

Maximizing Your Personality

“Steady and Supportive”

November 12, 2018

Worship #1 Endless Praise
Prayer
Worship #2 Beautiful Things
Video BTS
Feature #1 You’ve Got....

INTRODUCTION

*You've got troubles, and I've got 'em too
There isn't anything I wouldn't do for you
We stick together and can see it through
'Cause you've got a friend in me*

Chances are if these words resonate with you, you are or know someone who is an S personality type.

This is the third week of our “Maximizing Your Personality” series. I want to tell you upfront this is NOT my primary personality type. Like Rick, I’m a D. However, I’ve been married to an “S” for nearly 40 years and I think that has been part of God’s plan transform my D-ness!

We’ll get to that shortly.

But I want to start out like Rick did last week, with a review of what we’re trying to accomplish with this message series and how it fits into the lives of those who are followers of Jesus. (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).

Review

First, we’re using the DISC terminology where each of us can be generally described by one or two of those letters.

- **If you haven't had a chance to do so, I encourage you to visit www.123test.com/disc-personality-test and take a short, free quiz which will help you determine your type.**

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 great strengths and some 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.**

In Rick's words, “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.” So 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 is a snapshot of today. It reveals the raw material with which God has to work. That's where He starts. But His goal is to make you more than what you are.

When we reach 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

....When we do those 3 things, we begin a new life by the power of the Holy Spirit.

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 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)

As you look at that list, do you think “there’s no way I can be like that!”? As Rick said last week, 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 “natural 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)

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 who have been blessed with steady and supportive S -personalities.

How many scored as an “S” either on the online test or on another DISC test you’ve taken previously?

How many haven’t taken the test yet – you might also be as “S”! 😊

Describing the “S”

Let’s begin with a look at the four-quadrant grid we’ve referred to throughout this series.

➤ **Last week we saw that D-personalities tend to prefer tasks over people, and that they tend to be more active than passive in relating to their environment. (graph)**

In other words, if they don't like the circumstances in which they find themselves, they usually try to change things. I know this because I'm a D.

However, I'm married to an S – and it would seem I may have picked up some of his characteristics over the past almost 40 years.

- **S personality types tend to be exactly the opposite - they usually prefer people over tasks and they prefer to be more passive than active in relating to their environment.**

Which means that if they don't like things, they are very good at figuring out how to adapt.

This combination explains why Ss tend to be some of the most likeable and sociable people you will ever meet. Their natural disposition towards life is to be pleasant and agreeable. They can put up with almost anything and anybody.

For example, if you ask an S “where should we go for dinner?” they probably won't tell you. Instead, they'll say “it doesn't matter to me. Where would you like to go?”

I spent years thinking my husband, Mark, was just being polite. Then I found out (by discussing the DISC profile with him) he really doesn't care where we eat.

I have had people tell me what great conversations they have with Mark. When I ask what he said, they usually say, “He was just listened.” Remember the song the band did --- “You've Got a Friend in Me....”?

The combination of “steady and supportive” tends to produce an additional set of characteristics and behaviors.

➤ **First of all, the natural tendencies of "S"s produce a high sense of practicality.**

While D's (like me!) are getting all pumped up about climbing some mountain just for the sake of the challenge, the Ss are asking, "do we really need to? What's wrong with where we are right now?" They're the ones most likely to say "can we do a cost/benefit analysis first, before we change everything?"

In fact, it was likely an "S" who first uttered the words, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." □

"And furthermore," they would add, "even if it is broke, I can fix it. And even if I can't, we can probably figure out how to get along without it for quite a while."

An example – Mark and I moved to our Farm a year ago. Our TV is wall-mounted, so I wanted some kind of cabinet under it. Rather than just buying or building something, my very practical husband spent nearly 12 months "adapting" to our

bedroom dresser *in our living room* under the TV (complete with our clothes in it). Because "it looks ok and it's right beside the bedroom and no one else knows our socks and underwear are in it...." A high sense of practicality ☺

➤ **2. Another trait of S-personalities is that their lives are marked by consistency.**

There's no emotional guessing game with these folks: "Now, what kind of a mood are they going to be in today?" as there is with a lot of us. They're pretty much the same as they were yesterday and the day before that and the day before that.

This consistency affects more than just their emotions. Give them a goal or a vision that captures their hearts and they have the capacity to work towards it for a very long time.

They're tenacious about protecting a vision. In fact, when things begin to veer off track, it's

usually the S personalities who say, “let’s not forget our original vision.”

- **3. Finally, perhaps the greatest strength of an S-personality is the inborn capacity for long-term loyalty to people, to jobs, to just about anything, to which they’ve committed.**

If ever there was a song written to describe these folks, it would have to be the one we heard earlier in the service - “You’ve Got a Friend in Me.” They are loyal even when it’s hard.

In fact, one writer says that no personality “can absorb emotional pain and still maintain their commitment” like an S-personality. More than any other personality type, they go the extra-mile.

Practicality, consistency and loyalty - these are the outstanding qualities of this personality type.

Clearly, there are some major benefits of being blessed with it.

However, as we saw with the D personality last week, the trouble comes when these characteristics are taken to an extreme.....

Drama - “The Comfort Zone” (6)

What an “S” Can Be

Look familiar?

It’s true - the adaptability of an S allowed to go to the extreme can become a comfort-at-all-costs mentality – physically, relationally and spiritually.

- *Practicality* can become indecisiveness and an unwillingness to take action.
- *Consistency* can become stubbornness and resistance to necessary change.
- *Loyalty* can become insincerity and even bitterness when S personalities choose comfort over conflict for too long.

In fact, if you're predominantly an "S" or have a significant amount of "S" characteristics in your personality mix, you've probably had people confront you about these issues.

Where a D would strike back and try to convince you you're wrong, most S personalities will shut down because they have a deep desire to be accepted and supported -- to be treated the same way they treat others. To an S, *any confrontation* "feels" like rejection. It's not, but that's what it feels like.

The good news is, we don't have to be controlled by those negative characteristics. If you know Christ and if you are keeping in step with the Spirit, the Spirit will produce fruit in your life. You will develop characteristics that are not natural to your personality.

➤ **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)

Truthfully, every single person I know, including myself, could stand to grow in every one of those virtues. But, if you're an S-personality, there are several that jump out....

- **Specifically, the virtues of goodness and faithfulness.** (same verse, words contrast color)

If you're a follower of Jesus with S characteristics, this is probably where the Holy Spirit will do the most work in your life.

Does it seem like I just contradicted myself? Because of all the personality types, Ss already appear the most faithful. They are consistently supportive of people – going the extra mile, hanging in there 'til it hurts. That actually sounds a lot like goodness.

Yes but..... Just like last week, we're going to look at the original language of the Bible because the words translated "faithfulness" and "goodness" have implications which are missed in modern translations.

- **Let's start with the word "goodness." It's the Greek word "agathosune" (ag-ath-o-**

soo'-nay) which means "virtue-equipped at every point."

Notice, I've italicized the word "every" because it's significant to S personalities. By nature, S-personalities will exhibit what we know as "goodness" to a point. However, once that point is reached, an S personality will not (and often can not) move forward, especially if it involves what is perceived to be making a difficult change or having a hard conversation.

An S can become paralyzed in analyzing and will eventually adapt (sometimes in unhealthy ways) to feel "comfortable" (like in the drama). And it's at that point an S personality is robbed of a "necessary" form of goodness.

In looking deeper at the word agathosune " (ag-ath-o-soo'-nay), there's actually a degree of "pushing forward", an assertiveness or fierceness that we don't often associate with "goodness." To a steady and supportive S that feels very much like conflict.

Greek expert, William Barclay, says that ...

➤ **Agothosune ” (ag-ath-o-soo'-nay) “might, and could, rebuke and discipline.”**

The implication is that there is a “point of goodness” that requires us to rebuke and discipline because

1. it’s simply the right thing to do and
2. someone we care about needs it from us.

In other words, an S personality will have to make a choice to be ---- uncomfortable.

To be clear, “rebuking” means telling someone very directly that they have crossed a line and “disciplining” means enforcing clear consequences.

Barclay continues that an example of this kind of goodness is illustrated in what happened on the day that Jesus went to the temple and found it full

of con-artists who were using the people’s need for God to make themselves rich.

Jesus entered the Temple and began to drive out the merchants and their customers. He knocked over the tables of the money changers and the stalls of those selling doves.

He said, "The Scriptures declare, 'My Temple will be called a place of prayer,' but you have turned it into a den of thieves"!

Matthew 21:12-13 (NLT)

To the S-personality, that sounds like the last thing he or she would want to do because this is the point to which their “natural goodness” will not go. But, Jesus (without the weaknesses of an S) did exactly that.

He *rebuked* (told the money changers very directly they had crossed a line) and *disciplined* (enforcing clear consequences by running them out of the Temple).

Practically speaking wouldn't it be an amazing transformation for an S parent to be able to set boundaries for their kids and then stick to them, laying out consequences and following through? What an amazing transformation - and what a benefit for those kids.

What an incredible change it would be for an S personality to say, "Even though it's hard, I'll make this decision (whatever it is). I will choose to be uncomfortable to allow God to transform me."

If you're an S-personality who follows Jesus, it's possible for your natural virtue to be equipped at every point, including the ability to rebuke and discipline when necessary.

That's what goodness will look like in your life when the Holy Spirit has the freedom to produce fruit. And, wouldn't that be awesome?!

Ok, now let's move on to the word "faithfulness."

➤ **It's the Greek word "pistis" – which, interestingly enough, is most often translated in the New Testament as simply "faith."**

➤ **In fact, some of the more literal English translations render it that way:**

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith ...

At first glance, when this word is used to describe the fruit of the Spirit our understanding is the loyalty and tenacity that we define as "faithfulness".

However, when we drill into what the word for “faith” means in the original Greek, “*pistis*” is actually the noun form of a verb that literally means “faithing.”

- **So, a more correct interpretation would be, “I am faithing in God” or “I am living a faith-driven life” as opposed to waiting passively.**

Bottom line---“Faith” or “*pistis*” is word that describes an act of will that leaves the comfort zone and puts everything on the line whenever God says to.

One of the greatest examples of this was a guy named Abraham.

The Bible says that it was by faith (*pistis*) that Abraham obeyed when God called him to leave home and go to another land where God would give him as his inheritance. However, because

God was transforming Abraham, God didn’t tell Abraham where the “other land” was!

In addition, Abraham was incredibly comfortable when God gave him this command. He lived in the land of Haran, where his father had made a huge fortune. And Abraham was going to inherit this fortune on his father’s death. So for Abraham to obey God, he had to give up that fortune, leave his home and the “comfortable” lifestyle that went with it.

- **But he did because of faith.**

And even when he reached the land God promised him, he lived there by faith (*pistis*) —for he was like a foreigner, living in a tent.

Hebrews 11:8 (NLT)

To most S-personalities that sounds like the last thing they would want to do!

In their natural, non-transformed condition, many S-personalities are *faithful to God*. However, there is a point beyond which their *natural faithfulness* will not take them – and this is it: life outside of their comfort zone. And because of that, they miss out on so much of life that God wants them to experience!

One more thing about this faith issue: in the Bible, the opposite of faith is *a reliance on tradition instead of listening for what God is saying in the moment. Tradition is comfortable. God may or may not be.* (REPEAT)

What an incredible transformation it would be for S-personalities to become *risk-takers* for God. How amazing it would be for us to respond willingly when God says, “go here, do that, try this.” How incredible it would be for *all of us* to let go of our traditions and learn how to more fully keep in step with the Holy Spirit

➤ **Jesus once described that way like this.**

“The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.”

John 3:8 (NIV)

And, so it could be of you, too, if you’re an S-personality. That’s what can happen as the Holy Spirit produces fruit in you.

Goodness and faithfulness (or faith-driven-ness) - for those who are S personalities, if I could wish two things for your life I’d wish for you to *be as respected for those traits* as you are for all those wonderful S-characteristics that are hardwired into your personality.

That would be so awesome for you!

Disciplines for S Personalities

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 comfort-driven, indecisive or stubborn. It will take keeping in step with the Spirit as He works to transform our character into that of Jesus Christ.

And we saw last week that “keeping in step with the Spirit” means incorporating intentional activities – sometimes called spiritual disciplines - into your life that open you up to the influence of the Holy Spirit.

So here are four practical disciplines to help the fruit of the Spirit grow within you.

➤ **First is the discipline of -**

1. Exile – an enforced move that destroys the illusion of security.

As we've seen, those of us who are Ss tend to be comfort-driven by nature. There is a sense of “if I can just build a “fortress” – a comfort zone (however we define that, whether it's family or tradition or money or whatever) I'll be safe and secure.”

But God has higher designs for us than our comfort – specifically, our goodness and *faith-driven-ness*. So sometimes he does things to shake us out of that “fortress”, including tearing us away from that which brings us the most comfort and distracts us from Him.

There's an amazing (and rather frightening) passage in the prophetic book of Amos that illustrates this.

God is speaking to some of the people of Israel and he says to them:

You lie on beds inlaid with ivory and lounge on your couches. You dine on choice lambs and fattened calves. You strum away on your harps like David and improvise on musical instruments.

- **You drink wine by the bowlful and use the finest lotions, but you do not grieve over the ruin of Joseph.**

(Which is a way of saying they are not concerned about what God is concerned about.)

Therefore you will be among the first to go into exile; your feasting and lounging will end.

Amos 4:6 (NIV)

So “exile” is becomes a “time-out” from the “fortresses” we create to be safe and secure. Some of us may be facing a type of exile right now because we have become too comfortable.

God may be allowing people or stuff or status or finances or whatever to be stripped away so we will learn the lessons of exile. I know from experience, God’s “exile” isn’t fun.

But when we are in that place there is only one true answer. Stop trusting in what can be seen, touched, and held, confess our need to trust God, and begin “faithing” in the direction He says. In other words, get concerned about what God is concerned about by *choosing the discipline of exile*.

- **Second is the discipline of -**
 - 2. Giving – voluntarily choosing to release of some of what makes us feel comfortable and secure.**

Actually, the spiritual discipline is known as “simplicity,” but giving is a more active word. When we regularly and intentionally practice

giving away money and possessions and even time, we develop simplicity.

I know giving is a hot topic. So please don't hear me trying to "guilt" you into it.

I just want you to hear what Jesus said about it

➤ **"Don't store up treasures here on earth, where they can be eaten by moths and get rusty, and where thieves break in and steal. Store your treasures in heaven, where they will never become moth-eaten or rusty and where they will be safe from thieves.**

Wherever your treasure is, there your heart and thoughts will also be.

Matthew 6:19-21 (NLT)

So, what does giving look like in the life of an S?
I can't answer that because I'm not the Holy

Spirit. However, I can tell you from personal experience if we don't have a plan, giving won't happen. And by plan, I mean pray about it and let God reveal *where your heart is*.

I've also learned as I practice the discipline of intentional giving, God opens doors for me to give spontaneously. Mark and I have given away some odd stuff (in addition to money) because we agreed a long time ago that what we have really isn't ours. God is allowing us to steward His resources. So we have chosen to position our lives so when God says, "Give this right now", we can exercise *the discipline of giving*.

➤ **Discipline #3 -
3. Low-impact truth-telling – saying what you mean and meaning what you say when the stakes are low.**

S personalities have a great knack for being indirect as a way of minimizing conflict and keeping things pleasant. However, because that's a safe and comfortable way of life, it can be nearly paralyzing when the time comes to "rebuke and discipline."

We need to take seriously the scripture that says:

- **So put away all falsehood and "tell your neighbor the truth" because we belong to each other.**

Ephesians 4:25 (NLT)

I know this can feel almost impossible. But start small. For instance, next time someone asks "where do you want to go for dinner?" think, "if I was by myself, where would I go?" Then, be brave and say so.

As we grow in this, adopting the discipline truth-telling in safe places like in a small group and

with close, trusted friends helps all of us develop that characteristic of goodness. I've seen Mark, my husband, grow tremendously in this. I think our kids probably thought, "Yeah, Mom is always "truth-telling" (remember, I'm a D!). But when Dad does it, we need to listen." With a minimum of words and emotion, an S can be much more effective in truth-telling than a D.

- **OK, so the disciplines of Exile, Giving**
- **Low-impact truth-telling and**
- **4. Faithing – actively and intentionally choosing faith-driven, God-led life.**

I really like that word – faithing. For some of us, this comes more easily. For others, it will feel scary to listen and test and respond when we sense God is leading us in a certain direction, rather than discounting it.

And this isn't unique to the Steady and Supportive S personalities. Because all of us who are followers of Jesus are growing in the fruit of the Spirit and transforming into people who keep in step with the Holy Spirit.

And no matter what personality type we are, we all need the reminder that wherever God leads us, He's already making a way for His best plan in our lives.

Let's pray to that end.....

Thank You for Your plans for us to live fully as new people.

Make us aware of where we're "settling" so we can live in ways that are more and more transformed by you.

Maybe we've tried and failed. Maybe we're afraid to even try. But we know in You and by

the power of Your Spirit, our natural tendencies can be transformed in ways we cannot imagine.

Feature #2 Make a Way

CLOSING COMMENTS

Next week – continue with "C" – Keep it Between the Lines personality type