfulness. God’s people are honest.*
- Adaptability and affability are great traits that can help a person get along well with others.
- Drive, determination, and persistence can help keep a person going no matter what. For the most part, the Bible presents persistence as a positive character quality. Persistence is linked closely with endurance and [perseverance](#). Jesus praised persistence in prayer with an illustration to explain it. His parable in [Luke 18:1–8](#) tells of a widow who was not receiving justice for her case, so she continued to pester the judge and would not take “no” for an answer. Because the widow persisted in her pleas for justice, the ungodly judge finally relented and gave her what she asked. Jesus then challenged His followers to persist in their prayers the same way.

Persistence is positive when the goal is righteous. Persistence in prayer ([Luke 18:1](#)), in faith ([Hebrews 11:13](#)), and in doing good ([Galatians 6:9](#)) are all commended because the motivation is right. However, persistence is wrong when the motives are self-serving. If we persist in sin, the Bible commands other Christians to rebuke us ([1 Timothy 5:20](#); [Matthew 18:15–17](#)). In fact, those who persist in sinful lifestyles are not true Christians; they have not been born again ([1 John 3:4–10](#)). Persistent, willful sin is evidence that the Holy Spirit has not yet transformed our natures so that we desire godliness ([2 Corinthians 5:17](#)).

- Compassion, understanding and empathy help a person relate well to others. *The Hebrew and Greek words translated “compassion” in the Bible mean “to have*

mercy, to feel sympathy and to have pity.” We know that, according to the Bible, God is “a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness” ([Psalm 86:15](#)). Like all of God’s attributes, His compassion is infinite and eternal. His compassions never fail; they are new every morning ([Lamentations 3:22-23](#)).

- In addition to being a virtue, patience is a personality trait that's universally valued. *When everything is going our way, patience is easy to demonstrate. The true test of patience comes when our rights are violated—when another car cuts us off in traffic; when we are treated unfairly; when our coworker derides our faith, again. Some people think they have a right to get upset in the face of irritations and trials. Impatience seems like a holy anger. The Bible, however, praises patience as a fruit of the Spirit ([Galatians 5:22](#)) which should be produced for all followers of Christ ([1 Thessalonians 5:14](#)). Patience reveals our faith in God’s timing, omnipotence, and love.*
- Courage and confidence can help a person choose to do what is right in tough situations. *In the Bible, courage is also called “good cheer” as in [Mark 6:50](#) when Jesus gave the command to the disciples who saw Him walking on the water of the Sea of Galilee and coming toward them. The Greek word translated “courage” and “good cheer” means literally “boldness and confidence.” In the Bible, courage is the opposite of fear. When God commands us to fear not, to be of good cheer, and to have courage, He is always commanding against fear, which is the opposite of courage. Confidence is a popular subject today. We are told to think confidently, to be self-assured, to live brashly, boldly, and brazenly. The Bible says there are some things we should not have confidence in. For example, "Have no confidence in the flesh" ([Philippians 3:3](#)). Paul wrote these words to counter the claims of those who thought they were acceptable to God based on their heredity, training, or religious devotion. God is no respecter of persons ([Acts 10:34](#)), and our résumés and genealogies don't matter much to Him.*
- Loyalty is a good quality to possess; it will help others decide that you are trustworthy. *The word loyalty brings to mind a powerful sense of belonging and solidarity. With it comes the idea of wholehearted fidelity coupled with unswerving devotion and duty. In the Bible, the concept of loyalty is purely relational. This means our whole being is thoroughly committed to someone ([Joshua 24:15](#)). Such loyalty is expressed to us in both the divine and human realms as given to us in the first two commandments: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength,” and “Love your neighbor as yourself” ([Mark 12:29-31](#); [John 15:13](#); [1 John 3:16](#)).*
- Being adventurous and fearless can empower you to be willing to take chances.

- Having an imaginative and creative nature can help you come up with innovative ideas and unique solutions.
- Being helpful to others is a personality trait that will cause others to see you as indispensable.
- Being meticulous and precise means that you're careful and conscientious.
- A person who is optimistic tends to look for the bright side of situations rather than forcing on the negative. *Biblical optimism is the result of faith in the character of God. The Bible refers to this as “hope.” [Romans 15:13](#) says, “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” When we hope in God, we put our trust in His sovereign plan above what our circumstances tell us. [Romans 8:23–25](#) explains it this way: “But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.” Paul is speaking of our future reward and the things that “God has prepared for those who love him” ([1 Corinthians 2:9](#)).*
- Someone who is reliable and dependable is an individual that others know they can count on. *Dependability is the quality of being able to be counted on. Dependable people are reliable. They do what they said they would do and are worthy of trust. When we have an important task that must be completed within a specific timeframe, we look for dependable people. Dependability is a valuable character trait that also reflects a person’s trustworthiness, honesty, and responsibility. Dependability in a person will prevent that person from being a [gossip](#): “A gossip betrays a confidence, but a trustworthy person keeps a secret” ([Proverbs 11:13](#)). Dependability makes one a blessing to his or her employer: “Like a snow-cooled drink at harvest time is a trustworthy messenger to the one who sends him; he refreshes the spirit of his master” ([Proverbs 25:13](#)). We should be dependable because God is. Scripture often pictures God as a strong rock or an enduring fortress ([2 Samuel 22:3](#); [Psalm 9:9](#); [59:16](#); [62:7](#)), and the words of God “are fully trustworthy” ([Psalm 119:138](#)).*
- People who are gregarious, charming or sociable tend to be friendly, outgoing and upbeat. Those who are independent develop a reputation for taking initiative and seeing things through on their own.
- People who are fair and impartial are viewed by others as being able to make objective decisions not influenced by bias. *[James 3:17](#) But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. [Proverbs 1:7](#) The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction. [Ephesians 5:15-17](#) Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the*

time, because the days are evil. Therefore, do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

- Those who take an encouraging approach are viewed as being caring and interested in seeing others succeed.
- People who are humble tend to be viewed as those who can succeed without being arrogant about their accomplishments. *The Bible says a lot about humility. God calls all people to humble themselves ([Micah 6:8](#); [Matthew 23:12](#); [Romans 12:16](#); [Philippians 2:3–4](#); [1 Peter 5:6](#)). The prophet Zephaniah sums it up well: “Seek the LORD, all you humble of the land, you who do what he commands. Seek righteousness, seek humility” ([Zephaniah 2:3](#)). Believers especially are reminded: humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up ([James 4:10](#)). Humility goes hand in hand with fearing the Lord and doing what He commands ([Proverbs 22:4](#); [2 Chronicles 7:14](#)).*
- If people view you as capable and competent, they tend to trust that you know what you are doing.
- Those who are exuberant come across as being filled with joy and enthusiasm.
- People who are discreet are viewed as trustworthy individuals who are respectful of the privacy and dignity of others.

Examples of Negative Personality Traits

What would life be without balance? For the most part, people are not all good or all bad (though there may be some exceptions). Chances are that you, and everyone you meet, have at least a few negative personality traits. Consider some [examples of negative attributes](#). Again, the descriptive words or phrases commonly used to express these traits are bold.

- A propensity for lying in order to avoid responsibility for one's actions is a deplorable quality. *The Bible is clear that lying is a sin and is displeasing to God. The first sin in this world involved a lie told to Eve. The Ten Commandments given to Moses includes: “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor” ([Exodus 20:16](#)).*

In the early church, Ananias and Sapphira lied regarding a donation in order to make themselves look more generous than they really were. Peter's rebuke is stern: “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit?” ([Acts 5:3](#)). God's judgment was sterner: the couple died as a result of their sin of lying ([Acts 5:1–11](#)).

- A tendency to be untruthful or dishonest in your dealings with others is also a negative trait. [Proverbs 11:3](#)

The integrity of the upright guides them, but the crookedness of the treacherous destroys them. [Luke 16:10-12](#)

One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much. If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? And if you have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own? [Exodus 20:16](#)

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor

- Being rigid and consistently unyielding to the needs of others are not endearing qualities.
- Being full of laziness and excuses for failing to meet obligations is sure to drive others away.
- An inability to empathize with others is a negative personality trait that can alienate others.
- Being quick to anger will damage relationships and turn people away.
- Being disloyal, such as talking about others behind their backs or betraying them for personal gain, is among the most negative personality traits.
- People who are bossy tend to come across as self-centered individuals who disregard the concerns of others.
- Those who are conceited, pompous or arrogant tend to think that they have all the answers or universally know better than everyone else.
- Those who are unfriendly are often viewed as disrespectful and/or uninterested in connecting with other people.
- People who are sullen or surly by nature can be very rude and unpleasant to deal with in a personal or professional capacity.
- Those who are cowardly exhibit an unwillingness to face adversity head-on or to stand up for what is right.
- People who tend to be slovenly habitually fail to take care of their appearance or surroundings, and so are viewed negatively by others.
- People who are quarrelsome or argumentative by nature are more concerned with winning arguments and being right than with finding a solution.
- Those who are too finicky or picky come across as extreme perfectionists who cannot be pleased no matter what one does.
- People who tend to be impulsive often act without thinking about the consequences to themselves or others, thus coming across as reckless.

- Those who are habitually stingy or greedy are viewed by others as selfish individuals who disregard the needs of others.
- Pastors who are sneaky tend to be deliberately deceptive, factors that most definitely represent negative personality traits.
- Those who engage in malicious acts deliberately do things that they know will negatively impact other people.
- Those who are thoughtless act with a total disregard for how their actions might impact other people.
- Those who behave in an unruly manner are often disruptive and disrespectful and can cause harm to others by their irresponsible actions.

List of Words that Describe Behavior

Popular personality tests such as the [Myers-Briggs Type Indicator](#), Raymond Cattell's [16 personality factors](#), and the [Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory](#) develop personality classifications based on overlapping behavior in four key categories: task-oriented behavior, relationship-oriented behavior, introverted behavior, and extroverted behavior.

Reviewing a list of words that describe behavior can help you better understand how personality differences can occur, and help you better explain them.

Five Major Personality Factors

The combination of an individual's personality traits — positive and negative — work together to determine the face they present to the world. Most personality traits can be grouped into one of five broad categories considered to represent the major factors in personality.

- openness - the extent to which a person has an appreciation for a variety of experiences
- conscientiousness - the degree to which a person prefers to plan ahead rather than being spontaneous
- extroversion - the extent to which a person tends to prefer being sociable, outgoing and talkative
- agreeableness - how strongly a person tends to be kind, sympathetic and happy to assist others
- neuroticism - the extent to which someone is inclined to worry or be vulnerable or temperamental People can, of course, learn to adapt and behave in a way that is focused more on what is appropriate in a particular situation rather than what they'd

be led to do by their own natural tendencies. For example, someone who tends to be more [introverted than extroverted](#) but takes a job as a teacher or salesperson will adapt to behave in a more extroverted way for work. With adaptability, they can definitely do this. However, they may find their work roles more tiring than a person who is naturally extroverted.

Be All You Can Be

Being positive and upbeat can influence everyone around you (and in the past, it could've even influenced your family's last name), and so can negativity. For example, offering a friendly smile to a stranger can brighten up their day, just as glaring at them glare can directly or indirectly cause their mood to drop.

- While you may not be able to help it if you are having a bad day, or if you don't like doing a particular task, changing your attitude changes everything.
- Complaining and sulking will only make time drag when doing an unpleasant job. Don't wallow in the negatives of the situation you're in.
- Instead, try to shift your thoughts and redirect your mind to focus on what is positive. This will help you come across as a more pleasant person.

Understanding personality traits is a great way to start your journey toward self-discovery. If you really want to learn how to keep from being defined by negative personality traits, it's up to you to adapt away from negative tendencies and instead exhibit positive traits. The more you adapt away from the negative to act on the positive, the easier it will become to put forward behaviors that present you in a positive light.



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