

Maximizing Your Personality
“Life of the Party”
November 26, 2017

This is Amazing Grace

Whom Shall I Fear

Prayer-Richard

Behind the Scenes video

Feature-Happy (featuring some flash mob participants)

Did that wake you up from your turkey slumber?

Well good morning everyone and welcome to North Heartland where we are wrapping up our series, Maximizing Your Personality with the Life of the Party “I” personality. And what better way to illustrate this personality type but with a little impromptu dance party. A special thanks to my friends who were willing to be a little silly with me this morning. Thank

you!

Well, if you've been around North Heartland for a month or more, you are probably aware that I am the member of our leadership team with the highest I in their personality. When I take the DISC assessment I score fairly high in the I category. I wear crazy hats, I do crazy things, I've been nicknamed the Queen of the Party because I love to plan, execute and attend get togethers from big to small, I even lead a group here at North Heartland called Food, Fun and Friends because I love all those things!

Before we go deeper into understanding those with the I personality, let's do a quick review of our series and where we've been so far.

First if you haven't taken the assessment,

you can do so online using the quick free assessment located at www.123test.com/disc and if you missed any of the messages on the other three types the Let's Do It My Way (D), The Steady and Supportive (S) or the Keep It Between the Lines (C) please please please be sure to check those out under the media section of our website. It is imperative to understand those around you and how to love them better and to understand yourself and how God wants to maximize your personality.

Now a few things to remember.

Ground Rules Review:

1. No personality type is better or worse than any another.
2. Beware of the tendency to reduce people to a set of letters.

3. Your personality type is NOT an excuse for inappropriate behavior.
4. God's goal is to maximize your personality by producing "the fruit of the Spirit" in your life.

Review of the Types

Ok, let's take a look at where the I's fit in relation to the other types on that four-quadrant grid we've been looking at each week.

We've seen 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)

If Ds don't like the circumstances in which they find themselves, they will usually try to

change those circumstances.

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

If they don't like their circumstances, they will usually try to figure out how to adapt and be content anyway.

C personalities, like the Ds, gravitate towards tasks instead of relationships. Like the Ss, they are passive in their approach to their environment.

But, as we learned last week, *unlike* the Ss they are not very adaptable. They attempt to bring about change indirectly by appealing to logic and correctness - "do things the *right* way."

An “I” personality falls between the Ds and the Ss. Like the Ss they prefer people over tasks and, like the Ds, they are active towards their environment instead of passive (which tends to put them right in the middle of whatever action there might be and they like that).

However, whereas a D will try to change things through force and intimidation if necessary, those of us who lean more into the “I” arena know that “winning hearts and minds” is a lot more effective in the long run than “walking softly and carrying a big stick.”

Describing the “I”

1. And that leads to what is probably the greatest strength of the “I”: they’re the “masters of influence.”

... which is why this personality type is

referred to by the letter the "I" in the DISC personality profile system.

The active approach and people-orientation of those of us with "I" personalities tends to produce in us an unusually strong set of social skills. Most of us "I"s love to talk – and not only about ourselves, our opinions and our experiences (although that usually is our favorite subject) but about anything with anyone.

You might be an "I" if you walk in to a store, event, etc and you know at least one person there and if you don't by the time you leave you do. The joke in our house is that when we go to my husband's work holiday party for the first 10 minutes or so I'm Price's wife but not long after he's Shannon's husband.

I's generally can and will make conversation with anyone who is willing to engage with

them. They have a broad social network and know a lot of people.

In fact, as kids, I's get in trouble for ignoring their parents' warnings to not talk to strangers. But they're not trying to be disobedient. It's just that, to an I-personality, there is *no such thing* as a stranger - just people they haven't yet met and related to.

In fact, my son also exhibits strong I qualities and one day at the playground, he was the best example of an I's approach to the world around them. He ran on to the playground that was full of other kids of all ages—none of whom he knew!—and announced to all of them, “Hey everyone it's me, Steven.” As if the party could now begin because he had arrived.

I's tend to be in the center and they generally love the attention. In fact, will my fellow I's

stand up and represent. Give them a hand folks!

Since as I's we tend to be active in our environment and we want to be in the center of the action, it's not uncommon to find I's in leadership roles but whereas our fellow "D"s want you to follow them because you like their *plan*. Those of us who are "I"s want you to follow because you like *us*.

2. And most often people do follow because, more than any other type, "I"s are inspirational.

As natural-born optimists, our first inclination is to believe the best about everything. We tend to have a great deal of confidence in almost every situation in which we find ourselves (and if not we'll fake it til we make it). We really do believe that "the sun will come out tomorrow." And we can convince

you of that, too.

In fact, right now I want to show you a video of one of my heroes. If I'm having a down day, I hop on over to her FB page and watch some videos and she inspires me. Let's watch.

Video-Little girl singing karaoke

That little girl, is not as little as you think. Her name is Audrey and she has Diamond Blackfan Anemia which is a rare inherited disease. Audrey's bone marrow does not produce red blood cells which leads to a lot of steroids and transfusions. She looks much younger and smaller than she is because of her illness and treatments. But in true I fashion that doesn't stop her. She (and her dad) are constantly making music videos, Zumba videos, cooking shows and more. She loves life and uses her personality to draw

attention to her illness, bringing awareness and funding to the foundation which serves those with the same illness.

So, when you're down in the dumps and discouraged and need encouragement to get up and go get em, talk to an I-personality, because they'll encourage you that your future will be better than the present.

3. Another characteristic of the “I” personality is creativity - in almost every area of life.

As “I”s, we are usually creative in the things we say, in the systems we design and in the fun we have. That's because we're not bogged down by details or tradition. We are never short on ideas. We're natural-born “outside the box” thinkers.

In fact, that's a good way to distinguish us

from the other types. Whereas a D says, "I'll build the box - and you all get in it"; and an S says, "Nice box. I could be comfortable in that"; and a C wants to know, "was it built to specifications?" ... an "I" says, "Box? What box? Is there a box somewhere? You want *me* to get in *that*? You *must* be kidding!"

As "I"s we just don't care very much for structure or directions. In fact, remember the example of how different personalities react to an instruction manual when putting something together?

A "D" says, "I don't care what the manual says, this screw WILL fit into this hole."

An "S" says "I'll read the manual now and put it together later."

A "C" follows the manual to the letter

and frankly probably wrote it.

But an “I” just looks at the manual and the project and says, "Hmmm. What C-personality friends can I invite over?"

I's are also creative because we're not afraid to take a risk. It was an “I” who first said that “it's easier to ask forgiveness than it is to ask permission.”

4. Finally, “I”s love the excitement that comes from change.

Whereas Cs and Ss struggle with change and see it as a necessary evil, to an “I”, change is a *necessary good*. But not because it's usually the path to accomplishing something: change is desirable because that's what causes life to be a great adventure with lots of exciting twists and

turns.

This is why we "I"s tend to be impulsive - ready to drop whatever we're doing at any given moment for a more interesting offer. It's also why it's not uncommon for an "I" to have several unfinished projects laying around - projects like making the bed, cleaning the room, putting away the groceries, doing the dishes - all the things that the C's have been reminding them they need to do!

And for those of you who don't know, I am married to a C and he gets to practice a lot of patience as he finds all my half way done projects. Some weeks it's worse than others but often he has to remind me what it was I was doing, saying, etc. or fixing the little things that I didn't notice.

Like say the Christmas Tree that I put together while he was out of town that started

to lean because apparently there is a locking piece that I didn't lock in place;) but details details, I was in the middle of 6 other projects, a phone call and a texting conversation while also checking FB.

As I's, we are often distracted by squirrels and shiny things. So many things to see, people to meet, stuff to do, so many things much more interesting than all that other stuff like cleaning, organizing, doing paperwork, etc.

Well, there are many other good things that could be said about those of us who are blessed with this personality type but, as with each of the others, the trouble comes when our characteristics get taken to an extreme.

What an "I" Can Be

For those of us with an “I” personality, we run in to danger when we use our natural ability to try and manipulate others to see, do, be whatever we want instead of what God wants.

We get into trouble when we have gotten so far outside the box that we don’t even realize the extremity of our behavior. We become desensitized to it and excuse it away.

We can get into a pinch when confidence in our natural charm and charisma can lead us to “wing it” a lot more than we should.

Distaste for structure and directions can lead us to rebel against boundaries and authorities that have been set up by God – boundaries and authorities we *ought* to respect.

And the thrill of popularity can lead us to

desire more and more of it, to the point where we will make promises we're not sure we can keep or compromise our values in order to get it. Or, we'll shift the blame to others or tell lies in order to not lose it. We'll do whatever it takes to please people ... because the approval of people means almost everything to us.

Now, for those of us who are predominantly "I" or have a significant amount of "I" characteristics in our personality mix, it's likely that we've had people confront us about those very issues.

And, it stung us greatly because it felt like *rejection*. It felt like people were saying "That's it. We're done. I want nothing more to do with you." That's *not* what they were saying but, being that we're so people-dependent, that's what it felt like.

So, what are we going to do? Give up being

fun-loving, creative, inspirational “I” personalities? That’s not possible nor advisable.

And it’s not necessary because the good news is that we don’t have to be ruled by the extremes of our personality. If we know Christ and we are serious about following him, then the Holy Spirit who lives in us *will* change us. He *will* produce fruit – characteristics of Jesus that might be totally unnatural to us - in our life.

So, let’s look at that “fruit of the Spirit” passage again and see where God might do some really awesome transformation.

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, every single person could stand to grow in every one of those virtues. But, for those of us who are “I”s, there are two that jump out as being desperately needed ...

... Specifically, the virtues of patience and self-control. (same verse, words in orange)

If you're a follower of Christ with “I” tendencies, this is probably where the Holy Spirit will do the most work in your character. I know He has in mine.

Let's start with the quality of self-control because, from all we've said, it's the more obvious of the two as being needed in the life of an “I”.

1. The word that gets translated self-

control is egkrateia (en-gra-tay'-ah) which refers to “the spirit which has mastered its desires and its love of pleasure.”

William Barclay, the Greek expert who we've been quoting throughout this series, says that egkrateia (en-gra-tay'-ah) is “used of the athlete's discipline of his body (1 Cor 9:25) and of the Christian's mastery of sexual desires (1 Cor 7:9). It is the virtue which makes a man so much a master of himself that he is fit to be the servant of others.”

That has a lot of implications for those of us who are masters of others through our natural influence, doesn't it? Influencing ourselves – self-leadership – is just as important as influencing and leading others.

And, clearly, this has implications for the boundary issues which seem to plague those of us who are “I”s. What Paul is saying here

is that, as the Spirit transforms us, we *can* actually become masters of self. We don't have to sell out to the pressures of people-pleasing, we don't have to give in to our impulsivity (many I's have tendencies toward over-indulgence). We really can learn to "keep it between the lines" or stay "in the box" when God – or His appointed authorities – tell us to.

In fact, here's what an "I" personality, transformed by the Spirit can become. This is from 1 Peter chapter 2, beginning in verse 11.

11 Dear brothers and sisters, you are foreigners and aliens here [in this world]. So I warn you to keep away from evil desires because they fight against your very souls.

13 For the Lord's sake, accept all authority—the king as head of state, 14 and the officials he has appointed.

16 You are not slaves; you are free. But your freedom is not an excuse to do evil. You are free to live as God's slaves.

In other words, you don't have to be slaves to your impulses, to your extremes.

17 Show respect for everyone. Love your Christian brothers and sisters. Fear God. Show respect for the king.

18 You who are slaves must accept the authority of your masters. [And the same applies for employees and bosses, and children and

parents]. Do whatever they tell you—not only if they are kind and reasonable, but even if they are harsh.

19 For God is pleased with you when, for the sake of your conscience, you patiently endure unfair treatment.

20 Of course, you get no credit for being patient if you are beaten for doing wrong.

*But if you suffer for doing right and are patient beneath the blows, God is pleased with you. 1 Peter 2:11-20
(NLT)*

This passage was written by the Apostle Peter who, as we'll see shortly, was himself an on-the-edge, given-to-extremes, life-of-the-party "I" personality. This is the kind of

transformation that happened in his life, which means that it can happen in ours, too, as the Spirit produces the fruit and we begin to be characterized by *egkrateia* (en-gra-tay'-ah) instead of excess.

The second virtue is that of *patience*. And that may be a little misleading, because, when you think of "I"s as having a need for patience, you probably think of us as being impatient for change to happen, or impatient for the fun to start.

That may be true, but there is a different kind of patience that most "I"s need.

2. Most "I"s need the patience described by the Greek word *Makrothumia* (mak-ra-thu-mee'-ah) which means "longsuffering towards people."

Barclay writes that, "Generally speaking, this

word is *not* used of patience in regard to things or events but in regard to *people* ... It is the grace of the man who could revenge himself and does not, the man who is slow to wrath.”

Quoting another ancient author, he continues “The most illuminating thing about this word, is that it is commonly used in the New Testament of the attitude of God towards men. If God had been a man, he would have wiped out this world long ago; but he has that patience which bears with all our sinning and will not cast us off.”

And it is the fruit of the Spirit which reproduces this loving, forbearing, forgiving, patient attitude of God in us and turns it outward towards those who disappoint us.

Now, why is this kind of patience such a need in the lives of those of us who are “I”s? It’s

because, more than any other personality type, *we're disappointed by people* who don't measure up to our expectations. In fact, some of the most critical individuals you will ever meet are the fun-loving I-personalities.

How can those of us who are such people-oriented individuals become so negative and judging of others? It's because, unlike the change-resistant Ss (who are very tolerant of almost anyone), we "I" personalities have a change-orientation that can dramatically affect our relationships. Ds also desire change, but because they are task-oriented, they want *things* to change. "I"s want *people* to change.

However, it's a lot easier and a lot faster for *things* to change than it is for *people* to change, which is why those of us who are Christ-following "I" personalities have a greater need for the Holy Spirit to produce

this virtue of longsuffering in us more than anyone else.

And the good news is that this transformation really can happen. I have personally seen it happen time and again in my life.

As many of you know I'm married to a man who loves to run. Several years ago he suffered an injury that knocked him out of a marathon he had spent months training for just three weeks before race day. Try as I might, I could not inspire him to believe that there were worse things than not being able to run a marathon, I couldn't influence him to "get happy." Instead I had to learn to bear his pain and realize that there was not a thing I could do to fix him. I would just have to let God do what only God could do and transform his heart and heal his pain. It was a long journey for us but in the long run, I became a little bit more patient, I grew in

Makrothumia.

Disciplines for “I”s

And, if you're an I personality like me, my prayer for you and me is that we would eventually become as characterized by self-control and patience as we are for all our natural I-characteristics that everyone loves about us.

And the way that happens, as we've said each week, is that we first come to Christ, believing that what he did for us on the cross was enough to pay for our sins so that we could be forgiven. When that happens, the Bible says that the Holy Spirit takes up residence in our hearts.

And then, the key is, as Paul put it:

*Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.
Galatians 5:24-25 (NIV)*

And if you've been here during this series, you know that "keeping in step with the Spirit" means incorporating into our lives some intentional activities – spiritual disciplines - that open us up to His influence.

I want to share three of those disciplines that we who are I's can voluntarily practice, and one that God sometimes brings upon us in order to develop these qualities in us.

1. First is the discipline of confession - naming our faults so that we can identify with and be gracious concerning the failings of others.

Confession means daily, weekly, hourly – whatever it takes - looking in the mirror and asking the Spirit to convict us of where we have disappointed God, and then owning up to it and accepting his forgiveness.

And confession must be brutally honest to be effective. As Richard Foster writes, “We must confess that we have sinned by our *own fault*, our own most grievous fault. Our sins cannot be called ‘errors in judgment’ (which is sugarcoating), nor is there any room to blame them on upbringing or family or mean neighbors.”

In confession, there are no excuses. I identify my sin for what it is. I lay it naked on the table before God and, if necessary, my fellow Christian. I acknowledge that it is *my* sin.

Not only is this discipline vital to our own spiritual health and well-being, it’s also a key in developing the virtue of patient longsuffering towards people.

Jesus once said,

How can you think of saying,

“Friend, let me help you get rid of that speck in your eye,” when you can't see past the log in your own eye?

Hypocrite! First get rid of the log from your own eye; then perhaps you will see well enough to deal with the speck in your friend's eye. Luke 6:41-42 (NLT)

Confession is getting rid of the log in your own eye. As I's we MUST engage in confession before the Lord where we are brutally honest about ourselves, our shortcomings and we don't attempt to gloss over or excuse our sin.

2. The second useful discipline for “I”s is the discipline of solitude ... aloneness for the purpose of drawing life from God instead of the “party.”

A lot of times, the reason we “I”s find ourselves out of control is that we want the acceptance and approval of others. We draw life from it. So, we’ll do pretty much anything to get it. It’s like a drug for us and we will do whatever it takes to get it.

Solitude breaks this. Daily, weekly, hourly – whatever it takes – we carve out time to listen to the voice of God instead of the voice of the crowd.

Mark tells us of a day when Jesus had done a lot of miracles in one particular town. Late into the night ...

33 The whole town gathered at the door, 34 and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons ...

But the next day ...

35 Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.

That's the discipline of solitude.

The experience of solitude reminded Jesus that his Father was the source of his life on this earth – not the adoring crowd he could easily gather through his charisma. Solitude means time away from everyone including your phone, your social media and all the distractions that would keep you from just being alone with God.

3. Next is the discipline of secrecy – serving others without the possibility of approval or admiration.

Again, Jesus describes this for us.

3 But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4 so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

5 "And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full.

But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you."

Matthew 6:2-6 (NIV)

Clearly, every Christ-follower should have this attitude, but for us “I”s it is especially important that we make a practice of doing good things for others in secret. It is a constant reminder that the reward that’s really worth having is the praise of our Father in Heaven, not the praise of people.

We must engage in these practices on a regular and consistent basis to break our dependency on the approval of others and remind ourselves that we serve an audience of one. Because we will never truly be able to love others when we are addicted to their approval of us.

Now, let’s close this out with the discipline that *God* sometimes brings on those of us who are “I”s. I have to say that this one may

have more of sting to it than the discipline which sometimes gets applied to the other personalities.

4. For an “I”, sometimes God brings on us the discipline of embarrassment – exposing the foolishness of depending on our charisma instead of Him.

Earlier, I said that the Apostle Peter was an “I” personality. He was a people-gatherer and a crowd-pleaser. And he lived outside the box. In fact, on the day he met Jesus, one of the first things he said was “depart from me, Lord, because I’m a sinful man.” My life is out of control.

But Jesus said, “come follow me anyway and I’ll change you into someone you never thought you could be.”

And, along the way Peter continually

displayed his on-the-edge, out-of-the-box “I”-ness. Of all the disciples, he was the one given to moments of bravado and showmanship. Not that those moments didn’t have an element of sincerity, but, often, Peter would go over the top just to impress Jesus and the others around him.

And time after time, Jesus would embarrass him to help transform him.

One of the most notable times is when Jesus is gathered with his disciples at the last supper and Jesus says “all of you will desert me tonight” and Peter says, “everyone else might, but I will never betray you.”

And in front of everyone, Jesus says, “By morning, three times you will have denied that you even know me.” And he was right.

And this process continues even after Jesus

had risen and ascended. Peter had become a leader in the early church, through the Apostle Paul, God once again embarrassed Peter right in the middle of his people-pleasing crowd-impressing act.

*When Peter came to Antioch,
I had to oppose him publicly,
speaking strongly against
what he was doing, for it was
very wrong.*

And what was he doing that was so wrong?

*When he [Peter] first arrived
[in the city], he ate with the
Gentile Christians, who don't
bother with circumcision.*

In other words, he spent a lot of time hanging out with them.

*But afterward, when some
Jewish friends of James*

came, Peter wouldn't eat with the Gentiles anymore because he was afraid of what these legalists would say. Then the other Jewish Christians followed Peter's hypocrisy, and even Barnabas was influenced to join them in their hypocrisy.

When I saw that they were not following the truth of the Good News, I said to Peter in front of all the others, "Since you, a Jew by birth, have discarded the Jewish laws and are living like a Gentile, why are you trying to make these Gentiles obey the Jewish laws you abandoned?"

We know why – because he wanted to be popular with the friends of James – who was the head of the church in Jerusalem!

Paul goes on to say that he reminded Peter

that it's not about what we can do in our own strength. It's about what Christ does in us.

I have been crucified with Christ. I myself no longer live, but Christ lives in me. So I live my life in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. Galatians 2:11-20 (NLT)

Of course, in the end, this kind of discipline worked. Otherwise, we couldn't read what we read in Peter's letter earlier about self-control and patience.

Why does God sometimes embarrass us "I"s? So that we will learn that the life we live in this body is not by our own strength, but by Christ who lives within us. We need to rid ourselves of our dependence on self and our charisma, we need to stop looking to others to validate us and instead be led to the cross,

to Jesus who has the power to take us and transform us in to all He created us to be.

Let's pray

Prayer

Feature-Lead Me to the Cross

CLOSING COMMENTS AND OFFERING AT
THE DOOR- Rick

ENDNOTES