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LOOKING AT TYPE AND SPIRITUALITY

Preferences in Spiritual Practices

Extraversion—Experiencing God With Others

Talk and hear about matters of the soul
Engaging/spirited-led explorations of faith
Inquiry and learning through group study/
devotions of spiritual material

Service through evangelism and outreach as
expressions of faith

Listen to people's accounts of spiritual
events

Interactive retreat

Engage others in worship experiences
through singing/acting/dancing

Corporate prayer/sharing of gratitude, etc.
Variety in spiritual experiences

Consider the external world as the domain
of the spirit

Sensing—Experiencing God Through the Concrete and Specific

Regular, sequential study of sacred texts

Tangible/factual examples of God's grace

Sacred objects for remembrance and
example

Find proof of the divine in nature

Inquiry and learning through step-by-step
methods for spiritual growth

Live the spiritual life in the here and now
with promise of eternity

Methodical spiritual disciplines

Spur to spiritual growth: The real and the
tangible give evidence of the unseen

Following traditional rituals or patterns of
worship

Service through applying faith to practical
works

Introversion—Experiencing God Through Ideas

Study and read about matters of the soul
Contemplation as a means to explore faith
Inquiry and learning through one-to-one
conversations/discussions of spiritual
material

Service through reading, journaling, writing
to bolster one's own and the faith of others

Meditate on spiritual events

Silent retreat

Join with others in worship experiences for
enrichment through singing/acting/
dancing

Private prayer of gratitude, etc.

Depth in spiritual experiences

Consider the inner world as the domain of
the spirit

Intuition—Experiencing God Through Paradox and Mystery

Poetic writing/creative imagery to explore
sacred themes

Spiritual arenas that allow for use of the
imagination

Sacred symbols for inspiration and growth

Use nature to connect to spiritual themes
and patterns

Inquiry and learning through synchronistic
interaction between idea, person and
learning

Live the spiritual life with a view toward
eternity, incidentally in the here and now

Innovative spiritual disciplines

Spur to spiritual growth: belief in the unseen
gives reason to seek the real and the tangible

Designing new rituals or patterns of worship

Service through applying faith to areas that
need inspiration

Thinking—Experiencing God Intellectually

Take an intellectual approach to faith
 Get in touch with universal principles to guide one’s faith
 Search for truths in sacred texts
 Skepticism precedes conviction

Debate and dialogue on matters of faith
 Inquiry and learning through explanation of logical questions concerning faith

Consider the pluses and minuses of spiritual practices
 Service comes by working to establish truth, structures and mechanisms, and standards of accountability
 Identify with careers of intellectual “giants of the faith”
 Categories of faith, practice, etc.

Judging—Experiencing God Through Discipline

The beauty of spiritual *exercises*
 Practice a daily spiritual routine

Find resources that can help organize one’s spiritual journey
 Schedule specific times for devotional practices
 Service comes by setting time aside to deal with the needs of others
 Spirituality grows through acts of will

Inquiry and learning comes through structured learning experiences (i.e., read the 8 chapters in 8 weeks)
 Spiritual practices that remind us of what we *should do*
 Enjoy knowing what comes next or what is to be expected in spiritual practices
 Move quickly to decide what is appropriate, good/bad, right/wrong, valuable/not valuable in matters of spirituality—may be in danger of gathering information only to substantiate judgments

Feeling—Experiencing God Wholeheartedly

Take a personal approach to faith
 Get in touch with personal values to guide one’s faith
 Search for personal meaning in sacred texts
 Concerns for personal relationship between God and people supports conviction
 Discuss and persuade in matters of faith
 Inquiry and learning through explanation of motivations, inspirations and examples of others

Consider the impact of spiritual practices on people or community
 Service comes by finding ways to be involved with people and provide help to others
 Identify with personal lives of compassionate “giants of the faith”
 Commonalties of faith, practice, etc.

Perceiving—Experiencing God in the Moment

The beauty of spiritual *experiences*
 Engage in various spiritual experiences as they come along

Use available resources as need arises to support a spontaneous spiritual journey
 Combine devotional practices with other aspects of life
 Service comes by acting in the moment to meet the needs of others
 Spirituality grows through an increased awareness of the divine

Inquiry and learning happens during “sacred moments” (i.e., read when led to do so)
 Spiritual practices that remind us of what we *are doing*
 Enjoy occasional surprises or departures from what is customary in spiritual practices
 Seek to gather as much information or experience before deciding what is appropriate, good/bad, right/wrong, valuable/not valuable in matters of spirituality—may be in danger of being so open to new information that they do not ultimately decide

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Sensors are drawn to the reality of God

- Sensing types frequently experience the Creator through the reality of Creation. By focusing on how God is with them now and can be understood through what they hear, see, touch, smell or taste, they show how much the enjoyment of this life is one of God's precious gifts. Beauty is often found in the simplicity of faith.
- Sensing types are attentive to the present, the joys and beauty of what is. *"Putting seeds into the ground, watching them sprout and flower, and watering and pruning them brings me closer to God because I see a tangible act of God's creation."* They see God at work in the ordinary context of daily life, finding role models or events that have actually occurred as reminders of God's love.
- Sensory aids to worship such as flowers, incense, or music often enrich spiritual experiences for Sensors. Repeating common or traditional prayers or litanies often helps them feel connected to what has been handed down from generation to generation.
- For Introverted Sensing types, prayer is frequently conversational, telling God one's worries and sorrows, often in a chronological fashion.
- For Extraverted Sensing types, prayer is often through action, less so through words. Pursuits that tap into nature or those that meet the needs of others are often ways they feel closest to God.
- Sensing types enjoy learning about the facts, history, and customs of their faith. They enjoy step-by-step teachings that stick to the point and help them to concretely live out their faith.
- Sensing balances Intuition by concentrating on reality, balancing the dreams of what could be with the certainties of what is.

Intuitives are drawn to the mystery of God

- Intuitive types are comfortable with the unseen and relish dreaming about the possibilities that God might have in store us. By focusing on how God can be understood through the imagination, they add hope and fresh insights as they anticipate the future. Beauty is often found in the complex patterns of faith.
- Intuitive types are attentive to inspirations, especially about the future. *"The incredible sunrise reminded me of the wealth God's gifts to us and how faith in God will bring light even in darkness."* They envision the plans God may have for themselves, others, and the universe, seeking potential for growth and change.
- Imaginative aids to worship such as guided imagery, symbols upon which to meditate, chances to be creative, or parables with underlying meanings often help Intuitives tap into the sacred in new or innovative ways.
- For Introverted Intuitive types, prayer is often musing with God about what could be different or might be in store for them.
- For Extraverted Intuitive types, prayer is often preferred when done in community with others. Their prayers tend to come from a desire to make things better for people, organizations, or the natural world.
- Intuitive types enjoy discovering the big meanings behind simple events or stories and then relaying their insights to others. They enjoy teachings that allow scope for the imagination.
- Intuition balances Sensing by adding new possibilities and genuine hope, not blind optimism, in times of bleak reality.

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Thinking taps into God head-to-head

- Thinking types frequently experience God through their search for truth as they attempt to explain history as well as the events around them. Skepticism and distrust for the emotional aspects of faith lead them toward a more intellectual conviction of faith. Thinkers add an awareness of the principles which God has established for us.
- Thinking types are attentive to order, justice, and wisdom. *"God comes as I search to answer, 'Why?' I know I can wrestle with myself, others, or even with God, present the issues I see, and thereby move from doubt to faith."*
- Aids to worship need to engage the mind, either through clarity of teachings or the development of disciplines that demand the use of logic or reason. Sacred texts are examined for wisdom and truth.
- For Extraverted Thinking types, prayer might involve acting to change the structures that seem corrupt or unfair. They may see sin as untruths, dishonesty, or personal incongruity.
- For Introverted Thinking types, prayer often involves skepticism, confronting God on issues that involve ethics and principles.
- Thinking types often learn by asking the "big" questions, seeking intellectual challenge, studying the works of theologians, discussing paradoxes with other Thinking types, and using other disciplined approaches to acquire more knowledge about their faith.
- Thinking balances Feeling with a healthy questioning that can lead to greater understanding of the truths of faith.

Feeling taps into God heart-to-heart

- Feeling types frequently experience God through warmth and closeness to others or to ideals that lead them to a personal and intimate faith. By focusing on how God loves them, they add an awareness of the God who comforts, walks alongside, and rejoices with people.
- Feeling types are attentive to the joys, longings, and emotions of our spiritual journey. *"I may not understand why something has happened, but I feel God's presence. I know in my heart that God is alive in my life."*
- Aids to worship need to tap into the intra- and interpersonal aspects of faith, including stories or teachings that engage or are in line with personal values. Sacred texts are examined for personal meaning.
- For Extraverted Feeling types, prayer often involves acts of service for others as well as prayers with and for the needs of people and the community. They may see sin as insensitivity to or neglect of others.
- For Introverted Feeling types, prayer often involves sharing the sentiments of one's own heart as well as offering petitions for others.
- Feeling types often learn by celebrating common values with others, reflecting on universal goodness and beauty, imagining themselves as a character in a sacred text, or writing or listening to stories that engage their emotions or cause them to remember how God has personally touched them or other individuals or groups who are important to them.
- Feeling balances Thinking by emphasizing a God who wants to be in relationship with us and wants us in community with each other.

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activities changes. For example, Extraverts may seek out solitude and quiet for their spiritual life, while Introverts may want to express their beliefs with others.

Extraverts Gain Energy by Meeting God in the World Around Them

- Extraverts frequently encounter God through the people they meet or events they experience. They may seek situations where there is a lot of interaction.
- Extraverts prefer to talk through sacred practices and experiences in order to process what they are learning.
- Oral teachings and the spoken word aid in absorbing new ideas. Often, Extraverts would rather sample a variety of spiritual topics rather than spend large amounts of time on one subject.
- Use socially-oriented retreats for renewal.
- Enjoy gathering with different groups that are perhaps loosely organized and then disbanded.
- Extraverts may express their spirituality by dynamic participation in action or service, reaching out often with many others in response to the needs they perceive.
- Extraversion balances Introversion by calling attention to the God who joins with us as we gather together.

Introverts Gain Energy by Meeting God in the World of Ideas

- Introverts frequently experience God in moments of solitude and may seek atmospheres where they can avoid interruptions and distractions.
- Introverts prefer to introspect on sacred practices and experiences, using moments of seclusion to process what they are learning.
- Studying the written word, on their own or with one or two other people, aids in absorbing new ideas. Journaling may help to process spiritual concepts in depth.
- Use meditation-oriented retreats for renewal.
- Enjoy establishing a small, close group which stays together over time.
- Introverts may express their spirituality through a few carefully selected tasks, often choosing to act or serve with people they know well.
- Introversion balances Extraversion by calling attention to the God who seeks to dwell within us.

Judging (J) or Perceiving (P)— How We Live Out Our Spirituality

The way we prefer to live our outside life—the one others see—often reflects our preference for Judging or Perceiving. This preference has a significant impact on our spiritual journey. Because Judging types like to plan their work and work their plan, they often tackle their spiritual life with the same sorts of goal-oriented schedules and structures that dictate their work habits. Those with a preference for Perceiving, who like to remain flexible and open to whatever turns up, often find that systematic spiritual disciplines (which permeate literature on prayer and other writings on enriching one's faith life) threaten to dampen their chances of finding the sacred as they go about experiencing life.

Judging—Spirituality Comes Through Regular Practice

- Judging types tend to schedule regular times to be in touch with the sacred in their lives. They may have made clear decisions about their exact beliefs
- Judging types often prefer opportunities for spiritual growth that are defined — set study courses, prescribed times, exercises, or regular meetings with others to work toward mutual goals.
- Judging types are most at ease in worship experiences that follow a schedule. Many become uncomfortable if these experiences run well over their scheduled time because that could intrude on their other commitments.
- Judging types may use journaling, benchmarks, or other tools to mark their spiritual progress. *“Reviewing what I’ve studied up until now encourages me to stick to my spiritual goals for the rest of this year.”*
- Judging types may be so committed to their plan of action for pursuing spiritual matters that they may lose openness to new paths that might prove enriching.
- Judging types may become frustrated with the ad-hoc spiritual practices of Perceiving types, not comprehending how spiritual growth can happen without discipline. When judging types compartmentalize their spirituality too much, they may struggle to integrate faith with their everyday activities.
- Judging balances Perceiving by ensuring that the necessary rhythms of the spiritual journey, as well as those of a community of faith, are observed and continued with some degree of regularity.

Perceiving—Spirituality Comes Through Spontaneity

- Perceiving types tend to find the sacred in their everyday life, through serendipitous connections which reflect God. They may find it difficult to articulate their exact beliefs as they remain open to learning from new experiences.
- Perceiving types often prefer a variety of opportunities for spiritual growth, often during the same time period, gaining energy by juggling various practices, and purposely avoiding any routine that might become stifling.
- Perceiving types may become engrossed in worship experiences, if they are enjoying them, unaware of the passing time and not paying attention to their other commitments.
- Realization of spiritual growth comes as more of a revelation. *“I was surprised when I noticed that spiritual situation more easily than I would have a year ago. The experiences of the past months have increased my understanding.”*
- Perceiving types may be so intent on exploring the infinite variety of ways to experience God that they fail to discern what disciplines and practices are most meaningful or logical for them to do more fully.
- Perceiving types may become frustrated by the “oughts” and “shoulds” imposed on them by their spiritual communities. Sometimes Perceiving types may doubt their own spiritual sincerity when others comment on their lack of regularity in their spiritual disciplines.
- Perceiving balances Judging by adding re-creation and spontaneity to the orderly and structured disciplines of the spiritual journey and the life of a community of faith.

If your dominant function is:

Sensing:

Concentrate on what can be verified—proof of God in the world around you, in your life and in those close to you.

Intuition:

Concentrate on the unseen God, the possibilities of what God has in store for you and others. Bring optimism and a sense of the reality of the impossible.

Thinking:

Concentrate on the logic of faith, developing your own system of belief and aiding in the discovery of strengths and weaknesses of spiritual and religious positions.

Feeling:

Concentrate on the difference God makes in your own life and the lives of others; hoping to deepen relationships and meet the needs of others.

In midlife you may explore your inferior function:

Intuition:

Begin to envision new possibilities for the future and enjoy more imaginative or mystical approaches to prayer or worship.

Sensing:

Begin to enjoy the gifts of the life God gives us in the here and now, the joys of the moment. May find traditional spiritual practices more attractive and may notice God in everyday circumstances.

Feeling:

Begin to focus on how faith molds your values and become mindful of how you might be of service. Time with others becomes more important and prayer springs more from personal needs. God is called on for comfort, not just for explanations.

Thinking:

Begin to seek a logical foundation for your faith, perhaps in order to explain it better to others. May be more willing to acknowledge flaws or inconsistencies in your faith without feeling threatened.