

The Spirituality of Personality Types¹

Extravert—Outgoing, likes the world of people and action

Introvert—Quiet, likes the inner world

Extrovert spirituality can be described as energetic and outgoing. Introvert spirituality can be described as quiet and individual. Spiritual extraverts prefer praying in a group to praying individually. Spiritual introverts prefer to pray quietly. They like a place far from other people and distractions. Spiritual extraverts prefer group Bible study with lots of opportunity for discussion and sharing. Spiritual introverts prefer to study by themselves, or, if in a group, prefer a lecture.

Extraverts and introverts evangelize differently as well: Extraverts can be more realistically expected to approach strangers, visit in the homes of people they have never met, talk in front of groups and so on. Introverts will evangelize more quietly, often with people to whom they have already been introduced, and in a much more low-key manner.

Sensate—literal, likes details, the precise and routine

Intuitive—Imaginative, good brainstormer, can see the big picture

A spiritual sensate tends to be more concrete, literal and specific. The focus is the things of the moment. A spiritual sensate understands the doctrines and duties of the faith in a matter-of-fact way. A spiritual intuitive tends to take an expansive view of things. Take anything specific—a point in the liturgy, a specific Bible passage, a doctrine, whatever is happening at the moment—and he or she will use this as the jumping-off point for speculation, imagination, a search for possibilities, meanings, interpretations and applications. Fantasy, imagery and parable all intrigue the spiritual intuitive, while literal, precise definitions often leave him or her unmoved.

Spiritual sensates tend to focus more on specific prayer requests. They tend to like prayer lists and don't find them confining. Specific prayer exercises, that is to say, models of prayer or ways to go about praying are sometimes helpful, especially to sensates who are also judges. A spiritual intuitive at prayer is very different. Lists can often be confining. Often a spiritual intuitive will start praying and go on to another topic, which then suggests another topic and so on. In worship, a spiritual sensate tends to be matter of fact, as in his or her prayer life. It should be simple and done right. Worship need not be ornate or fancy. Spiritual intuitives want their worship not only to instruct the fact-oriented left brain but also affect the creative right brain. They don't just want to be taught, they want to be inspired.

Spiritually sensate persons generally approach Bible study with an attitude of "Read it and believe what it says and do what it asks." A spiritual sensate will also often give careful attention to detail. He or she will sometimes employ

¹ Material taken from *Why Can't I Be Me?*, Mark Pearson (Chosen Books: Grand Rapids, 1992)

maps, Bible dictionaries, concordances and commentaries to get the precise, complete meaning. Spiritual intuitives let their creative minds search for the rich, deep, poetic symbolism of Scripture. They know that their gift of seeing the possibilities helps them apply the truths of Scripture to a whole variety of changing circumstances. Spiritual intuitives note that sometimes one can so focus on the precise words that one misses the bigger picture.

In evangelism, spiritual sensates tend to like such methodical, straightforward presentations of the Gospel as the Four Spiritual Laws or the two basic questions of Evangelism Explosion. They want to present the basic facts of the Gospel without a lot of frills. Spiritual intuitives often share the Gospel in less of a detailed, precise outline form. As a result, they are free to go wherever the conversation goes or the Spirit leads.

Thinker—Dispassionate, makes decisions based on the rules

Feeler—Compassionate, makes decisions based on the heart

The area of spiritual thinker-feeler is the one in which we most see people expressing their faith in ways opposite from their everyday personalities. Often the person who normally relates to others as thinker is enraptured with feelings when it comes to God. Prayer for a spiritual thinker often includes contemplation of God. For spiritual feelers, prayer is the chance to spend time with their heavenly Friend. For them, knowing *about* God may be interesting intellectually, but knowing God *personally* is even better.

In worship, a spiritual thinker likes hymns that speak about the truths of the faith and an atmosphere conducive to thinking and contemplating. A spiritual feeler, on the other hand, wants warmth. Bible study to the spiritual thinker is a time to study the doctrinal and ethical truths of the faith. Spiritual feelers want to be moved emotionally in a Bible study. In evangelism, spiritual thinkers and spiritual feelers conduct themselves differently, thinkers appealing more to the mind and feelers more to the heart. In pastoral care, spiritual thinkers attempt to meet the circumstantial need and spiritual feelers attempt to meet the emotional need.

Judge—Predictable, likes structure, order, plans

Perceiver—Flexible, likes spontaneity and informality

The difference between the spiritual judge and the spiritual perceiver can best be described as the difference between framework and freedom, or between structure and spontaneity. In worship and prayer, a spiritual judge will likely be more structured and organized. A spiritual perceiver will likely be more spontaneous and flexible. Spiritual perceivers find structured prayer confining.

In Bible study, a spiritual judge will more likely prefer a well-prepared, logical presentation of the material. The spiritual judge studying alone will often have a plan for study. Spiritual perceivers, on the other hand, often study more informally. They will sit down one night and open to something that strikes their fancy and read until their fancy shifts.