THE PURPOSE OF YOUR PERSONALITY

A man who had a high opinion of himself stepped on a coin-operated scale that dispensed a card giving your weight and also commenting about your personality. After reading the card, he handed it to his wife and said, “Hey, look at this!” She took it and read aloud, “You are dynamic, gifted, and a born leader. Handsome, and much admired by women for your personality.” Giving it a second look she said, “And look, I see it’s got your weight wrong as well!"

Today we continue our series on SHAPE and we come to the P which means PERSONALITY. All of us have been made with different personalities. In the 4th century BC, a guy named Hippocrates determined there were four different personality types, and we still use these four to this day. To make it easy on us we will associate these temperaments with animals. They are the: lion (doer), otter (influencer), golden retriever (relater) and the beaver (thinker). Many of us will find that one personality does not describe us completely because we are actually a combination of two or more of these personality types, although one will probably be dominant.

Mark 12:28 One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?"
29 "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: `Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. 30 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.'

The number one purpose of your life is to love God with all your heart and soul and mind and strength. One of the ways you can look at this is through the lens of personality. While we are all called to love God in all 4 of these ways, the reality is that every one of us here usually leans towards one of those ways more than the others. You tend to be either a heart person or a soul person or a mind person or a strength person. That is your God-given personality.

Rom 12:9 says that “Love must be sincere” In the context of the passage it means that we are to approach God as we are – not trying to fake it or be something we are not. God wants each one of us to love, worship and serve Him with our personality. Each one of us has a unique relationship with Him. God doesn’t want us to worship or serve Him like somebody else.

Another way to say this is that we are called to love God with all our talk, and all our feelings, and all our thinking, and all of our acting. We were shaped to be primarily either a doer or a talker or a feeler or a thinker. This is called the DISC test or more easily DIRT (Doer, Influencer, Relater and Thinker)

A number of people did this test this morning. The purpose of these tests is not to put people in boxes. All of us are a blend of all of these things. There is a little bit of each one of these in all of us. Generally we act in one of these ways more than the other. We’re going to look at how God wants you to worship and serve and share and know Him by the way He shaped you. Let’s look at the four personalities.

1. TALKERS – love God with all your heart (otter)

The first style refers to Talkers. Talkers are people who love God with their heart. In the DIRT test this refers to those people who are called the INFLUENCERS.

In the Bible we see over and over again the direct connection between the heart and the mouth. The mouth is the window of the heart. If you have a problem with profanity, it is because there is a problem in your heart. If you have a problem with complaining and saying critical things it is because you have a problem in your heart.

Matt 12:34 For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks

Jesus said there is a direct heart-mouth connection. Heart people can't help but speak. This can be positive or negative. Talkers are verbal people. They have a real hard time being quiet. When your heart is filled, and you're a heart person, you've got to let it out.

Psalm 40:10 I do not hide your righteousness in my heart; I speak of your faithfulness and salvation. I do not conceal your love and your truth from the great assembly.

Talkers love to tell stories. They enjoy proclaiming truth up in front of people. We need talkers in the church because of the need in the world today for COMMUNICATION. There is power in it. In Urbana 86 I remember a speaker explaining how teaching and preaching can change lives. Many churches have watered down this. They minimize the power of preaching.

Pr 12:18 Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.

The right kind of words at the right time can heal a broken heart. They can change a person's life. The wrong words can destroy. I want to challenge the talkers to use their words to build up and not tear down. While this personality has strengths there are also weaknesses. One of them is obvious – if you talk a lot you are going to say the wrong thing eventually. In every personality the greatest area of strength can also be the greatest weakness. E.g. all the dumb things I have said when preaching.

Pr 10:19 When words are many, sin is not absent, but he who holds his tongue is wise.

Pr 17:27 A man of knowledge uses words with restraint, and a man of understanding is even-tempered.

Another translation of this proverb says *Those who are sure of themselves do not talk all the time*. Talkers need positive crowd feedback and can be insecure and get nervous in silence. Confidence means there are times you just need to shut up and listen. God's warning to Talkers is that there are times when talk is cheap and we have to act on what we say.

Pr 14:23 All hard work brings a profit, but mere talk leads only to poverty.

Talkers love to plan things but there comes a time when they need to stop aiming and pull the trigger. Is there anything that you have been talking about doing, maybe for weeks or months? Maybe you're been talking about doing this for years, and you've never done it. You need to move ahead. Do it. Don't just talk about it. Do it!

Sometimes words are not enough and spiritual discipline is needed. E.g. Eliza Doolittle.

On a side note - one of the quickest ways to understand your personality is to look at music. Different temperaments like different styles of music. Whatever your personality there is power in singing worship songs. Sometimes people again do not place value on worship.

That is a bad mistake for your heart because it needs music. One counselor would always ask people who were depressed the same first question "Do you sing the songs in the church you go to?" He said almost all of them say no. Their first assignment was to start. All of us need the emotional release that comes from singing.

What we speak with our mouths transforms our hearts. That is just the way we were created. Maybe you think you are a bad singer but anyone can make a joyful noise. The first personality are TALKERS – they love God with all their *heart*.

2. FEELERS - love God with all your soul (golden retriever)

Feelers are those who love God with their souls. In the DIRT test we call these people the RELATERS. The word SOUL in the Bible is used many different ways but most of the time it is used as a synonym for emotions. This is especially true in the book of Psalms. If you are a feeler, you probably love the book of Psalms because in it is every emotion known to man. The Bible talks about a downcast soul, a disturbed soul, a satisfied soul, a yearning soul, a troubled and forlorn soul, a joyful soul. It talks about a bitter soul, a thirsty soul, a hungry soul, a rejoicing soul, a delighted soul, a longing soul. Can you hear the passion in these words? Soul people feel things deeply. They're in touch with their emotions.

Psalm 42:1 As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. 2 My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?

The reason you have emotions is because God made you in His image. God is an emotional God. Feelers have a hard time hiding their emotions. Sometimes they think they are doing a good job of hiding them but you can pretty much tell a feeler because it shows in their body language. They're very passionate people. Feelers like that old song – This is the air I breathe … They just close their eyes and enjoy the emotion.

We need feelers in the church because we need more than just communication, we also need COMPASSION. We need shepherds, counselors and encouragers.

Eph 4:32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Feelers represent God's passion and compassion. A feeler is a people person. They're the best people persons of all because everybody likes them. They deeply care for people and care deeply about issues. They can empathize and sympathize with the pain and the problems of others. You go up to a talker and say, "I'm having a bad day!" – they'll give you an hour of counseling. You go up to a thinker and say, "I'm having a bad day." – they'll analyze it for you and try to fix it. You go up to a doer and say, "I'm having a bad day," and they'll say, "Come on, get over it!" But you go up to a feeler and they will say, "I understand where you're coming from. I know that feeling"

Are there weaknesses in this personality? Just like talkers can over talk and never get anything done, but just talk about it - Feelers will be more tempted by their feelings than the rest of us. If you're a feeler you have a tendency to be manipulated by your moods. You will tend to say, "I want to do this because I feel like it, or I don't want to do it because I don't feel like it." You can be controlled by an ocean of emotion. They're more tempted by emotions than most of us.

The problem with that is feelings sometimes lie. You can be discouraged saying "Everything is bad right now" – but it really is not. If you feel that way, you think it's true. Sometimes what you feel like doing is not the right thing to do and what you don't feel like doing is the right thing.

You're going to be tempted in the areas of emotion. "It feels so good, how can it be wrong? If loving you is wrong, I don't want to be right." That was written by a feeler! You just have to be aware. Everybody's tempted. Temptation starts by getting our attention and then hooking into our emotions. Once it keys into an emotion, you're hooked.

1 Pet 2:11 Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul.

Emotions can lead us into sin. Don't just give in to what you feel. Instead, the Bible says:

Gal 5:16 So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.

Let the Holy Spirit guide you to choose between what are good and right emotions and what are harmful and destructive emotions. You will either be controlled by your feelings or by God's Spirit.

It is interesting that in worship, feelers will often close their eyes so they can concentrate. The Bible says that when you're worshiping God, what's all around you becomes irrelevant. Regardless of your personality, God wants you to worship Him with your soul, with your emotions. There are Talkers and Feelers ...

3. THINKERS - love God with all your mind (beaver)

Thinkers love God with their minds. In the DIRT test these are called the same thing - THINKERS. Did you know that you can love God with your intellect? God gave us our brains and it brings him glory when we use them for Him.

When you are developing, strengthening, and educating your mind, you are doing an act of worship. You're doing something with what God gave you.

When thinkers become believers and follow Christ, all of a sudden they fall in love with the Bible. They love to study this book. There is no other book in the world like it because as you study it goes deeper and deeper.

Ps 119:97 Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long.

Thinkers are important because we do not only need communication and compassion in the church but we also need CONSIDERATION. We need people who can think through tough issues and complex problems. We need scientists, writers, philosophers, inventors and innovators.

Lam 3:40 Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the LORD.

Socrates said, "The unexamined life isn't worth living." We need to think about the direction of our life. Thinkers are good at this. They ponder the path that they're headed. There are also weaknesses to this personality. One, is pride. Thinkers who have the ability to think fast or who are educated, tend to look down on people who don't think the way they do. They are perfectionists.

1 Cor 8:1We know that we all possess knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.

If you are going to be smart – great. Use your mind but you must temper it with love or else you will become a know-it-all and egotistical. Even brilliant people are wrong in some areas.

Education without values, as useful as it is, seems rather to make man a more crafty devil – C.S. Lewis

The other problem of thinkers is indecision. Some people use study as an excuse to never act. Some of the most scholarly people I know are also the most vacillating, wimpy, indecisive people I know. They're always saying, "It could be this, or it could be that…" They never come to conclusions.

2 Tim 3:7 always learning but never able to acknowledge the truth.

If you are a thinker make sure you acknowledge your dependence on God and practice humility.

Pr 3:7 Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and shun evil.

Humility is a choice. Never pray for God to humble you but do what it says in the Bible, *"Humble yourself before the Lord."* It's a choice. Humility is not denying your strengths. It's being honest about your weaknesses. The other warning to thinkers is to practice what you know.

James 1:22 Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.

You could come to church for twenty years and take notes on every single sermon ever preached here and still never really do it. I only believe the parts of the Bible I actually do. Do you believe you ought to give to the poor? Do it! Do you believe people need Christ to go to heaven? Are you telling them about it? Do you believe in tithing? Are you doing it? There are Talkers, Feelers and Thinkers …

4. DOERS - love God with all your strength (lion)

The fourth personality is the DOER. In the DIRT test this is also called the DOER. These are the energetic activists of life. They are the get it done people - the achievers, accomplishers and workers that push things forward and make things happen in the practical sense of life.

Psalm 116:16 O LORD, truly I am your servant; I am your servant, the son of your maidservant; you have freed me from my chains.

He's saying, "Put me in, Coach! I want to be in the game. Don't leave me on the sidelines. I want to be involved. I don't want to watch history happen - I want to make history! I'm obedient. I'm active and I'm ready to go to work. I'm ready to serve You. We need doers in the church not just for communication or compassion or consideration but also for CONTRIBUTION. We need people of action who will get things done.

Rom 12:1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship.

Your body is the only way you can serve God. You can feel and think things all day but eventually you have to serve through your body. The weaknesses of doers is overwork. They often don't take time to think or feel and often not even to talk. They can work themselves to death. The key is rest.

Ps 127:2 In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat-- for he grants sleep to those he loves.

Some of you need to do less. Not necessarily less for God, but less in other areas so you'll have more time to do what matters most.

The Bible says that when you become a believer, God makes you a new person inside. What is new is that you have new hope and joy – your past is forgiven, you have a new reason for living, your home is in heaven. Let me tell you something that doesn't change when you come to Christ. Your personality doesn't change. If you were a talker before you knew the Lord, you're still a talker. If you were a feeler before you knew the Lord, you're still a feeler. If you were a thinker before you knew the Lord, you're still a thinker. If you were a doer before you knew the Lord, you still are a doer. God doesn't slow you down when you come to Him. He just changes your direction. In fact, He says, "I want to empower you." Remember, you got your personality from Him.

God doesn't want to make you a clone of everybody else in the way that you worship and serve and love God. No. He says, "I want you to worship and love and serve Me the way I made you to be. With your personality. In talking, in feeling, in thinking, through doing. I want you to do it all four ways even though I primarily put you in one category." He says, "Not only that, but I will strengthen your personality. Not dampen it.