

Discovering Your SHAPE

Session 6: Personality

We are all born with different and unique personalities which are also a gift from God and can be used for building of His kingdom.

The Encyclopedia of Psychology defines personality as: “The individual *differences in characteristic patterns of thinking, feeling and behaving that each person has.*”

We all respond to one another and our environment in different and unique ways. For example, some of us love being the centre of attention at big, vibrant parties while others of us prefer a quiet catch up with one or two friends. Some of us like to run our daily lives in a controlled and organised manner, while others prefer to be more relaxed and simply go with the flow.

The ways in which we interact with others and our environments may be called our personality traits/characteristics. And God has created each one of us with unique character traits.

In Psalm 139 vs 13, David reminds us that God has creatively knitted each one of us together in our Mother’s wombs which includes our personalities. And in verse 3 we read that David is mindful that God is familiar with all his ways of being, which are unique to David and can be different to those around him.

In the Scriptures we see that God can use our individual character traits to help others to come to know him. A classic example is Barnabas, who is referred to as “The Son of Encouragement’ (Acts 4:36) who is not only optimistic, encouraging and insightful but is also tenacious and a social connector. We see him using these personality traits to pursue and bring people like Saul/Paul (Acts 9:27) and John Mark (Acts 15:37) into the discipleship community.

And just like Barnabas and others in the Scriptures, God can use our unique personality traits to help make disciples who make disciples. However, often we are not aware of our unique personality traits or how they can be put to use for kingdom purposes.

One way to become conscious of our unique personality traits is to think about how others have described us in the past or how they would describe us. So for example, your friends and family might describe you as hilarious, outgoing, friendly, thoughtful, relaxed, organised, authentic, insightful, compassionate etc.

In our modern era we are also blessed to have gifted psychologists and social scientists who have developed some useful tools to help us identify our personality traits and understand the unique ways in which we respond to one another and the world around us.

One tool that has been successfully used to help understand personality traits is the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI).

The MBTI measures the way in which we prefer to interact with our world and others across the following four categories:

Category	Preference
Directing of personal Energy	<p>If you prefer to focus on people and things outside of yourself, and you are energized in social settings like large parties and events you may have a preference towards Extroversion (E).</p> <p>If you prefer to focus more inwardly on your inner thoughts and ideas and are energized after spending time alone or in a small group, you may have a preference towards Introversion (I)</p>
Processing of new Information	<p>If you automatically process new information as it appears through your five senses you may have a preference for Sensing (S). Sensors tend to be more focussed on the present and tend to be very practical and focussed on solving the immediate problem at hand.</p> <p>If you prefer to interpret and add meaning to information then you may have a preference for Intuition (N). Those</p>

	<p>with a preference for intuition can tend to live in the future and the world of endless possibilities. They focus on the big picture and may be more theoretically orientated.</p>
Making Decisions	<p>If you prefer using objective logic and concrete facts to make decisions then you may have a preference for Thinking (T).</p> <p>If you prefer to make decisions based on how you feel about a situation then you may have a preference for Feeling (F). Feelers tend to be more driven by emotion and make decisions more with their heart than with their heads and are very conscious of the impacts on other people.</p>
Interacting with the outside world	<p>If you prefer being structured, organised, well planned and focussed on completing tasks then you may have a preference for Judging (J). Note that Judging does not mean being judgmental but rather refers to the way that a person likes to deal with day-to-day activities.</p> <p>If you prefer going with the flow and being able to respond to new opportunities as and when they arise, you may have a preference for Perceiving (P). Note that Perceiving does not refer to being perceptive but rather the adaptive and flexible way a person likes to deal with their day-to-day activities.</p>

Group Exercise

1. Read through the information above on understanding personality.
2. Take 3 minutes to answer the following question:

Those who know me would describe me as (e.g. funny, quiet, authentic, serious, warm, insightful, empathic, loving, etc) :

3. Complete the free 10-minute online Myers Briggs personality questionnaire which can be located at:
<https://my-personality-test.com/personality-type-indicator>

Note – there are no right or wrong answers. Answer what comes more naturally to you.
4. Read the personality type and description provided at the end of the test.
5. Share your thoughts about the revelations from instructions 2 to 4 with the group.
6. As a group, discuss and discern ways in which each one's unique personality can be used to help grow God's kingdom.
7. Pray for one another – for God to reveal ways in which your unique personalities can be used to help build His kingdom.

APPENDIX

Descriptions of the Personality Types

Category	Preferences
Directing Personal Energy	Extraverted (E) or Introverted (I)
Processing of New Information	Sensing (S) or intuitive (N)
Making Decisions	Thinking (T) or Feeling (F)
Interacting with the outside world	Judging (J) or Perceiving (P)

Type	Description
ENFJ	Pedagogue" - Outstanding leader of groups. Can be aggressive at helping others to be the best that they can be. 5% of the total population.
ENFP	"Journalist" - These people love novelty and surprises. They are big on emotions and expression. Life is an exciting drama. They are good at sales, advertising, politics, and acting. 5% of the total population
ENTJ	"Field Marshall". The basic driving force and need is to lead. Tend to seek a position of responsibility and enjoys being an executive. 5% of the total population.)
ENTP	"Inventor". Enthusiastic interest in everything and always sensitive to possibilities. Non-conformist and innovative. 5% of the total population.
ESFJ:	Seller". Most sociable of all types. Outstanding host or hostesses. They may be dependent, first on parents and later on spouses. They excel in service occupations involving personal contact. 13% of the total population.
ESFP	"Entertainer". Radiates attractive warmth and optimism. Smooth, witty, charming, clever. Fun to be with. Very generous. They make

	good performers, they like public relations, and they love the phone. 13% of the total population.
ESTJ	"Administrator". Much in touch with the external environment. These are responsible mates and parents and are loyal to the workplace. They are realistic, down-to-earth, orderly, and love tradition. They often find themselves joining civic clubs! 13% of the total population
ESTP	"Promoter": These are action-oriented people, often sophisticated, sometimes ruthless -- our "James Bonds." As mates, they are exciting and charming, but they have trouble with commitment. They make good promoters, entrepreneurs, and con artists. 13% of the total population.
INFJ	"Author". Strong drive and enjoyment to help others. Complex personality. 1% of the total population. These are serious students and workers who really want to contribute. They are private and easily hurt. They make good spouses, but tend to be physically reserved. People often think they are psychic. They make good therapists, general practitioners, ministers, and so on.
INFP	"Questor". These people are idealistic, self-sacrificing, and somewhat cool or reserved. They are very family and home oriented, but don't relax well. High capacity for caring. High sense of honour derived from internal values. 1% of the total population.
INTJ	"Scientist". Most self-confident and pragmatic of all the types. Decisions come very easily. These are the most independent of all types. They love logic and ideas and are drawn to scientific research. They can be rather single-minded, though. 1% of the total population.
INTP	"Architect". Greatest precision in thought and language. Can readily discern contradictions and inconsistencies. They are good at logic and math and make good philosophers and theoretical scientists, but not writers or salespeople. 1% of the total population.
ISFJ	"Conservator". These people are service and work oriented - very loyal. They may suffer from fatigue and tend to be attracted to troublemakers. They are good nurses, teachers, secretaries, general practitioners, librarians, middle managers, and housekeepers. 6% of the total population

ISFP	"Artist". Interested in the fine arts. Expression primarily through action or art form. They are shy and retiring, and are not talkative. They are not big on commitment. 5% of the total population.
ISTJ	"Trustee" These are dependable pillars of strength. They often try to reform their mates and other people. They make good bank examiners, auditors, accountants, and phys. ed. teachers, and boy or girl scouts! 6% of the total population.
ISTP	"Artisan". These people are action-oriented and fearless, and crave excitement. They are impulsive and dangerous to stop. They often like tools, instruments, and weapons, and often become technical experts. They are not interested in communications and are often incorrectly diagnosed as dyslexic or hyperactive. 5% of the total population.