

Maximizing Your Personality
The Do It My Way “D”
November 5, 2017

PRE-SERVICE VIDEO

Worship Song – “Rejoice”

Baptism Intro (including video)

Worship Song – “All Because of Jesus” / “I Am Free”

Feature Song – “The Man” / Offering

As Naomi said, today we’re continuing in our “Maximizing Your Personality” series ... and if you know anyone who sounds like the person described in that song – “Tell everybody I’m the man (or the woman) and this is my world” ...

... chances are that person is blessed with the personality type we’re going to talk about today – the “Do It My Way” Dominant “D” as defined by the DISC personality inventory.

And we’ll get to that shortly ... but I want to start out with a quick review of some of the things we

talked about in last week's message which was intended to put into context all of the "personality information" you'll hear today and in the three weeks that follow. (As always, if you were not here last Sunday, I encourage you to watch, listen to or read the message in the media section of our app and website).

First of all, in case it isn't obvious, in this series we're using the DISC terminology where each of us can be generally described by one or two of those letters.

For instance, you might be a "D" personality like me, or you might be an S-C combination ... or an I-D combination and so on.

And, if you haven't had a chance to do so, I encourage you – as I did last Sunday – to visit www.123test.com/disc-personality-test and take a short, free quiz which will help you determine your type.

By the way, you can almost guess your type by the way you reacted to my suggestion.

- If you took the test and then sent an email to the webmaster suggesting ways it could be improved, you're probably a dominant and determined "D" personality.
- If you went to the website and but didn't take the test because you were distracted by all the other cool stuff on the site, you're probably an influencing and impulsive "I."
- If you said to yourself, "I really need to do that, but I'll get to it later" – and you still haven't done it, you're probably a steady and supportive "S."
- Finally, if you took the test two or three times because you were concerned you might have misunderstood the words or maybe ranked them wrong you're probably a creative and conscientious "C."

Anyway ... if you haven't taken the test, I

encourage you to do so.

The second thing I want to reiterate from last week are the “ground rules” concerning how we use this information.

Rule #1. Remember that no personality type is better or worse than any other.

All types have some really great strengths and some really big weaknesses, as we’ll see throughout this series.

Rule #2. Beware of the tendency to reduce people to a set of letters.

DISC is a way of describing predominant preferences. But sometimes, people deviate from those preferences. In fact, sometimes people deviate because God is changing them.

Rule #3. Don’t use personality type as an excuse for inappropriate behavior.

If you act like a jerk, it’s not because you are a <fill-

in-the-blank> personality. It's because you *are* a jerk.

Don't use personality as an excuse.

Finally, if you're a Christian – a believer in and follower of Jesus ...

Rule #4. Understand that God's goal is to maximize your personality by producing the fruit of the Spirit in us.

Your personality type as it is today – right now, this minute – is the raw material with which God has to work. That's what He starts with. But His goal is to make you more than what you are.

See, when any of us come to the point ...

- Where we realize and admit to him that we are sinners in need of a savior and that Jesus is that savior
- When we trust what He did for us on the

cross as atonement for our sin

- When we turn our lives over to Him to become his followers

... we begin a new life by the power of the Holy Spirit. We are “born from above” (as Jesus put it).

And the Holy Spirit begins to change us.

We start to look a little less like “us” and a little more like “Jesus” in how we think and act. New qualities and characteristics begin to appear in our lives – qualities and characteristics that might be *completely foreign* to our personalities.

Paul describes these qualities as “the fruit of the Spirit.”

When the Holy Spirit controls our lives, he will produce this kind of fruit in us: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Galatians 5:22-23a (NLT)

Now, think about that list.

Is there anything there that makes you say “boy, that one is not me. Patience – no way; joy – are you kidding?”

I’ll bet you those qualities are directly related to the inherent weaknesses of your personality type.

But you don’t have to stay weak in those things because, as Paul says in the next verse:

*Those who belong to Christ Jesus
have nailed the passions and desires
of their sinful nature to his cross and
crucified them there Galatians
5:24 (NLT)*

In other words, those of us who have received Jesus as our savior and Lord are not ruled by our “default wiring.” Those who are not gentle, for instance, can develop the ability to be as gentle as Jesus when the situation calls for it.

And Paul explains how that can happen in the final verse of this passage:

*Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep
in step with the Spirit. Galatians
5:25 (NIV)*

And our goal in this series is to understand how the fruit of the Spirit and keeping in step with the Spirit might apply to each personality type and help us to grow beyond the natural characteristics of that personality – to maximize it and ourselves.

Today we’re going to see how that can happen for those of us who have been blessed with dominant D-personalities.

I’m curious – how many here scored as a “D” either on the online test or on another DISC test you’ve taken previously? As I shared with you last week, this is my predominant type.

Describing the “D”

So, let's begin with a look at what that type looks like.

Using the basic four-quadrant grid we talked about last week, we can quickly see two of the most basic preferences of those with D personalities.

**1. D's tend to prefer tasks over people and they tend to be more active than passive.
(graph comes up)**

Given the choice of working on a project that produces something, or sitting around shooting the breeze, they'll usually choose the project. In fact, one of the most difficult things for a D to do is to stop in the middle of a task and have a conversation.

Why? Because conversation is passive and people-oriented and, by nature, that's just not where they

want to live.

Now, this particular combination tends to produce an additional set of characteristics and behaviors.

2. For one, most D-personalities have a high sense of confidence.

They're not intimidated by difficult challenges. In fact, their intense desire to achieve often gives them courage to try things about which most people would say "it can't be done."

Of course, saying *that* to a "D" only energizes them. It brings out their competitive spirit. They love to *win* – no matter what the playing field.

And they work hard to win because they really do believe that, given enough time and energy, they can accomplish just about anything they desire.

3. And, because D's believe they can *do anything* ... they desire to *control* and *direct*

almost everything.

The two questions that will be on the mind of a “D” in any given situation are “Who’s in charge here?” and “what’s the goal?”

If they don’t get a clear answer – or if they don’t like the answer – then it’s likely that they’ll attempt to step to the front and say, “I’m the man” (or “I’m the woman”). Let’s do it my way.” They’ll attempt to take charge and set the agenda.

Now, that’s not necessarily a bad thing, because most D personalities have an intuitive sense of what needs to be done in order to accomplish a goal. In fact, if you have a problem that requires a solution, you want to talk to a “D.” They have a knack for being able to quickly ...

- Analyze a situation
- Recognize the bottom line issues
- And come up with a plan that has a reasonable chance of success.

4. Finally, D-personalities are willing to do what it takes to get better results.

You've heard the statement "if it ain't broke ... don't fix it?"

That kind of thinking drives D's crazy, because their motto is "if it ain't broke, that gives me time to find an even better way to do it!" ... whatever "it" might be.

Dominant personalities are risk-takers and change-agents. They're always looking for the tweak or the angle or the revolution that can make things go better ... with, of course, "better" being defined by them.

What a "D" Can Be

Now, clearly, there are some major benefits of being blessed with this kind of personality.

- Being confident and motivated and able to respond well to challenge is a good thing.
- Being able to see what needs to be done and developing a plan to accomplish it is of high value.

The trouble comes when these positive characteristics get taken to an extreme.

- The sense of confidence can become pride and an unwillingness to admit when we're wrong.
- The desire to control and direct can become heavy-handed demandingness.
- The desire to achieve and win can lead to insensitivity; treating people as simply a "means to an end."

In fact, if you're predominantly a "D" or have a

significant amount of “D” characteristics in your personality mix, you’ve probably had people confront you over these things.

- “You’re so arrogant!”
- “You always have to be right!”
- “You’re too demanding!”
- “You’re just insensitive!”
- “You don’t care about anyone but you!”

Furthermore, when that’s happened, you’ve been shocked to discover that’s how anyone perceives you, because *that certainly wasn’t your intention*.

I remember when I first got into ministry as a career. I was at a church that *I just knew* could grow and reach many people for Christ. And, as a D personality, I was pretty confident that I knew how we could do it. In fact, several times I preached visionary messages to the congregation on the subject.

Unfortunately, I was not the senior pastor.

And while some people *liked* what I was saying – including my boss (who was the senior pastor) – others were quite unhappy with me. They saw me as arrogant, demanding and attempting to take control of a role that wasn't mine.

I was shocked. “That wasn't my intention at all,” I protested.

But they were right. That's what I was doing.

While I'm at it, I probably should admit that I've also been confronted more times than I can count for being insensitive and uncaring – and rightfully so. And, again, almost every time that's happened, I've been shocked and dismayed because it's really not my *intention* to be that way. It's just a natural weakness; a character flaw. It's hardwired into my sinful human nature.

That's not meant to be an excuse. It's meant to be

an explanation of what naturally comes out of me – and anyone else who is a D-personality type.

However, what's greatly encouraging to me is that *I am not nearly as much like that as I used to be*. The people closest to me will tell you that's true. I'm not totally "there" yet but, as promised, the Spirit is producing fruit in my life. I have developed characteristics that are not natural to my personality.

And I'm not special. Transformation can happen to anyone with a D personality who will, as Paul said, try to keep in step with the Spirit. (And I'll explain what that looks like for Ds in just a few minutes).

But let's look at that "fruit of the Spirit" passage again:

When the Holy Spirit controls our lives, he will produce this kind of fruit in us: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

gentleness, and self-control.
Galatians 5:22-23a (NLT)

Obviously, every single follower of Jesus could stand to grow in every one of those virtues.

But, if you're a D-personality, there are a few that jump out as being desperately needed.

Specifically, I'm talking about the virtues of love, kindness and gentleness.

If you're a follower of Christ with a D-personality, that's probably where the Holy Spirit will have to do the most work in you. If you don't realize that, the people who live and work with you certainly do!

Now, let's define these virtues more precisely and talk about why they're so important to "D" personalities.

And let's start with love.

1. The word translated *love* is the Greek word “agape” which means “benevolence that seeks what’s best for another person while requiring nothing in return.”

William Barclay, an expert on the Greek language, writes that agape’ describes “the deliberate effort ... never to seek anything but the best for others ... *even for those who seek the worst for us.*”

Hmmm ... “never to seek anything but the best for others.”

For a purpose-driven results-oriented D-personality who, at their worst, uses *people* to get their *plan* done, what an amazing transformation it would be for them to use their *plan* to get *people* done.

That transformation *is* possible. You *could* be that way, you know. If you’re a D-personality, it’s possible for you to invest energy and effort into people purely for their benefit.

That's what *love* would look like in your life if the Holy Spirit had the freedom to produce fruit.

And wouldn't that be awesome – to be perceived as someone who accomplishes great things *including the betterment of people around you?*

Ok, let's look at “kindness.”

2. The word translated *kindness* is the Greek word “chrestotes” which means “an attitude of sweetness or mellowness.”

Barclay writes that this is “a lovely word.”

Lovely ... sweet ... mellow – it's hard to think of three traits that are less natural to a D-personality! But those words describe what D's can become when the Holy Spirit works in them.

And that doesn't mean “becoming a wimp.” Instead, those words describe how the naturally controlling and directing nature of a D can come out in a positive way.

Let me give you an example.

Jesus once said ...

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. Matthew 11:30 (NIV)

Then he said ...

For my yoke is easy and my burden is light. Matthew 11:30 (NIV)

You know what a yoke is, right? It's the harness that goes over an ox to control and direct its movements.

Now, get this. When Jesus said his yoke was easy, the word translated "easy" is the same word translated kindness.

“My yoke, my control, my direction is *chrestotes*” Jesus was saying.

“It’s sweet, it’s mellow, it’s lovely. It doesn’t chafe the one who wears it.”

So, if those of us with D-personalities developed the characteristic of kindness – of *chrestotes*, it would mean that the strategizing and direction we are so naturally good at ...

- Fits others well.
- It would take into account their weaknesses and strengths.
- It wouldn’t saddle them with unreasonable demands or expectations.

That kind of a yoke – that kind of direction – is perceived as being “easy and light.”

By the way, the word *chrestotes* is also used to describe the mellowness of a fine wine that’s been

carefully aged.

Wouldn't it be awesome to be perceived by others as someone who could control and direct when it was needed, but who was also mature enough to mellow out when it wasn't?

If you're a D, all of this is what you can become as the Holy Spirit produces fruit in you.

3. Finally, the word translated *gentleness* is the Greek word “*praotes*” – which means great power that is under control; great power that is submitted to a higher authority than itself.

Sometimes, it's actually translated as “meek.”

*“Blessed are the meek (*praotes*),”
Jesus said, “for they will inherit the
earth.”*

Matthew 5:5 (NIV)

So what does this look like?

On Palm Sunday when Jesus rode into Jerusalem, Matthew wrote that he did so in order to fulfill the prophecy that said:

Say to the Daughter of Zion, "See, your king comes to you, gentle (praotes) and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey."

Matthew 21:5 (NIV)

The king of the Israel; the King of all Creation – the one who had ultimate power did not come with a display of power – with horses and chariots. Instead, He moseyed into town on the back of a donkey. His power was gentle, proates, under control.

And that's significant because the thing about power is that sometimes it can be scary and even dangerous. In fact, if you're a D-personality, it's likely that, at some point, someone has told you that it scares them when you get amped up.

I'll never forget the day Jetta told me "our girls are afraid of you when you get angry" ... which was

shocking to me because I was never verbally or physically abusive to them or to her.

I would just get amped up about ... stuff. Lots of stuff. Lots of stuff that wasn't worth being amped up about.

And I wasn't trying to be scary. I was just being *me*.

According to Barclay, *praotes* is “the quality of the person who is always <get this> *angry at the right time and never at the wrong time*.” The adjective form of the word is used to describe a wild animal that has been tamed and brought under the control of a trainer. It displays its power only when the trainer gives permission.

That's what it looks like when the Spirit's fruit is produced in the life of a Christ-following D-personality. We're the animal. He's the trainer.

And like a wild animal, the inherent power of our

personality never goes away. We're still a force to be reckoned with. But we are a force under control. Our power doesn't come out in random and destructive ways because it's submitted to the authority of God in our lives. It's reserved for when He says it's appropriate and necessary.

Wouldn't it be awesome for the people around us to be able to trust that about us? To be able to get close to us and not be afraid because our power is under control?

If you're a D, that's what can happen as the Holy Spirit produces fruit in you.

Love, kindness, gentleness – if you're a D-personality, if I could wish three things for your life (and mine!), I'd wish that we could be as respected for these three traits as we are for all those wonderful D-characteristics that are “hardwired” into us by personality.

That would be so awesome, wouldn't it?

Disciplines for Ds

But it will take *more than wishing* for that to happen.

It will take, as Paul said, understanding that our sinful nature is crucified with Christ – that we really don't have to be unloving, demanding and insensitive. It will take “keeping in step with the Spirit” as he works to transform us to be more like Jesus and less like ourselves.

So, what does that mean – “keeping in step with the Spirit?”

It means incorporating activities into your life that open you up to the influence of the Holy Spirit.

Sometimes these activities are known as “spiritual disciplines.” I want to talk to about

three that we can voluntarily practice, and one discipline that God sometimes forces on followers of Jesus in order to bring about change.

Let's start with that one, since it's the most difficult – and we “D”s love a challenge, right?

1. It's the discipline of *failure* – God breaking the pride of self-sufficiency in you.

As we've seen, D's are very confident in their ability to “make it happen.” So, what happens to them when they try as hard as they can, but nothing works – they fail?

We either get bitter or we recognize that, in reality, we are not dependent on ourselves but on God. He is the source of our strength. He is the real power at work not us.

There's an amazing passage in the OT book of Deuteronomy in which God promises to bring the discipline of failure to arrogant self-sufficient people. As the nation of Israel was entering the

Promised Land flowing with milk and honey and all kinds of riches ...

... Moses gave them this warning:

You may say to yourself, “My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me.” But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today.

If you ever forget the LORD your God and follow other gods and worship and bow down to them, I testify against you today that you will surely be destroyed.

Deuteronomy 8:17-19

(NIV)

You will fail.

By the way, this principle is repeated again and again in the scripture. God brings failure to break

the pride of the self-sufficient.

Some of us D's are experiencing that right now. It's probably not an accident. God is trying to develop your dependence on Him and your worship of Him. He's trying to develop that gentleness and meekness we talked about earlier.

And the sooner you recognize that and submit what little power you truly have to Him; the sooner you humble yourself and stop thinking more highly of yourself than you ought; the sooner God will raise you up and use those D-characteristics for His glory and not yours.

As the Apostle James writes ...

“God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” Submit yourselves, then, to God ... Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up. James 4:6,10 (NIV)

The second principle – the second practice that

opens us up to the influence of the Holy Spirit is

...

2. The discipline of *silence* – voluntarily choosing to keep your ideas to yourself (even if they *are* incredible and life-changing!) unless invited to share.

As James 1:19 says ...

Be quick to listen, slow to speak.
James 1:19 (NIV)

Practicing the discipline of silence will help you develop the trait of *gentleness* – keeping your power under control.

It will also help you develop *kindness* because keeping your mouth shut allows you to evaluate if you are placing a yoke that really fits someone, or just fulfilling your own need to be in charge.

3. The third discipline is that of *study* – putting yourself under the teaching authority of others.

We D's are so confident that we tend to think we know it all. But we don't.

And we need to admit that on a regular basis and there is no more effective way than reading a book or listening to a talk by someone who has more knowledge or different knowledge than we do.

Brother James (who was also a High-D personality) again writes:

Humbly accept the message God has planted in your hearts, for it is strong enough to save your souls. And remember, it is a message to obey, not just to listen to. If you don't obey, you are only fooling yourself. James 1:21-22 (NLT)

By the way, that word translated “humbly” could also be translated as “gently” because in Greek, it's the word *praotes*. So, James is encouraging us to submit our power to the message God has given

us. Study helps us develop gentleness and meekness.

For example ... one of the greatest books I've ever read – this is way back in the early 90s – was called *Imperative People: Those Who Must Be in Control* by Dr. Les Carter. (You can get it on Amazon these days for less than a dollar). “Imperative People” is just another way of saying “D personality.”

That reason that book was so great was that I was at a crisis point in my life. I had caused so much unintentional relational damage just by “being me” – just by “doing what came natural” – that I was desperate for help.

I was a failure in so many ways that I was ready to put myself under the authority of someone who could teach me how to relate in a way that was perceived as helpful instead of demanding; a way that respects the fact that other people are thinking, intelligent human beings who can make their own decisions without feeling like they have

to do my bidding.

If you're a D you can learn how to do that. But you have to accept the discipline of study because it's not natural to you.

4. Finally, there is the discipline of “second” – intentionally choosing second-place (the “not-in-charge place” – and letting someone else lead.

That's incredibly challenging for a person who is hard-wired to seek the first-place. But it's necessary so that God can teach us that we don't need first-place.

There is an amazing story in the New Testament about a high-D personality who chose second place. They called him John the Baptist. Before Jesus came on the scene, he was big. He had a huge following, mostly because, in true D-like fashion, he told it like it was.

But one day, He baptized Jesus and the Holy Spirit

descended on Jesus like a dove, and that was pretty much it for John's ministry. From then on, people began to follow Jesus and not John.

In fact, the Bible says that one day some of John's disciples who were still hanging on came to him and said:

“Rabbi, that man who was with you on the other side of the Jordan--the one you testified about--well, he is baptizing, and everyone is going to him.” John 3:26 (NIV)

... instead of you.

Listen to what John said. It's incredible:

“The bride belongs to the bridegroom. The friend who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him, and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom's voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete.

In other words, “I'm just the best man here. I'm

not the groom. It's not about me. It's about him."

And then he said:

*He must become greater; I must
become less." John 3:28-30 (NIV)*

"It's time for his name to be lifted higher than mine. It's time for me to be second and to follow his lead."

I think that, today, there are some of us in this room who probably need to implement this discipline in our lives right now with respect to other people. There are situations where we just need to step back and say, "I don't need to take charge. Someone else can lead. I'll be second. I'll keep my mouth shut. I'll be supportive. I'll pray that God does what needs to be done."

But even more than that, I think there are probably some of us in this room who need to say that kind of thing to God.

“It’s not about me, Lord. I’ve spent so much effort and energy *making* it about me and what I want and what I think is best, but really it’s about You; for you, Jesus, are Lord of all. And it’s time for me to follow *your* lead and not my own. It’s time for your name to be lifted higher than mine.”

<Prayer>

Feature Song – “Stronger”

CLOSING COMMENTS

1. Next week ... the “S” personality type.
2. Offering at the door.
3. Prayer down front.

Endnotes