

Maximizing Your Personality
“Keep It Between the Lines”
November 18, 2017

Introduction:

- Do you like to separate your M&M candies by color before you eat them?
- Do you prefer your bookshelves, cabinets or sock drawers neatly organized and in order?
- Have you ever over-analyzed a situation because you were afraid of what would happen if you didn't?
- Do you find yourself wanting to correct other people's spelling errors or filling in the missing facts they left out in a conversation?
- Is your preference to get away and find a quiet place to sit, think, and zone out instead of hanging out with people?

- Have you ever struggled finding satisfaction, and often felt melancholy because so many things in your world aren't perfectly the way you want them?

If you answer “yes” to most of these questions, then you most likely are a “C” personality type or have “C” tendencies. Whenever I take the Disc profile, I usually grade out as 50% C and 50% S. And since my personality is 50% C, I would answer “affirmative” to most of the questions I just mentioned. Yes, I do sometimes organize my M&Ms by color before I eat them. Yes, I do have a tendency to over analyze situations to avoid making mistakes and I do prefer getting away to a quiet place so that I can emotionally recharge and have time to think. But I have to confess that my sock drawer is only partially organized. (I

separate casual socks from my dress socks) and my shoes are a mess in my closet. So I am not all C. But just like the words in the iconic song the band just played, I often feel like “I can’t get no satisfaction.” The perfection I seek in life often eludes me. I want my world to be more perfect than it is.

How about you? Do you see any of these traits in yourself? If so, you will be able to identify with today’s message because today we are going to focus on the strengths and weakness of a C personality type and look at how God can shape our “C-ness” to glorify him more fully.

Review

As most of you know, we are in the middle of a series called “Maximizing Your Personality” and

each week we have been taking a look at a different personality type using the DISC personality profile. If you'd like to take the DISC personality profile for yourself, you can do so by going to:

www.123test.com/disc-personality-test

If you've been here each week during this series, you've probably noticed that we haven't focused each message entirely on the personality type of the day. We have also included some basic principles of Christian Formation as we go along.

We've done that because our purpose is not just "self-discovery that leads to self-improvement" but self-awareness that helps us to recognize how God works within the framework of our natural

“wiring” – our inborn personalities - to conform us to the character of his Son, Jesus Christ.

That’s God’s ultimate goal for anyone who has invited Him to be Lord and Savior – character development (literally, character transformation) from who we are *naturally* into who we can become *supernaturally*. Everything that happens in the life of a Christ-follower is intended to produce this result. In other words, our personality is maximized as God produces the fruit of the Spirit in us.

Or, as the Bible says:

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)

Today our goal is to see how this fruit of the Spirit can be integrated into the life of those of us who have been blessed with the “keep it between the lines” C-personalities.

But before we talk about Cs, let’s review by taking a look at the four-quadrant grid we’ve referred to throughout this series, and also by looking at the D and S personalities we’ve studied to this point. This will help us visualize where Cs fit in relation to the other types.

Two weeks ago 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. When Ds don't like the circumstances they find themselves in, they will usually try to change those circumstances. That's what we mean by "active."

S personality types, as we learned last week, 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 don't spend a lot of energy trying to bring about change. Instead, they figure out how to adapt, which is why an S can become quite comfortable in almost any situation.

Describing the "C"

C personalities share some characteristics of both of these types. Like Ds, they naturally gravitate towards tasks instead of relationships. Like Ss, they are passive in their approach to their environment.

However, *unlike* an S, they are not very adaptable. In fact, in undesirable circumstances, a C desires change as much as a D does. But since they tend to be uncomfortable in dealing with people, they are hesitant to bring about change through force of personality as a D would.

Instead, they attempt to bring about change by appealing to logic and correctness. Whereas a D would say, “follow my lead – do it my way”, a C would say, “do it the *right* way ... my way, because I’ve already done the research as to what

is the right way.” The C lets their research do the convincing, not the forcefulness of their personality like a D.

And that leads to what is probably the greatest strength of the C personality:

Cs are very conscious of how things are supposed to be and to be done ... and are very conscientious about staying within those boundaries.

They are conscious and conscientious – which is why this type is known as a “C”.

Or, to use an analogy, they like to know where the lines are and they like to keep it between those lines. If the lines are supposed to form a box, the

Cs are most comfortable right in the middle of it and most *uncomfortable* outside of it.

By the way, if you move the lines or you change the rules on a C, you'd better have a good reason. Just saying, "Because I said so" won't cut it for a C. They want to know the logic and reasoning behind WHY you want it done differently. And if they don't agree that you are doing it the "right way", expect them to tell you about it!

Now, this consciousness of lines and boxes and standards - the "right way" of doing things – produces several other admirable qualities. Let's look at three of those qualities. First,

C personalities tend to be great at researching and discovering answers.

Because they are not as people-oriented as other types, they are known for spending time alone researching and reading and thinking things through before attempting to solve a problem.

I see this trait in myself. One of my favorite things to do is to research all the logistics and travel options before we go on a trip. We just came back from a trip in Virginia and DC a couple of weeks ago, but before we left, I spent several hours on “Trip Advisor” reading travel forums to find the most efficient and economical way to do everything we wanted to do. I found some deeply discounted tickets for a double decker bus tour and found the best train option to get us into DC in good time. I get a lot of satisfaction in doing research for our trips because it makes for a better experience and reduces the bumps along the way.

One other aspect of this “research mentality” is that C personality types will actually *read* the instruction manual *before* starting a project. While a D is saying, “I don’t need to read some stupid manual. I’ll just figure it out as I go” and is still cussing that “this blankety-blank screw won’t fit into this hole,” the “C”s – because they did the research and read the manual - have already finished the assembly, cleaned up the mess and sent in the warranty card.

Without the research skills of the C personalities of the world, some of our stickiest and most pressing problems wouldn’t get solved.

This was never more true than in the year 1970, when the Apollo 13 crew radioed back to mission control on earth saying that now famous line: “Houston, we have a problem”. Watch this clip as

the C's go to work to fix a critical problem on Apollo 13 and notice how detailed they are as they work on the solution.

**>VIDEO CLIP: APOLLO 13 CO2 Problem
(3:13)**

Not just gray tape, but DUCT tape. Not just a lithium container but TWO. This is the way a C thinks. No detail is too small and accuracy is of the utmost importance. So, if you need research and answers to a problem ... ask a C. The second admirable quality is...

**C personalities have a knack for
organization and efficiency.**

Again, this traces back to that consciousness and conscientiousness of doing things the right way. Cs can look at almost any operation and see how it could be better organized. They can look at almost any process and know how it could be done more efficiently.

That makes them a great addition to any team because while the Ds are saying “let’s take the hill” and the Ss are saying “let’s make sure everyone’s comfortable”, the Cs are saying, “if it’s worth doing, it’s worth doing right – so let’s figure out the best way to get it done and keep everyone organized in the process.” They tend to be really good tacticians and really good troubleshooters. If things aren’t running smoothly, a C will most likely be able to tell you why.

Now, at this point I'm aware that I may be giving the impression that C personalities tend to be unfeeling and unemotional. That's not true at all. In fact, Cs may be THE *most* emotional of all the personalities. However, for a C, processing emotion is difficult for two reasons.

First, emotions get in the way, which is why most Cs hate it when they get emotional – it just interferes with what needs to be done.

Second, emotions usually attract the attention of other people and, as we've seen, Cs don't like that.

So, most Cs would rather turn that emotion inward and deal with it on their own. And that's not necessarily a bad thing, because their internalized emotion often becomes creative

energy ... which leads us to the third notable characteristic of this personality type:

The life and work of a C is often marked by excellence and even brilliance.

Did you know that most of the great artists in the world are Cs? Most of the geniuses down through history have been Cs. Look at this list of Cs:

- *Albert Einstein (physicist) (pic of Einstein)*
- *Allen Greenspan (economist)*
- *Bill Gates (businessman)*
- *Diane Sawyer (news anchor)*
- *Ernie Els (athlete)*
- *Henry Kissinger (politician)*
- *Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis (former First Lady)*

- *Kevin Costner (actor)*
- *C 3PO (Star Wars)*

I read somewhere that most surgeons are C-personalities as well. I don't know about you but that "excellence mindset" is *exactly* what I want in someone who's holding a knife and about to use it on me!

So...Conscientiousness, the ability to research and discover answers, a knack for organization and efficiency, a life marked by excellence and even brilliance ... these are the outstanding qualities of this personality type. And, clearly, there are some major benefits of being blessed with it.

But as you might expect, trouble comes when these ANY of these characteristics are taken to an

extreme. Let's watch a clip from the movie "Smart People" and notice how Vanessa takes her C to an extreme as she describes her father's new girlfriend.

>VIDEO CLIP: "Smart People" (1:30)

The Downside of Being a C

Did you catch what that Vanessa said to her father? "People like you and me don't need to compensate."

This video clip illustrates the greatest crisis that confronts a C personality. Cs cannot help but notice the shortcomings in other people, in their circumstances and in themselves. Everywhere they look, they see things that are wrong, things

not between the lines, things *not* in the box, and *not* being done the right way. More than any other personality type they are aware of the fact that this world is not what it should be.

And, so, there is a heaviness of spirit and depression that can easily overtake a C personality. In fact, Hippocrates, the originator of the four type personality model, labeled this type of personality, “the Melancholy.”

Unfortunately, those of us who are Cs can become more than just melancholy.

- **We can also become difficult to live with.**
- **Our conscientiousness can become pickiness.**

- **Our need to know “why” can become a judgment on the competency of others.**
- **Our research can be used as a tool to elevate ourselves and put others down.**
- **Our knack for organization and excellence can create unreasonable expectations that no one can live up to – including ourselves.**
- **The fact that we are “inward processors” can turn us into whiners and complainers.**

Now, for those of us who are predominantly a “C” or have a significant amount of “C” characteristics in our personality mix, it’s likely that we’ve had people confront us about those very issues. And that stung us pretty bad because we’re already keenly aware of our shortcomings. In fact, we’re

ashamed of them, and it feels like piling on when someone else points them out. That's not true, but that's what it feels like.

What a “C” Can Be

The good news is that we don't have to be slaves to these negative characteristics. If we know Christ and we are willing to hang in there, turning to him even when it's hard – then *the Spirit will produce fruit in our life*. We will develop characteristics that help us overcome some of our natural tendencies.

Let's read that “fruit of the Spirit” passage again and see where God might do some of his best work in us.

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 we've said each week – and will probably say again next week, every single person could stand to grow in every one of those virtues. But, for those of us who are Cs, there are two that jump out as being desperately needed; specifically, the virtues of joy and peace.

If you're a follower of Christ with C tendencies, this is probably where the Holy Spirit will do the most work in your character.

Why? Because of all the virtues listed here, these two - more than any other - are rooted in eternity.

Joy and peace focus squarely on realities that transcend the realities of this world.

And for us Cs who are overwhelmed by the shortcomings of this world, transcendent reality is where our heart must remain anchored, or a life of misery is guaranteed.

So, let's take the quality of "joy" first. It's the Greek word "chara" (kha-ra'), which literally means "cheerfulness of heart that comes from the experience of God's presence."

Now, joy is different from happiness. Happiness is circumstantial, or based on the situation in which we find ourselves at a given moment in time. Joy is independent of circumstances. Chara' is rooted in the fact that God is near and involved in our lives.

As the Psalmist once wrote:

In Your presence is fullness of joy. In Your right hand there are pleasures forever. Psalms 16:11 (NASB)

Of course, the question is ... why is the presence of the eternal God connected with joy?

There is joy because God fulfills the longing in our hearts for something in our human experience to be absolutely perfect.

C.S. Lewis once said that our thirst for something tells us that we were made for that and that it must exist somewhere. So, for us Cs, our longing for excellence, our desire for things to be done right

100% of the time tells us that there ought to be something somewhere to fulfill our thirst and desire.

But there is nothing on the earth that measures up to our expectations.

However, as we get to know God and experience Him, we begin to discover that He is that perfection we seek. And so the joy comes from realizing that IN GOD our longing is fulfilled.

In my own life, I experience this joy by going to the Bible whenever I start getting discouraged with the people or circumstances in my life that are less than perfect. Over the years I have committed to memory certain bible verses that serve as a “reset button” whenever I feel myself getting down about the imperfection around me. So I quote to myself verses like Psalms 42:5:

Why, my soul, are you downcast?

Why so disturbed within me?

Put your hope in God,

for I will yet praise him,

my Savior and my God. Psalm 42:5 NIV

Quoting this verse to myself reminds me to put my hope in God and not in my circumstances or other people.

Wouldn't it be awesome for those of us who are Cs to be so connected to God that our disposition literally begins to change from melancholy to cheerful? That transformation is possible. It really can happen to you as the Holy Spirit develops His fruit in you.

The second virtue, translated peace, is the Greek word “eirene” (a-ray’-nay), which is the “tranquility of heart that comes from knowing that our times (and we ourselves) are in God’s hands.”

Greek expert William Barclay writes that “in the original Greek language, this word eirene had two interesting usages.

First, it was used of the serenity which a country enjoyed under the just government of a good emperor; and, second, it was used of the good order of a town or village. Villages actually had an official who was called the the keeper of the public peace or eirene.”

It’s pretty clear how that applies to those of us who know God, isn’t it? We are under the

government of the ultimate good emperor – the emperor of the Universe. And because of that, even though there is disorder everywhere we look, there can be order in our “village” – there can be peace in our heart.

Again, as Jesus put it to his disciples:

“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace (eirene). In this world you will have trouble. (Things aren’t going to be perfect). But take heart! I have overcome the world.” **John 16:33 (NIV)**

In other words, “I’m the good Emperor. Nothing is happening that is beyond my control. And nothing will happen to you that is not allowed by me.”

Again, notice the eternal perspective in all of that. *We* are in the world, but *He* is bigger than and beyond the world! And if we're submitted to him and trusting in him and following him ... He's on our side!

That's the source of eirene in the life of a Christ-follower. We aren't *at peace because* everything goes as we hoped and planned, or because our expectations are met. We are at peace because we know that God is in control.

If you're a C personality, my wish for you is that your life will be as characterized as much by peace and of joy as it is with all of those other wonderful C - characteristics that are naturally part of your personality.

Disciplines for Cs

The transformation I just referred to will take more than wishing. It will take coming to faith in Christ - which causes our sinful nature (all the imperfections and junk about us) to be crucified with Christ - and then cooperating with God as he transforms our character and maximizes our personality.

As Paul put it:

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

One of the ways to “keep in step with the Spirit” is to incorporate intentional activities – sometimes called spiritual disciplines - into our lives that open us up to the influence of the Holy Spirit.

I want to talk to about two disciplines we can voluntarily practice if we're Cs, and each one of these I've found helpful in my life.

Let's start with that one first.

There's the discipline of worship and celebration that will help us to develop joy.

Remember we said earlier that joy comes from being in the presence of God? The discipline that takes us into His presence is worship and celebration.

What is worship and celebration? It's just remembering and acknowledging who God is. It's focusing on him in the way the writer of Hebrews suggested when he wrote:

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross Hebrews 12:2 (NIV)

You can do that in lots of ways, too. You can come to church and sing. You can sing in your car. You can listen to other people sing. You can stand outside at sunrise or sunset and marvel at the power of our Loving Creator. You can memorize Scripture. There are hundreds of ways! What matters is not how, but that we do set aside time to intentionally worship because being in the presence of God and focusing on His perfection is what produces joy in us.

Then there's what I'll call the discipline of "good enough" – planned imperfections

designed to remind us of God's graciousness towards *our* imperfections.

Sometimes, as a discipline, it's valuable for us to just draw a line and say, "that's good enough." For instance, sometimes the house just doesn't have to be spotless. The kids don't need to have everything they we think they need every minute of the day. The world won't come to an end and people won't die if those things happen or don't happen. People will still love us anyway. And we need to experience that, intentionally, so that we can learn peace.

Conclusion

So what is the biggest takeaway from today for a Ci besides knowing that peace and joy are

important spiritual virtues to cultivate? What is most important thing for a C to remember besides developing the disciplines of worship, celebration and the “it’s good enough” mentality?

It think it boils down to this: There no such thing as “perfect” in this life. Our circumstances will never be perfect. People won’t be perfect and we won’t be perfect either. But neither I, nor others or my circumstances have to be perfect because we worship a perfect God. He is the perfection that we seek. In him is all perfection and as we get to know God and experience Him, we will begin to discover that He is all that perfection we need. In him our deepest longing is fulfilled.

So let us lift up your hearts to him and be amazed, and be changed by a perfect God. Let’s pray to that end.

SONG – “Perfect People”

CLOSING COMMENTS: Next week, “life of the party” i personality.