

INTRODUCTION

We’re going to talk about God’s personality profile in this message. We all know people have different personality types. I’ve always admired those who could say the right thing at the right time. I’m not really that way. I find myself often reviewing conversations thinking, “I should have said something like this or that.”

I heard story about a college student who was a quick thinker, and could say the right thing at just the right time. This student was working in the produce department of a grocery store. He was arranging the fresh vegetables when a little old lady came up and asked him if he would sell her half a head of lettuce. He rolled his eyes and said, “Ma’am I don’t know if we sell half-heads of lettuce, let me go ask the manager.”

He took off down the aisle looking for the manager. He went up one aisle and down another until he finally found the manager at the other corner of the store. He said, “Sir, there’s some idiot over there who wants to buy half a head of lettuce.” He didn’t realize the little lady was pretty spry, and that she had followed him step for step. Just as he was speaking, he caught a glimpse of her out of the corner of his eye and said, “Sir, there’s some idiot over there who wants to buy half a head of lettuce...and this dear lady wants to buy the other half!”

They took care of the customer, and the manager realized the college kid was pretty sharp so he asked him, “Son, where are you from?” He said, “Sir, I’m from Minneapolis, Minnesota. Home of the world’s ugliest women, but also home of the world’s best football players.” The manager said, “Son, my wife is from Minneapolis.” Without missing a beat the kid responded, “Really, what team did she play for?”

If everybody had the same personality, life would really be boring. Many of us have taken personality tests to help us understand our personality types. For years, psychologists devoted their study to abnormal personalities. But in 1928 a Harvard educated psychologist named William Moulton Marston wrote a book entitled *Emotions for Normal People* (who’s normal?) Marston wasn’t only a psychologist; he was also the creator of the DC Comics character Wonder Woman. William Marston was the first to suggest that most people fall into one of four general personality types. This has become know as the DISC Personality Profile. Over 50 million Americans have taken tests to determine where they fall on the DISC grid. You can’t pass or fail the test, and there’s no good or bad personality type—just different.

People who score high in “D.” which stands for “Dominant or Driving.” tend to be fast-paced and task-oriented people. Those who are “I’s” which stands for “Influencing or Inspiring” are fast-paced and people-oriented people. If you’re an “S” which stands for “Stable or Steady” you will be slower-paced and people-oriented. People who are “C” which stands for “Compliant or Correct” have a tendency to be slower-paced and task oriented.

By understanding your personality type and the type of those you live and work with, you can be a more effective friend and co-worker. For instance, whenever I take the DISC test, I learn that I am a high “I.” I’m faced paced, but people-oriented. If you wanted to have a productive personal relationship with me, you should be interested in my personality type.

Does God have a personality? He’s not really a person; God is Spirit. However, the Bible teaches that God has many personal characteristics; these are often called the attributes of God. Even though God isn’t a person, He has a personality based upon these personal qualities. God wants to have a personal relationship with you that is real and growing. If you want to know God and love God, you should be interested in learning what He’s like.

In these two short verses, the Apostle Peter describes what God is like. Let’s read II Peter 3:8-9.

“But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousands years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”

In these two short, powerful verses Peter helps us discover God’s personality profile. Let’s learn four things about God’s personality:

1. GOD IS INFINITE

We read in verse 8 “With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousands years are like a day.” I received an email from Kyle Glover last week. His 6-year-old son asked him a question about God he couldn’t answer. Brandon’s question was, “Did God make himself?” That’s a pretty good question coming from a 6-year-old! I wrote back and told him God didn’t make Himself, because there has never been a time when God didn’t exist. The scripture I shared with them was Psalm 90:2. “Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.” (Psalm 90:2)

We are finite people. It’s hard for us to even grasp the concept of an eternal God. Our lives are defined by beginnings and endings. But God didn’t have a beginning and He’ll never have an ending. When the Bible says God is infinite, here’s the plain meaning: God isn’t limited by time or space. He doesn’t wear a watch. He’s never been late—or early. God doesn’t occupy any space, yet He occupies it all. He’s never had to stop and ask for directions because He’s never been lost.

I heard about a guy talking to God. He said, “God, can I ask you a question?” God said, “Sure.” The man said, “What is a million years to you?” God said, “A million years is but a second to Me.” The man then asked, “God what’s a million dollars worth to you?” God said, “A million dollars are but a penny to Me?” The man said, “Well, then God, would you give me a penny?” God said, “Sure. In a second.”

There are three words often used to describe the unlimited infinity that is part of God’s personality. These three words all have the word “omni” in them. *Omni* means “all, total, complete.” The Bible teaches that He is omnipresent. God’s presence is not limited. When you’re at home, you can’t be here at church, and when you’re here at church, you can’t be at the lake. God doesn’t have that limitation. He’s everywhere. He is also omnipotent. God’s power is

not limited. I can lift a dumbbell weighing a hundred pounds, but I can't lift one weighing a thousand pounds. There is a limit to what we can do, but God doesn't have that limitation. Third, He is omniscient. God's understanding is not limited. There are a lot of things I don't know. In fact, my brain is so limited I'll probably never know one millionth of one percent of everything there is to know. But God knows it all. He's not limited in any of the ways we are. He is infinite.

Some children were lined up in the cafeteria of a Catholic elementary school for lunch. At the head of the table was a large pile of apples. Someone had written a note and placed it next to the apples. It read, "Take only one apple, God is watching." Moving through the line, to the other end of the table, was a large pile of chocolate chip cookies. One little boy wrote his own note and snuck it next to the cookies, "Take all the cookies you want, God is watching the apples." Because God is infinite, He doesn't have any trouble watching the apples and the cookies at the same time!

2. GOD IS PATIENT

In verse 9 we learn that "The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you..." We live in a generation of impatient people. If you don't believe it, try this social experiment. The next time you're the first car sitting a traffic light, wait three seconds after the light turns green before you accelerate. One Mississippi, two Mississippi... Before you can get to three I predict two things will happen. First, the car behind you will start blowing its horn, and two; I'll probably be the one behind you blowing my horn!

We live in a generation of angry people who possess hair-trigger, explosive tempers. God gets angry, but He is patient. He is slow to anger. The Bible says, "The Lord is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love." (Psalm 145:8) This means God isn't slow in keeping His promises.

Don't mistake God's patience for slowness. For instance, God has promised to always answer our prayers, but perhaps you've cried out to the Lord with some desperate need, and you've been discouraged because it doesn't seem God has answered your prayer. I had a man tell me one time, "I had a problem, so I decided to try prayer. I prayed a couple of times, and God didn't answer my prayer, so I concluded that prayer doesn't work." "I said, "Really? Once I wanted to know what sleeping on a feather pillow was like, so I put a single feather under my head. After that I decided that feather pillows aren't soft." A single prayer is no better indication of the effectiveness of prayer than a single feather indicates the softness of a feather pillow. It takes thousands of feathers to make a soft feather, and it takes thousands of prayers to demonstrate how powerful prayer really is.

You may be in the middle of a desperate situation right now, and you've cried out to God for help, and you may think God hasn't answered your prayer. You may be asking, "Why doesn't God respond?" You may wonder, "Is He ignorant?" Doesn't He KNOW what I'm feeling? He's not ignorant. The Bible says, "His understanding has no limit." (Psalm 147:5) He knows. Then you may wonder, okay then "Is He indifferent? Maybe He knows, but He doesn't care." No, the Bible says we can "cast our cares on the Lord, for He cares for you." (I Peter 5:7) Well, if He knows, and He cares, maybe God is just too busy for me, so you wonder, "Is He too involved?"

No, Jesus said in Luke 12:6 that God notices when a little sparrow falls to the ground. If He is not too busy to attend the funeral of every little bird, He's never too busy for you. No you've got to understand God's delays are not God's denials! You want God to answer your prayer right now! ASAP! We are like children in the back seat on a trip asking, "Are we there yet? Are we there yet?" We keep saying, "When are you going to answer my prayer?" And the Bible says God does everything perfectly in His time. He is patient, and He knows timing is much more important than time.

3. GOD IS LOVING

Not only does the Bible teach that God is love, but we also know it is part of His personality to be loving. It says in verse 9 that He is "...not wanting anyone to perish..." The Bible teaches in hundreds of verses that God's personality is one of love and kindness. There is a Hebrew word in the Old Testament used to describe God's personality—it's never used to describe a person. The word is *chesed*, and it appears more than 180 times. Sometimes it's translated as "kindness" and sometimes as "mercy." But it's a word that combines love and kindness so it is most often simply translated as "loving-kindness." For instance the Bible teaches, "The Lord appeared to us in the past saying, "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness." (Jeremiah 31:3)

When the Bible teaches that God is loving, it means God doesn't want anyone to perish. The word "perish" doesn't just mean to die physically. It means to perish eternally in a place the Bible calls hell. Hell was never intended for human habitation. Jesus said in Matthew 25:41 that hell was "prepared for the devil and his angels." God doesn't intend for anyone to go to hell.

Just because God *wants* something to happen, doesn't necessarily mean it *will* happen. God's will is *not* automatically done on earth. That's why Jesus taught us to pray, "Thy will be done on earth as it's done in heaven." God's will is always done completely and fully in heaven, but we have to pray for it to be done on earth, and then we have to DO God's will here.

Jesus wanted the people in Jerusalem to accept Him as their Lord. He wanted it so much He stood over Jerusalem and wept. But even though He wanted it, that didn't mean it happened. God has given each of us a free will. You can choose whether to obey or disobey God. God doesn't want you to go to hell. He loves you so much He sent His only begotten son, so that IF you believe in Him you won't PERISH, you'll have eternal life. But He won't force you to believe in Jesus.

What kind of mechanical God would He be if all He had to do were push a button in heaven and you'd fall on your knees and repent? He wants you to choose to accept His love and to love Him in return. The Bible says, "This is good and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ." (I Timothy 2:3-5)

Because God is loving, He wants and is willing for every person on this planet to be saved. But each person must come to an understanding that there is *one* God and only *one* mediator between God and man: Jesus. And if people refuse to accept this, then they are rejecting God's love, and

by their own refusal, they are breaking God's will for their lives.

4. GOD IS JUST

The Bible says in verse 9 that God is "...not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance." God is just. You may wonder, "just what?" The word "just" can be used as an adverb, "I'm just about finished with this message." Or it can be used as an adjective to describe the quality of righteous justice. God's justice is perfect. He is a just and righteous God.

Americans have always been fascinated by high-profile trials. Whether it was the Scopes Monkey Trial, or the Lindbergh kidnapping Trial, O.J. Simpson, and now, Michael Jackson. Opinion polls reveal a majority of Americans believe O.J. was guilty, but he is walking free. And whatever the outcome of the Michael Jackson trial, there will be people who are convinced the verdict was incorrect. As good as our judicial system is, it's not perfect.

It's possible to commit a crime and escape human justice. Legal experts will tell you even though you're guilty; there are theoretically five ways you may never be punished for your crime. First, the crime may go undetected. Second, you could leave the area of jurisdiction for the crime. Third, you may be arrested and charged, but the judicial process fails and you may be released on a technicality. Fourth, you may be arrested and found guilty, but you may escape before the punishment begins. Or fifth, you could die before the punishment is received.

But God's law has no loopholes. His judgement is perfect. The Bible says, "Do you think you will escape God's judgement? Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance, and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you to repentance? But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself when his righteous judgement will be revealed." (Romans 2:3-4)

There is no way to escape His punishment. You may think just because your life is pretty smooth right now that you're getting away with it, but there will be a payday someday. You have haven't escaped God's judgement, you've only delayed it. If you aren't a Christian, my advice to you is to make sure you're on a fat-free diet, exercise regularly, and have frequent physical check ups. Try to live as long as you can because that's the only way you will delay judgement.

God is just. The plain meaning of this facet of God's personality is: God won't excuse those who refuse to repent. God is holy and we are sinful. The only way we can approach God is to be willing to repent. "Repent" means to change your mind and change your behavior. It means to "turn around."

If you're a soldier marching and you hear the drill instructor say, "About face!" you would know to turn around. The Bible says in our natural state, all of us are going in the wrong direction. Jesus said there is a broad highway that leads to destruction and that many people are traveling on it. It's a road that leads to hell, but the scary thing is those who are on this highway don't know it leads to hell. The Bible says in Proverbs 14:12, "There is a WAY that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death."

But to every person God says, “About face!” That’s His call to repentance. You must turn from sin and turn toward God. God is not wanting anyone to perish, but for all to come to repentance.

CONCLUSION

God is infinite. God is patient. God is loving. But don’t forget, God is just. Remember, the context of these two verses have to do with the Second Coming of Jesus. Why is God delaying the return of Christ? There are people who make jokes about it. “Where is this second coming???” Peter compared the Day of the Lord with the flood during the time of Noah. There’s a reason God is delaying His judgement—it’s because He wants to give you and others more time to repent. The same was true about the great flood.

Here’s a Bible trivia question: “Who was the man in the Bible who lived to be older than anyone else?” If you said, “Methuselah lived to be 969 years old,” you’d be right. Can you imagine attending Methuselah’s last birthday party? You could have seen the light from the candles on his cake 7 miles away! People often wonder how and why people lived such long lives before the flood. Some experts suggest many of life-shortening diseases and germs weren’t around before the flood. But the *real* reason Methuselah lived to be so old is because he is an example of God’s patience. When you add up some of the numbers in Genesis you can learn an amazing lesson about God’s patience.

The Bible says, “When Methuselah had lived 187 years, he became the father of Lamech. Altogether, Methuselah lived 969 years and then he died.” (Genesis 5:25-27) Back then parents gave their children names that carried a meaning. Enoch was Methuselah’s father. Enoch walked with God and Jude writes that Enoch was a preacher of righteousness. He must have known judgement was coming because he named his boy Methuselah, which means, “When he is dead it (the flood) shall come!” “Muth” means “death” and “Shalak” means “to bring something.” So his name carried the idea that his death would bring about something important.

I can imagine every time little, When-I-die-judgement-will-come got sick as a boy, the people probably panicked! But Methuselah didn’t die for 969 years. He was Noah’s grandfather, and his life is an example of the patience, mercy, and grace of God.

Here’s what we know: Methuselah fathered Lamech when he was 187. (Genesis 9:25) Lamech fathered Noah when he was 182. (Genesis 9:28) The Flood came when Noah was 600 years old. (Genesis 7:6) So when you add up $187 + 182 + 600$, you get 969 years. That let’s us know Methuselah died the year of The Flood! The Jewish Talmud even suggests Methuselah died seven days before the flood.

What’s the point? When some people learn about the great flood that killed all the people and animals except those on the ark, they tend to think, “What kind of mean, angry, hateful God would do that? I don’t want to believe in a God like that.”

But Methuselah shows us that for almost 1,000 years, God warned the people to repent. He kept Methuselah alive longer than any man in history because He is a patient God who is slow to anger. When you understand old Methuselah, you’ll understand more about God’s personality

profile. God is a God of patience, who is slow to anger, and quick to forgive. But while there is no limit to His power and wisdom, there IS a limit to His patience.

You may be reading this today and God is saying to you. “I love you. I want to have a personal relationship with you. I’m giving you time to repent of your sins and turn to Me in faith. Today is just another example of My patience.” Will you place your faith in Him today?

OUTLINE

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Meaning: God isn't limited by time or space

2. GOD IS PATIENT

"The Lord is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love." *Psalm 145:8*

Meaning: God isn't slow in keeping His promises

3. GOD IS LOVING

The Lord appeared to us in the past saying, "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness." *Jeremiah 31:3*

Meaning: God doesn't want anyone to perish

"This is good and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ." *1 Timothy 2:3-5*

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"Do you think you will escape God's judgement? Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance, and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you to repentance? But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself when his righteous judgement will be revealed." *Romans 2:3-4*

Meaning: God won't excuse those who refuse to repent



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For the Joy...
Pastor David Dykes