

Session Two



GOD'S WORD ON UNDERSTANDING STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

Without bulging biceps or massive shoulders, a petite, slender woman might appear, at first glance, to be physically weak. Then you discover she can run a marathon in under three hours. A bodybuilder might appear to have great strength until he demonstrates a weakness for drugs or alcohol. The Bible speaks about this tendency for strength and weakness to impersonate each other in our lives. Sometimes the seemingly strong is very weak, and apparent weakness belies great strength. The key is not external appearances but internal spiritual character. As we grow in spiritual maturity we learn to recognize the weaknesses of our strengths.

WHEN IS WEAKNESS GOOD, AND WHEN IS IT BAD?

Mark 14:38 . . . Keep alert and pray. Otherwise, temptation will overpower you.

Our proclivity toward sin is a weakness from which we need to be delivered.

Isaiah 57:12-13 . . . Now I will expose your so-called good deeds that you consider so righteous.

Faith placed in our own strength or in other gods becomes great weakness.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A "STRONG CHRISTIAN"?

Galatians 4:9 . . . Why do you want to go back again and become slaves once more to the weak and useless spiritual powers of this world?

A faith based on works is weak and worthless.

2 Corinthians 12:2-10 . . . My power works best in your weakness.

An awareness of our own weaknesses emphasizes God's strength.

Ezekiel 34:2-6 . . . You have not taken care of the weak.

God's people become strong only when they exhibit care for the weak.

HOW DO I KNOW WHAT MY STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES ARE?

Daniel 1:17 . . . God gave these four young men an unusual aptitude for learning the literature and science of the time. And God gave Daniel special ability in understanding the meanings of visions and dreams.

1 Corinthians 12:11 . . . It is the one and only Holy Spirit who distributes these gifts. He alone decides which gift each person should have.

God is the source of our strengths and special abilities.

Exodus 31:3 . . . I have filled him with the Spirit of God, giving him great wisdom, intelligence, and skill in all kinds of crafts.

Romans 12:6 . . . God has given each of us the ability to do certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out when you have faith that God is speaking through you.

We should take a look at what God has gifted us to do.

Ezekiel 11:19 . . . I will give them singleness of heart and put a new spirit within them. I will take away their hearts of stone and give them tender hearts instead.

Haggai 2:5 . . . "My Spirit remains among you, just as I promised when you came out of Egypt. So do not be afraid."

John 14:16 . . . I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor, who will never leave you.

God's Spirit can open our eyes to see how he has especially gifted us.

Ephesians 1:16-17 . . . I have never stopped thanking God for you. I pray for you constantly, asking God, the glorious Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to give you spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you might grow in your knowledge of God.

The more you know God, the better you will understand your own strengths and weaknesses.

Daniel 1:4 . . . “Select only strong, healthy, and good-looking young men,” he said. “Make sure they are well versed in every branch of learning, are gifted with knowledge and good sense, and have the poise needed to serve in the royal palace. Teach these young men the language and literature of the Babylonians.”

Matthew 25:15 . . . He gave five bags of gold to one, two bags of gold to another, and one bag of gold to the last-dividing it in proportion to their abilities-and then left on his trip.

1 Timothy 4:14 . . . Do not neglect the spiritual gift you received through the prophecies spoken to you when the elders of the church laid their hands on you.

Our strengths will become evident to others around us and over us.

HOW CAN I TAKE FULL ADVANTAGE OF MY STRENGTHS AND MINIMIZE MY WEAKNESSES?

Exodus 36:1 . . . Bezalel, Oholiab, and the other craftsmen whom the Lord has gifted with wisdom, skill, and intelligence will construct and furnish the Tabernacle.

1 Corinthians 12:7 . . . A spiritual gift is given to each of us as a means of helping the entire church.

Each of us should use our strengths and skills to build God’s “temple,” the church.

Ecclesiastes 4:12 . . . A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken.

Joining together with others will help us to minimize our weaknesses and maximize our strengths.

Ecclesiastes 10:10 . . . Since a dull ax requires great strength, sharpen the blade. That’s the value of wisdom; it helps you succeed.

God can give us wisdom to know how to more fully develop our strengths.

1 Corinthians 4:7 . . . What makes you better than anyone else? What do you have that God hasn't given you? And if all you have is from God, why boast as though you have accomplished something on your own?

We should always remember to give God the full credit for whatever strengths we have.

1 Corinthians 16:13 . . . Be on guard. Stand true to what you believe. Be courageous. Be strong. And everything you do must be done with love.

Having faith in God will help us to be stronger.

Jeremiah 20:11 . . . The Lord stands beside me like a great warrior. Before him they will stumble. They cannot defeat me. They will be shamed and thoroughly humiliated. Their dishonor will never be forgotten.

2 Corinthians 12:9 . . . Each time he said, "My gracious favor is all you need. My power works best in your weakness." So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may work through me.

God will stand beside us and help us to be strong, even when we are weak.

PROMISE FROM GOD:

Isaiah 40:29-31 . . . He gives power to those who are tired and worn out; he offers strength to the weak. Even youths will become exhausted, and young men will give up. But those who wait on the Lord will find new strength. They will fly high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint.

Isaiah 41:10 . . . Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you. I will help you. I will uphold you with my victorious right hand.

Zechariah 4:6 . . . He said to me, "This is what the Lord says to Zerubbabel: It is not by force nor by strength, but by my Spirit, says the Lord Almighty."

Ephesians 3:20 . . . Glory be to God! By his mighty power at work within us, he is able to accomplish infinitely more than we would ever dare to ask or hope.

One of the strategies that you will need to achieve extraordinary outcomes in your personal and professional life is to understand personality. Knowing your personality and the personality type of others with whom you live and work with is critical to your success.

Our objective here in this lesson is that you will learn why:

- Why some people seem to be natural born talkers, while others find talking harder and listening easier.
- Why some people always take charge in any situation, while others find it much easier to follow.
- Why some people are optimistic and others seem to be naturally pessimistic.
- Why some people are more concerned about projects than people and others are more naturally sensitive to the needs of people and less concerned about projects.

The personality test will take you less than 10 minutes to complete.

You can't fail this test. There aren't any right or wrong answers, but you will be able to identify your natural personality inclinations and strengths. The most important advice we can give you is to just be honest as you rate each word. Do not rate the word based on how you would like to see yourself, but instead rate it exactly how you are today. You will discover your dominant and sub-dominant personality type.

Remember, understanding personality is a strategy that enables you to:

1. Capitalize on your personality behavior and personality strengths.
2. Reveal and clarify your inherent weaknesses.
3. As you learn the personality types of your spouse, children, coworkers, employees and supervisors, you will have a much greater understanding and appreciation of who they are and how to interact with them for a more positive communication experience.
4. More effectively communicate, motivate and encourage people.
5. Reduce stress, enjoy life and be more productive.

L= Lions

NATURAL STRENGTHS

Decisive
Goal Oriented
Achievement Driven
Gets Results
Independent
Risk Taker
Takes Charge
Takes Initiative
Persistent
Efficient
Driven to Complete Projects
Quickly and Effectively
Competitive
Enjoys Challenges, Variety and Change

NATURAL WEAKNESSES

Impatient
Blunt
Poor Listener
Impulsive
Demanding
May View Projects More Important than People
Can be Insensitive to the Feelings of Others
May "Run Over" Others Who are Slower to Act
or Speak
Fears Inactivity, Relaxation
Quickly Bored by Routine or Mechanics

O= Otters

NATURAL STRENGTHS

Enthusiastic
Optimistic
Good Communicator
Emotional & Passionate
Motivational & Inspirational
Outgoing
Personal
Dramatic
Fun Loving

NATURAL WEAKNESSES

Unrealistic
Not Detailed Oriented
Disorganized
Impulsive
Listens to "Feelings" Above "Logic"
Reactive
Can Be Too Talkative
Excitable

G= Golden Retrievers

NATURAL STRENGTHS	NATURAL WEAKNESSES
Patient Easy Going Team Player Stable Empathetic Compassionate Sensitive to Feelings of Others Tremendously Loyal Puts People Above Projects Dependable Reliable Supportive Agreeable	Indecisive Over Accommodating May Sacrifice Results for the Sake of Harmony Slow to Initiate Avoids Confrontation Even When Needed Tends to Hold Grudges & Remembers "Hurt" Fears Change

B= Beavers

NATURAL STRENGTHS	NATURAL WEAKNESSES
Accurate Analytical Detail Oriented Thoroughness Industrious Orderly Methodical High Standards Intuitive Controlled	Too Hard on Self Too Critical of Others Perfectionist Overly Cautious Will Not Make Decision Without "All" the Facts Too Picky Overly Sensitive

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT HONOR?

BIBLE READING: Ezra 7:11-28

KEY BIBLE VERSE: Praise him for demonstrating such unfailing love to me by honoring me before the king, his council, and all his mighty princes! I felt encouraged because the gracious hand of the LORD my God was on me. And I gathered some of the leaders of Israel to return with me to Jerusalem. (Ezra 7:28)

THOSE WHO HONOR GOD WILL BE HONORED.

Ezra praised God for all that God had done for him and through him. Ezra had honored God throughout his life, and God chose to honor him. Ezra could have assumed that his own greatness and charisma had won over the king and his princes, but he gave the credit to God. We, too, should be grateful to God for our success and not think that we did it in our own power.

BIBLE READING: Romans 12:1-21

KEY BIBLE VERSE: Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other. (Romans 12:10)

GIVING HONOR IS BETTER THAN RECEIVING HONOR.

We can honor others in one of two ways. One involves ulterior motives. We honor our bosses so they will reward us, our employees so they will work harder, the wealthy so they will contribute to our cause, the powerful so they will use their power for us and not against us. God's other way involves love. As Christians, we honor people because they have been created in God's image, because they are our brothers and sisters in Christ, and because they have a unique contribution to make to Christ's church. Does God's way of honoring others sound too difficult for your competitive nature? Why not try to outdo one another in showing honor? Put others first!

BIBLE READING: Exodus 20:1-26

KEY BIBLE VERSE: Honor your father and mother. Then you will live a long, full life in the land the LORD your God will give you. (Exodus 20:12)

SIDE BY SIDE COMPARISONS

How people deal with their strengths and weaknesses.

DRIFTERS/ORDINARY

Do whatever comes naturally. Think everyone should act the way they do.

PURSUERS

Play to their Strengths to pursue their projects, goals, and dreams.

ACHIEVERS

Play to their strengths. Strengthen their weaknesses. Balance strengths and weaknesses with learned behavior.

EXTRAORDINARY

Play to their strengths. Strengthen their weaknesses. Balance Strengths and weaknesses with learned behavior. Partner with people who have strengths that compliment their weaknesses.

TAKE ACTION

1. List what you believe are your greatest strengths from your dominant and sub-dominant personality types.

2. List what you believe are your greatest weaknesses from your dominant and sub-dominant personality types.

3. Write down what you believe are some of the best ways you can strengthen or compensate for your natural weaknesses.

4. List what you believe are the personality types for your spouse, each of your children, your boss, and those with whom you work most closely with.

5. In light of their personality types, review and write down what you believe will be the best ways to motivate, encourage and communicate with each member of your family and with the people you work with.
