

I Said This You Heard That

Speaking Green

May 22, 2022

INTRODUCTION

When the road looks rough ahead, and you're miles from your nice warm bed, just remember what your old pal said, you've got a friend in me. As most of you know, that song comes from the animated hit movie, Toy Story, and it's sung by one of my all-time favorite animated characters ... an old-fashioned pull-string cowboy doll named

In the movie, Woody is Andy Davis' favorite toy and is the leader of Andy's toys. Woody is a happy go lucky, caring, temperamental toy but most of all, he's just a good ol' friend.

He's Andy's best friend and a friend to all of the toys.

Woody and I have a lot in common because we have similar personalities. His story is more than just about his unwavering relationships with Andy and Bonnie; it's about the growth and maturity that many of us, like myself, experience during our lives. From childhood to full-fledged adult, Woody's journey is a metaphor for the emotions and personality traits we encounter over time, and the life lessons that shape the people we become.

And as we mature and grow into the people God wants us to be, life becomes less about us and our needs and more about others and how we can help them fulfill their hopes and dreams.

That's been my life goal for many years: to help people reach their full potential in Christ. And just as Woody cheered on and supported his other toy friends, I want to be that for the people in my life. Woody had a lot of green in his personality and so do I. So today I want to conclude our series, "I Said This, You Heard That", by talking about the "Woodys" of the world, the Green or "Steady and Supportive" personality types.

REVIEW

We are in the 4th week of our series, "I Said This, You Heard That". What we have been learning is that

The quality of your life is dependent on the quality of your relationships.

As Rick said last week, "Show me a person who doesn't have very good relationships, and, regardless of how wealthy, healthy or successful they are, I'll show you a person who more than likely isn't very happy with their life." The quality of your life is therefore dependent on the quality of your relationships. So, obviously, getting our relationships right – learning how to do relationships better – matters. And this is true whether you're a Christian or not.

Now if you are like me, you may assume that you are doing okay in the area of relationships and communication. You and I may think we have been communicating in an effective manner our whole lives. Most of us have communicated our entire life in our own specific color, not realizing that while we may be inspiring some, we might be putting off others by the way we communicate.

But what we are learning in this series is that

Everyone has different needs because everybody has their own temperament or personality style.

Hopefully we are all starting to realize that we need to be more conscious of the temperaments of those people around us and what they need to hear. This is important because when I communicate, I'm not just trying to get a point across, but also trying to love people in the most effective way possible.

When I was working as a manager at Hallmark Cards, I had several people reporting to me when I was the head of the IT Education department. I had every personality color of the rainbow represented in that group. One thing I began to realize over time was that one of the most effective things I could do as a manager was to structure my one/one staff meetings with each employee according to their needs and personality style. For example, Betsy was a RED. She was a very direct and no-nonsense communicator. In our one/one meetings, she wanted me to get the point and tell her what her top priorities were as quickly and efficiently as possible. So that's what I did. Our meetings were short and to the point.

Pat, on the other hand, was a YELLOW and the most important things on her mind were the people in her life and the fun things she'd been doing lately. So I always started by asking her personal questions like, "What fun things have you been doing lately? How's Joe doing? (her husband) As you might guess, my meetings with Pat were always the longest of all when compared to my other employees like Betsy. But I could always tell that Pat appreciated my approach and felt valued every time I gave her that little extra bit of personal attention.

I think you get the point. By structuring my staff meetings according to the NEEDS of each employee, I increase my effectiveness as a manager 10-fold. I still try to do that today at NHCC. And each of us can apply that same principle as we learn to love and communicate according to the needs of those around us.

So it doesn't matter who you are or what you do, the quality of your life is dependent on the quality of your relationships, whether you are at work or at home. That is why the Apostle Paul spent so much time in his letters teaching and coaching first-century (and 21st century) Christ followers how to do relationships. That's why each week, we've come back to this same verse to emphasize the importance of effective communication.

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. Ephesians 4:29 (NIV)

In other words, you and I have an opportunity every day, with every person we encounter, to hurt or to help. It's obvious which one we all want to do. We just need some practical tools to do it. And that's why this series is so important. So if you want to listen to or watch any of the earlier messages in this series, feel free to go to the Media section of our website or our church app.

CHARACTERISTICS of GREENS

Ok, let's jump into the final temperament of this series, the "GREEN Temperament". The GREEN temperament, also known as the phlegmatic or S profile on the DISC, is the "steady and supportive" personality. Let me start with some of the high-level characteristics of a Green compared to the others. As you can see from the chart we've been using:

THE 4 COLOR QUADRANTS

The Reds speak the language of Power and Control, and the Yellows focus on People and Fun, while the Blues want Perfection and Order, the Greens speak the language of Calm and Harmony. You can also see from this chart that Greens tend to be more people oriented (than task) and more introverted than extroverted.

Knowing that Greens naturally want Calm and Harmony, let's look at some of the specific characteristics of a Green temperament.

First, Greens are...

Characterized by personal consistency and reliability.

A "Green" is as steady as they come, which is why this personality type is referred to as an "S" in the DISC personality profile system. Greens are often more stable, reliable, and predictable than most personalities. They like to get into a routine that feels good to them and then to stick with it. They like tasks that can be completed at one time or seen through from beginning to end and enjoy practical procedures and systems. They pride themselves on consistently maintaining their assigned processes or procedures and they genuinely appreciate recognition for their loyalty and dependability.

Next, Greens desire

... Stability and security.

Greens like stability and prefer to keep their environment "as is." They don't like change. It was a Green who first uttered the phrases, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." and "Never change a winning game." They don't like it when you move their cheese. They like their cheese right where it is, thank you. If asked to make a change, they adjust best when given a long enough period to adapt to change and require an explanation of why the change is occurring.

I see this trait in myself. Once I get a process working well on my job or at home, I don't want anyone to mess with it. I will tenaciously resist most changes once I have perfected something. I hate changing something that is working so well.

Next, Greens desire...

Cooperation and caring.

That's what makes them so likable. At least at the start, they know how to get along with almost anybody. Their natural disposition is to be pleasant and agreeable. For that reason, you'll often hear a Green say, "I'm good with whatever." or "I think we can make that work." If you ask, "where should we go for dinner?" they'll ask, "well, where would you like to go?" This is my daughter in law Cindy. Whenever we go on a family vacation, she's quiet and rarely offers her opinion about where to eat. And she's not just kissing up to me, either! She really does want to go wherever everyone else wants to go.

Because they desire cooperative and caring relationships, they are loyal friends and good listeners. (that "good listener" trait is an area I'm still working on).

Many years ago, Norma and I discovered that two of our kids are Greens. Our Blue son Joel is very particular about his clothing and his appearance and has an eye for details and accuracy. Our Yellow son Kyle on the other hand, is constantly on the go and wants to hang out with as many of his friends as possible all the time. Our other two Greens, our daughter Abby and son Cory, tend to go with the flow. There's no wondering about what kind of mood they'll be in on a daily basis. All things being equal it will typically be the same as it was yesterday and the day before that. I'm fairly certain one of the questions that runs through their minds on a consistent basis is, "So what's the big deal?" That's because they typically never get too high or too low about anything. They just "take it easy".

When you ask a Green, "What does a perfect day look like?" They'd probably prefer it to be quiet and slow paced, with time to squeeze in a nap in the afternoon, and maybe later hang out with a few close friends, where they can either sit on the patio chatting or do something fun that doesn't involve interacting with large crowds of people. For some people that might sound boring. But for Greens, that sounds heavenly...slow pace, no work, lots of rest and relaxation and just chillaxin with a few close friends.

So, that's a very brief overview of the tendencies of the Green temperament. Do you know anyone who exhibits those characteristics? Do these tendencies describe you? If you see yourself in what I describe, then you are most likely a steady and supportive Green personality.

Of course, as with all temperaments, the trouble comes when these good characteristics get distorted or taken to an extreme. Let me highlight two areas where Greens tend to struggle the most. First, it's in the area of conflict.

Conflict is a Green's biggest fear.

They avoid conflict and desire peaceful environments where the people or the groups they are with are in harmony with one another. Since they are so averse to conflict, greens have a tendency to stuff issues inside themselves and not deal with them openly. Relational tensions can simmer inside a Green and remain undetected for a long period of time. The danger in this is that over time, the conflict doesn't go away and they become bitter.

Greens not only don't like to be confronted, they also don't like to confront others. They will often avoid a hard conversation and put it off as long as possible because they prefer harmony and calm over the hard work of conflict resolution.

Now if conflict is one of their biggest fears, then

Accepting change is a Green's greatest challenge.

Because a Green strives for stability and a feeling of peace and safety, they fear a loss of security when things change. Change is rarely a happy place for Greens. When change is forced on them, they will move from deliberately doing a task to working slower and slower until they eventually stop altogether. That's because they like to get into a routine with what feels secure and stick with it, which results in an opposition towards change. There is comfort and harmony in keeping things the same for Greens. Many people accept the fact that change is a part of life, but if Greens had their way, things would remain the same as much as possible.

WORKING WITH GREENS

Now the truth is, there are challenges in relating to any personality type---even the likable "Green". As we've said throughout this series, God has uniquely created each of us, so it only makes sense to see how He relates to different personality types. Greens can be found throughout the bible but one of the most notable is Abraham, also known as Abram early in his life. Abraham was a patriarch in the Old Testament. He was a man of tremendous faith whose descendants formed the twelve tribes of Israel. In fact, his lineage leads directly to the birth of Jesus Christ.

That's the big picture of Abraham's life. But when we take a closer look, his story is one of continual change. Not only is that difficult for a Green personality, it can be extremely frustrating to other personality types when they have to deal with a Green's natural resistance to change.

The story of Abraham shows how God dealt with this resistance and brought out the best in Abraham, such as his ability to make practical choices, or his desire to be a peacemaker while functioning as part of a team, or his loyalty and commitment.

These are just a few of the qualities that Abraham needed to become the leader God wanted him to be. I think it's important to note that God didn't turn Abraham into a Red so that he could become a leader. Instead He taught Abraham how to lead in a way that "fit" him. We can do the same as we relate to the steady and supportive folks around us.

So using Abraham as an example, how do you work successfully with a Green?

1. Allow time for them to process a request for change.

Greens don't move quickly. They need to think about what they are being asked to do. When you give a Green extra time to process, you will get the best results from them.

That's how God handled Abraham.

"Terah took his son Abram (Abraham), his daughter-in-law Sarai (Sarah), and his grandson Lot...and left Ur...to go to the land of Canaan. But they stopped instead at the village of Haran and settled there." Genesis 11:31 (NLT)

Abraham and his family lived with his father in a place called Ur. God's plan was for Abraham to eventually live in Canaan. But He knew Abraham wouldn't be able to deal with leaving everything that seemed secure. God also knew that Abraham would need time to process a move of that magnitude.

Picture of map/Haran

So God led Abraham's father, Terah, to move the whole clan in the general direction of Canaan. Even though they stopped and settled at Haran, it gave Abraham time to adjust to the idea of leaving Ur. As you can see in the next passage, Abraham still needed to be reminded by God of where he was going.

"Then the Lord told Abram, 'Leave your country, your relatives and your father's house, and go to the land that I will show you.' So Abram departed as the Lord had instructed him and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran." Genesis 12:1,4 (NLT)

When dealing with an "Green", give them plenty of time to process change. A Red or Yellow can completely forget about an issue in the time it takes a Green to process through it. But remember this---faster doesn't equal smarter. Once you've given a Green the necessary information, wait patiently while they process. Be available to repeat facts without demanding an answer. Being patient with them will yield much better results.

2. Give them specific reasons for the change.

The more information a Green has, the more likely they will gain the security they need to accept a change.

Look at how God provided Abraham with all kinds of extra information to give him more confidence to change locations.

"I will cause you to become the father of a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and I will make you a blessing to others." Genesis 12:2 (NLT)

A Green personality will maintain the status quo, even though others may view the current situation as undesirable. Fear of the unknown often causes them to feel insecure and will cause them to avoid any new ventures if at all possible. God recognized Abraham's fear of the unknown and gave him a reason to move to Canaan. Notice how God told Abraham that he would become the father of the nation of Israel and

The Line of Abraham

that he would later become famous because from his lineage would come the promised messiah, Jesus of Nazareth. This knowledge helped Abraham have the courage to move to a country that he hadn't ever seen before.

So when relating to a Green, look far enough down the road in order to give specific, concrete reasons for change. Just recognizing that Greens deal with a lot of fear will help those of us who regularly work with the steady and supportive Greens around us. So, give plenty of warning before making big changes..

3. Don't expect them to fully accept the change until stability is restored.

A Green just isn't going to celebrate change - even a positive or necessary one like Abraham's - until they have time to live with it for a while.

Listen how gently the Lord reassures Abraham

"After Lot was gone, the Lord said to Abraham, 'Look as far as you can see in every direction. I am going to give all this land to you and your offspring as a permanent possession. Take a walk in every direction and explore the new possessions I am giving you.'" Genesis 13:15,17 (NLT)

After Abraham's nephew Lot chose where he wanted to settle, God knew that Abraham would need to have his stability restored. God didn't tell Abraham to just get over it and move on. Rather God reassured him of his importance. Then He gave Abraham time to adjust to his new surroundings by encouraging him to "take a walk and explore the land".

Managing change is probably the greatest source of tension between Greens and Reds. Since Greens need time to adjust, Reds need to understand that applying pressure won't make the situation better. Greens need time to "take a walk and explore"; they need to have hands-on experience to resolve their concerns. They need time to be quiet, reflect and process. It takes time for a Green to take ownership of anything. But once they own it, you won't find a more committed person.

4. Finally, understand that encouragement and support is what produces maturity in a Green.

In the New Testament book of James, we read:

"Abraham believed God, so God declared him to be righteous. He was even called 'the friend of God.'" James 2:23 (NLT)

God accepted Abraham as a person, even during those times when he sinned and was outside of God's will. Green personalities need personal acceptance and reassurance. God provided the type of environment which allowed Abraham to mature slowly through difficult changes. Even though initially it may seem tedious, it's only through this process that Greens will become more independent and respond more positively to change.

Because Abraham was willing to trust God with his fear of the unknown, God was able to use him in tremendous ways. Not only that, but Abraham became known as "the friend of God". So one of the greatest gifts you can give someone with a Green personality is to give them the encouragement and the space to progress at the pace God has designed for them.

GREEN ADVICE

Now, in the time that remains, I want to say a few things to my Green brothers and sisters about how you can relate to and communicate with others. So, here are three things you can do in order to mature and maximize your personality.

Confront "people trouble" before it's too late.

An out-of-balance GREEN might say "peace at any price." For those of us who are Green, our desire for cooperation and caring when taken to the extreme produces a tendency to look the other way when confrontation is necessary.

That's why a lot of Green fathers and mothers don't discipline their kids. In fact, one author says that Green personalities "find it extremely stressful to be the instrument of discipline in the life of another person." When those of us who are Green don't confront others when it's necessary (or don't say no when we need to), we run the risk of bitterness. And that's very dangerous.

Watch out that no bitterness takes root among you, for as it springs up it causes deep trouble, hurting many in their spiritual lives. Hebrews 12:15bTLB

Beware of appearing overly pessimistic or negative.

Our focus on practicality, when taken to the extreme, can discourage and deflate the visionaries around us, like the Reds and Yellows. No question, some of the dreams and schemes of the Reds and Yellows aren't always realistic or practical. But we can help our visionary friends greatly if we pause before we immediately point out the flaws we see in their ideas. We need to find ways to encourage them and thank them for their ideas before highlighting the problems we see. This is a good discipline for us because we can so easily focus on why something won't work because of our tendency to avoid change. But just because something is challenging does mean it's the wrong direction to take. And finally, we need to...

Realize that a "comfort zone" mentality may cause you to miss opportunities.

Once Greens create a pattern or routine, it's tough for them to break out of it because it's comfortable and familiar. In fact, a Green places a premium on staying in their personal comfort zone. And we Greens work hard to keep and maintain it. We can easily miss opportunities to make our lives even better, when we avoid making changes at work or in our personal lives.

In addition, our desire to stay in a comfort zone will mean that we are more likely to stress over our bank balance and worry about retirement, as well as succumb to materialism than any other personality type. The reason for this isn't because we are greedy or desire more status, it's because those things provide us stability and security.

CONCLUSION

As we bring this message to a close, I'm sure some of you noticed that I didn't wear a solid-colored shirt, like the red, yellow and blue pastors who've been teaching during this series. I wore this blue/green striped shirt for a reason. I'm not just Green. I'm a Blue/Green. Almost 50/50 in fact. My personality has been evolving and changing since I was a teenager, just like Woody's evolved in the movie Toy Story.

Early in the movie Toy Story, it was evident that Woody was a fearful toy who was afraid that Sid's toys would eat him and we also notice his immaturity when he shifts the blame to Buzz Lightyear when the two of them get lost. Over and over we see Woody's insecurities revealed in the movie as he goes from one adventure to another. Only by the end of movie does Woody take responsibility for his actions, learn to love Buzz and grow as an individual.

Pic of Woody and Buzz

His cowardice is replaced with courage as he overcomes his fear to save Buzz from Sid, the mean neighbor. And finally, he realizes that Andy will still love him despite Buzz's arrival as the newest toy in the box.

When you look deeply into Woody's cartoon life, you find a character that symbolizes the growth that we all experience. He's the embodiment of our own development, and acts as a lens through which we can see our own growth. His journey reveals some of the same traits and emotions we possess at each stage, and the lessons that we learn to become the people we are today. His human-like story is a reminder of the physical, emotional, and spiritual growth that we all undergo.

That's why I resonate with Woody. When I was young, I was totally a Green personality. I was a fearful kid, who sucked his thumb and needed a lot of safety and stability. In my teenage years, I was uncertain of who I was or where my life was going. But as time went by, I began to change. My personality developed and God continually challenged me to step out of my comfort zone. As a result, I'm no longer the Ladell I once was. I am blue/green with even a little red mixed in. Some of you have seen your personality evolving and change as well, as you've placed more of your faith and trust in God. And the truth is that the change never stops. God keeps calling us higher and higher. If you are like me, you want to go wherever the Lord leads me. You want to look more like God and less like your old self. You want God to maximize your personality and make you more and more into the image of Christ.

So, as we close this message, I asked the band to lead us in a song that I think might be particularly helpful to all of us who want to see more of God in our lives, regardless of our personality type. So, let's stand together and sing.