



Communication Theory

Christian Communication

Intersected with the Christian Life

Session 2: Personality Theory

Introduction

Watch the [video](#) by the famous and funny YouTubers Kim and Penn Holderness, “Introvert vs. Extrovert Translator.” In what ways does American culture value extroverts more than introverts?

Personality Theory

Matthew 10:2–4

Devotional Thought

When Matthew lists the twelve disciples, he highlights two disciples for something other than their name—Matthew, “the tax collector,” and Simon, “the Zealot.” In Jesus’ day, tax collectors supported the Roman government. The Zealots were Jewish revolutionaries who wanted to violently overthrow Rome. Yet Jesus unites these two people with two different personalities and backgrounds together in a group that went on to accomplish great things for Christ. So too in the church today, love for Jesus’ mission and love for each other will always win out over personality.

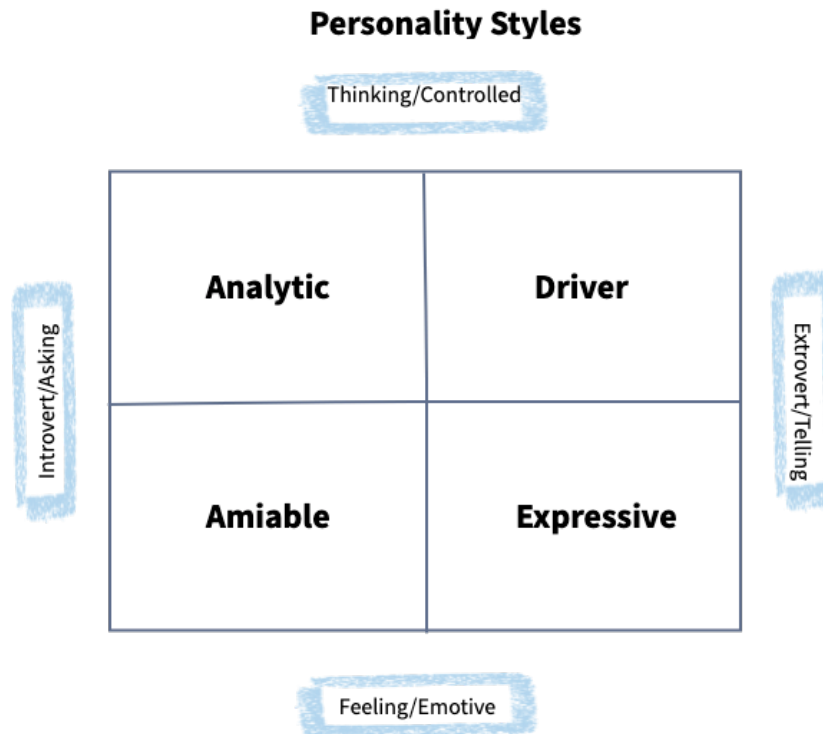
Theoretical Explanation

The categories of “introversion” and “extroversion” began with Carl Jung’s psychoanalytic theory in the early twentieth century. (Carl Jung was a student of Sigmund Freud.) Jung defined extroverts as those who turn their psychic energy outward, while introverts direct it inward. Jung did not believe introversion was necessarily a bad thing; it simply describes where someone finds energy. Modern personality tests—such as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) or the DISC (Dominance, Influence, Steadiness, Conscientiousness) profile—use Jung’s dichotomy along with other dichotomies. In 2012, Susan Cain wrote the *New York Times* bestseller, *Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can’t Stop Talking*, which sought to explore how American culture is predisposed toward an ideal of extroversion and to reclaim the role of introverts in society. Now “introverts” and “extroverts” are part of common vocabulary.¹

¹ Summarized from the literature review in Grant Hagan, “Quiet in the Pulpit: A Qualitative Study of Introverted Pastors,” Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary thesis, 2023, 4–9.

Discussion

1. **Select** where you personally fall (most of the time) in the following chart.
2. **Gather** together with those who have the same personality style as you.
3. **Discuss:** “What do you wish other people in the church would know more about you? How do you want to be perceived? What stereotypes do you want to be laid to rest?”
4. **Be prepared** to share your thoughts with the entire group.



Description of Characteristics: Do you tend toward ...

Introversion/Asking	Extroversion/Telling
Recharge in solitude Live the inner life Spend less effort to influence others State opinion carefully Exert little pressure on others Softer, slower, less eye contact, subtle gestures	Recharge with people Live the outward life Spend more effort to influence others State opinion strongly Exert more pressure on others Louder, faster, more eye contact, big gestures
Thinking/Controlled	Feeling/Emotive
Follow your head Rational and intellectual Guarded in emotional expression Prefer facts and details Limit small talk Limited vocal inflection	Follow your heart More emotional and empathic Express emotion and react to others' emotions Prefer stories and jokes Lots of small talk Much vocal inflection

Respond to the introvert vs. extrovert debate in churches. What do introverts need to do out of selfless love? What do extroverts need to do out of selfless love? Pick as many as time allows:

1. "I don't want to be part of a growth group. I don't like being around people. It's draining."
2. "I don't want to do evangelism. That's for extroverts to do."
3. "I don't want to volunteer. I prefer to just sit back and let other people take the lead."
4. "Why don't other people step up more? It seems like a few of us are the only ones who makes things happen around here. We're starting to get burned out."
5. "Why do some people just leave right when church ends? The Sunday morning vibe is no-fun and boring."
6. [During a call meeting] "We need an outgoing, gregarious pastor who is friendly and can meet people out in the community. We don't need a quiet, studious pastor who sits in his office all day."

Conclusion: Put it into Practice!

Any church is filled with people of various personality types who need to work together to accomplish the mission of the church. Envision being in a growth group or social setting at church filled with people who do not share your personality. **Simulate this situation** by doing the following:

1. Gather into new groups filled with people of different personality styles (see above).
2. Have a conversation with people of different personality styles.
3. Begin by asking, "Tell me more about yourself. I'd really be interested in hearing about how you see your role at Redeemer."
4. Shift the conversation around naturally so that each person has a chance to talk.
5. Analyze how the conversation(s) went as a group and provide feedback for everyone.