LIBERTY BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

USING THE MYERS-BRIGGS TYPE INVENTORY AS A DISCIPLESHIP TOOL IN MARRIAGE

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by

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LIBERTY BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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ABSTRACT

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Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 2020

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Making disciples is a requirement for every Christian, given by Jesus as His mission. It would be advantageous for spouses to learn to disciple each other. This project will set forth specific guidelines for spouses making disciples of each other, using the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory. Focus will be given to spiritual growth as it relates to two areas within a marriage—communication and conflict resolution. Research will establish the importance of the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory in understanding personalities. Volunteers will be asked to take an assessment similar to the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory and turn in results; they will receive teaching on the results and how to utilize the results in the two areas. Differences observed before and after knowledge of the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory and the exercise will be presented to provide evidence the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory can be used to improve marriages and make disciples within a marriage. This project will allow leaders in ministry to teach couples based on Myers-Briggs Type Inventory results to provide spouses with a tool to disciple each other in a way that effectively leads them to greater intimacy with Christ.

Abstract length: 187 words.
DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to everyone who made sacrifices so I could work on and finish this project.

You know who you are.
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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The Myers-Briggs Type Inventory is a useful tool for assessing the personality type of individuals. The Myers-Briggs Type Inventory reveals how a person approaches the environment intellectually and attitudinally and how a person processes what is happening around her. The assessment indicates preferences of a person and not just a peculiar way that a person acts or responds without exception. This assessment has been used extensively to reveal to individuals and groups the underpinnings of their thought processes and actions at any given moment. The assessment should not be used to replace biblical truth for how one should live; it should be used in tandem with what scripture says about the individual and her gifts.

Discipleship is not just teaching others to love in a biblical way; it is about loving others in a biblical way. A disciple is someone who, after believing in who Jesus is and trusting Him for salvation and then surrendering to Him, “is committed to practicing the spiritual disciplines in community and developing to their full potential for Christ and His mission.” In a Christian marriage, disciples can first be made at home, with each spouse responsible to disciple the other. The Myers-Briggs Type Inventory can be used to aid the process of discipleship in a marriage. Particularly in the areas of communication and conflict resolution, the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory can allow spouses to gain greater understanding of themselves and their spouses to make needed changes toward the amelioration of the marriage. The assessment may be used to alleviate some problems associated with these two areas and enhance spiritual growth so that

2 Ibid.
3 Dave Earley and Rod Dempsey, Disciple Making is...How to Live the Great Commission with Passion and Confidence (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2013), 28.
discipleship can begin in the home.

The project involved with this thesis will be an overall study on a tool for discipleship in marriage. The project will revolve around observed differences in ways of thinking and acting in spouses who take the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory, are briefly taught about how they might use the results, both in themselves and in their spouses, and are given some ideas on how the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory results may reveal spiritual needs and desires. Measured results will be provided to observe the differences between results before spouses have taken the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory and learned how they can used the information to disciple their spouses and after they take the assessment and put the knowledge gained from the assessment results to use for a period of two weeks. These results will show that the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory is a useful tool for discipleship. It will also show the need for further study and observation, over longer periods of time and with more couples, so that spiritual depth of discipleship in marriage between spouses can be even more greatly enhanced using the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory as a tool for discipleship.

**Rationale for This Project**

The purpose of this project is to show that the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory can be used as one tool for spouses to disciple each other in a marriage. It would be greatly advantageous for spouses to disciple each other; discipleship between spouses would allow them to then go outside the home, into the world, and disciple others as Jesus commanded. There are many reasons why this would be a good idea. If spouses learn to disciple each other, it is possible that the rate of divorce in Christian marriages would decrease. “There is, however, an alternative to divorce. You can gain a better understanding of the person you are married to. Armed with that understanding and a commitment to your spouse you may participate in the transformation of
your marriage.” It is also true that divorce creates a unique burden on children in a marriage, especially with “the curse” of continuing in divorce. Too many couples start marriage deeply in love and then eventually get to the point where both spouses cannot even stand to be around each other. Some of these spouses are unhappy and those who are willing to work at it would like for things to change for the good in the marriage. Therefore, working at a marriage by using a personality inventory should bring about change and the “happiness factor” in Christian marriages would be expected to increase. Discipleship within a marriage using a personality inventory would also provide spouses with an opportunity to raise children in an environment of evaluation and understanding of others’ ways of doing things. It sets an effectual example in place for children, which is important since they are always watching their parents and learning how to live by the example parents set. It would also allow for discipleship at home to be the prototype, so family members are better equipped to disciple others outside the home. Finally, peace at home and in a marriage might provide for greater ministry accomplishments as a family and in the world—toward the mission of Christ.

The first and most important idea of this project is that spouses understand the importance of being able to disciple each other toward greater intimacy with Christ. This may not on the surface seem complicated and in fact, may seem obvious to some. There is, however, seemingly few avenues, programs, or even materials geared toward such an endeavor. If a

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7 Ibid.
8 John Trent, *Breaking the Cycle of Divorce*, 145.
personality inventory could aid a couple who wishes to advance the cause of Christ through discipleship of their spouses, it is left only to decide which personality inventory would be best. There are many from which to choose. Pienaar looked extensively at various personality theories to expose how they are used in marriage counseling. He also considered various marriage counseling approaches, none of which used personality theory in a definitive way. He then unfolded a unique approach to marriage counseling that included using the Myers Briggs Type Indicator. This project will show that using the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory as an intentional tool for spiritual growth, both in one’s self and as a way of better understanding one’s spouse, is one way for spouses to disciple each other.

Following is an example of what churches offer to resource couples in their marriages. The example (and most examples of what churches offer for spouses, in fact) is not a bad idea. The point is that churches seldom offer something that includes a consideration of personality in marriage resources.

**Marriage Group Study** – begins this Sunday, February 16. Couples, be sure to join us for *The Art of Marriage* this Sunday from 6:30 – 7:45 PM in Room 104. This is a 6-week study on Sunday evenings led by Doug and Susie Peters. Please sign up on your Connection Card this Sunday or email scott@certainchurch.org if interested, so that we can order enough study guides:

*Love Happens: God’s Purpose
*Love Interrupted: Communication & Conflict
*Love Fades: Overcoming Isolation
*Love Sizzles: Experiencing Real Intimacy
*Love Dances: Fulfilling Our Responsibilities
*Love Always: Leaving a Lasting Legacy

One has to wonder if any of the topics for this particular marriage study takes personality into account.

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9 Jan Adriaan Pienaar, “The Integration of the Myers and Briggs Type Indicator in a Marriage Counselling Approach” (PhD diss., University of South Africa, 2004), 3.

10 Beverly Schumacher, “This Week from Pastor Ernie,” e-mail to All Church Parishioners, February 11, 2020 (10:50 a.m. EST). Names have been changed.
account. It could be argued that God’s purpose for marriage is to make each spouse more holy. This can happen as each loves the other by responding in a way that takes personality into account. Communication and conflict (which is an interesting although coincidental alignment of topics with this author’s current project) are ostensibly dependent on personality. Isolation, and especially whether it is considered good (for an introvert) or bad (for an extrovert), needs to be understood in light of varying degrees of need of it by every person. Greater intimacy will come about only when people understand both themselves and the other. Responsibilities can be determined by biblical justification of roles within a marriage, but they also can be determined by a knowledge of who prefers what and why they prefer it. Leaving a lasting legacy can certainly be accomplished by a couple remaining married and content, developing a true understanding of each personality and working toward peace and understanding in the home, and ultimately, by spouses developing disciples in the home first in order to move outward in their pursuit of helping to fulfill the Great Commission.

In the example given above, marriage study group members should be implored to incorporate knowledge of personalities as a key component to accomplishing every other stated objective in the above example and in most marriage exercises. It could be the most useful tool for spouses to use, after the Bible itself. It would not matter how long a couple had been married or how many children they had. What matters is the willingness of spouses to grow spiritually and work to help their spouses grow spiritually as well. Even if a couple has struggled for years in their marriage, their marriage can be transformed into something new, something good, if they

begin to love each other God’s way. God’s way to love is to sacrifice for the other. Learning about one’s own and a spouse’s personality and then using that personality knowledge to find ways to better understand, encourage, and nurture a spouse can be an effective way to love by making sacrifices.

**Statement of the Problem**

Divorce rates for people in the United States fall in the 30-37 percent range, with one particular reliable median stating the actual number is actually less than 32 percent. Even those in the church, according to one survey, have a 22% divorce rate. Although not as high as is often quoted, this still-high rate of divorce among people who generally have biblical convictions against divorce (i.e. Christians) is too high. “Although it appears that Americans like to be married,” problems abound. The problems could be partially explained by the lack of understanding that each person has of his/her own and the spouse’s personalities. This is also complemented by the tendency to blame problems in the marriage on shortcomings or sin in a spouse rather than on a difference in ways of seeing or understanding situations. A better understanding of personalities between spouses would allow greater understanding specifically in communication and during conflict resolution in a marriage. More effective communication and more biblical conflict resolution in a marriage will allow each spouse to exhibit biblical values when communicating and when trying to resolve conflict, allowing for spiritual growth.

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14 Ibid., 74-75.

for both spouses.

Even when divorce does not occur, a marriage can be full of irritations for both spouses because of what each spouse would consider bad habits on the part of the other.\(^\text{16}\) Even in marriages in the church, wives often express the need for greater intimacy and love from their husbands and husbands express the need for more respect and understanding from their wives.\(^\text{17}\) Communication may often be impeded and conflict resolution coping mechanisms may be lacking in marriages; rather than each spouse having a mutual understanding of the other person and the issues involved, each person lacks understanding of the other and consequently may be unable to find a solution that works for both sides. There are many resources available to teach the body of Christ how to communicate well and resolve conflict well.\(^\text{18}\) Very few sources are available, however, to teach spouses in the body of Christ how to interact well with each other based on personality. Often, even when a personality assessment is used in pre-marital counseling, it is used merely for briefly observing differences between people rather than fleshing out the differences to attempt to come to a better understanding of how to use them in advantageous ways in the marriage.\(^\text{19}\) The differences seem to rarely be used (if at all) to encourage spouses to understand more about each other for the purpose of discipleship in the marriage. Follow up to pre-marital counseling also will probably not include a reminder of the


\(^{17}\) Ibid., 17-19.

\(^{18}\) One need only go to any Christian bookstore to see the large number of books available to resource people in these issues. One can also go to a web site such as christianbook.com and search for “marriage,” “communication in marriage,” or “conflict in marriage” to see pages and pages of available resources on these topics.

\(^{19}\) Gary Hahn, interview by author, Indianapolis, March 20, 2020. Participant noted this was true for him and his wife and as a pastor in the church, he stated he believed this was generally true.
Myers-Briggs Type Inventory results and how they can be used in the marriage.

It is also a problem that the Church does not advocate for spouses discipling each other. Why this is true is unknown. The most often used “method” of spiritual growth in the church involves small groups (68%), Sunday school (24%), one-to-one mentoring (15%), and classes (11%). In spite of the number of people who seem to desire to grow spiritually, 60% “have no sense of what they want to achieve or become.” It may actually be true that more people need to understand both the importance of discipleship and one way to achieve it in marriage.

What may be lacking in teaching these topics in marriages is the knowledge to understand how personality type affects everything a person does, including interacting within a marriage. A greater understanding of personality types within a marriage may be key to allowing spouses to communicate in ways that lend sensitivity to the other person and to resolve conflict in ways that take into consideration how the other person perceives information and makes judgments about that information. This greater understanding of the other person and applied techniques relating to personality for nourishment of the marriage can then lead to spiritual growth, facilitated by each spouse with the other, as knowledge of personality increases.

**Statement of Limitations**

- This project does not cover other possible reasons for the limitations within marriages: lack of full understanding of the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory, other assessments such as Strength-Finders, spiritual gifts, experiences, upbringing, number of children, how many marriages or how long a couple has been married, age of participants, gender, and

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21 Ibid., 36.
pathology.

- This project is limited to Christians and when both spouses are professing Christians.
- This project will not teach communication or conflict resolution techniques, which are also important.
- This project will not consider a long-term approach, including a loss of interest in or knowledge of personality theory that may decrease awareness and ability to continue using it as a tool for discipleship.
- Personality is not the only factor in the spiritual growth of any person, including a spouse.
- This project does not consider the limitations of the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory.
- No statements are being made about the validity of the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory, only that personalities are a factor for all persons to consider and in which to grow.

Terminology Defined

It is important that the reader understands the terminology used for this project in the same way the author intends the terminology to be understood. This common understanding will prevent a misunderstanding of what is being communicated and allow the focus to remain on the results of the project. Terminology that will be defined include psychological type, profile, preference, discipleship. A brief summary of the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory will also be provided and specific results relating to the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory will be defined.

“Psychological type is a theory of personality developed by Swiss psychiatrist Carl G. Jung to explain the normal differences between healthy people. Based on his observations, Jung concluded that differences in behavior result from people’s inborn tendencies to use their minds in different ways. As people act on these tendencies, they
develop patterns of behavior.”22 Psychological type can be defined as “an underlying personality pattern resulting from the dynamic interaction of our four preferences, environmental influences, and our own choices.”23 A person’s type, in simple terms is the combination of the four letters that result from taking the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory; a person’s type will indicate patterns of behavior for that person.

Profile – In the context of the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory, a person’s profile is the same thing as their “type.” The words “profile” and “type” will be used interchangeably throughout this project.

Preference – In the context of the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory, a person’s “preference” is the way that person favors acting. It is a way of going about daily life that is most inherent to a specific personality type and therefore is the way a person is most likely to behave.

Discipleship – More than one “official” definition for “discipleship” will be presented in this paper. These definitions come from learned professionals and are adequate for understanding that to which Christ called His Church before He left the earth the first time He came. For the purpose of this project, an operational definition of discipleship is also provided here. This is necessary… The project centers around spouses using the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory as a tool to disciple each other. The project is not measuring spiritual growth, but whether or not the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory may be an effective tool for spouses to use for discipleship. Therefore, the definition of discipleship for the measurements of this project are as follows: if a wife can use her

22 Isabel Briggs Myers, *Introduction to Type*, 6. Bold was added by this researcher.

23 Ibid., 8.
knowledge of her own and her husband’s personality profile to create an environment that feels less antagonistic or attacking by communicating and resolving conflict in calm and biblical ways, the wife will have discipled her husband. The same definition holds true for the husband.

**Biblical/Theological Basis**

There are two parts to the biblical justification of this project. The first regards the need for a tool to resource the discipleship process in a marriage. Jesus did not advocate for any particular tool, but He did advocate for fruit-bearing by making disciples. In fact, this was one way a disciple was to measure if a person was, in fact, a true disciple. “In various ways, and among all kinds of people, Jesus called men to evaluate the product of their lives. This was the revelation of what they were. In fact, where fruit bearing is seen in its larger context of reproducing the Christ life in human personality, first in ourselves and then in others, practically everything which the Master said and did pointed to this principle.”

It can be argued that in order for the life of Christ to be made a reality in a person’s life, knowledge of her personality is crucial. The “other,” as Coleman points to in this particular context, would be a spouse. One way to better know a person is to take and study the results of a personality assessment. Then it is possible to apply biblical knowledge to the growth of that person.

Knowing ourselves and others better in order to more diligently understand how to put the other first can also be justified biblically. Paul said to “Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves.”

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25 Phil. 2:3. All Scripture references will be taken from the *New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update* (La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995).
also said, “For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think.” 26 Personality assessment can allow a person the acumen to understand why another is doing something and then respond appropriately. It is a way to think of the other first and consider his or her needs above one’s own. Paul also encouraged the church at Thessalonica to “Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing.” 27 There are many ways to encourage and build up others, but one way in particular is to understand the other and work to both encourage the positive components of her personality and encourage growth in the weaker points of the personality. Paul tells believers that “Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.” 28 He also told the Roman Church that they should “Therefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God.” 29 One might wonder if Paul had considered the personalities of persons when he was writing his letters. Even if he did not, however, the pragmatism of understanding personalities in order to live biblical lives of love and acceptance should not be lost. Love itself can include a willingness to know the other person more intimately and more intimacy with understanding can bring more patience, kindness, and a lack of inappropriate behavior. Greater acceptance comes with a greater understanding of who a person is and why she acts the way she does. Grant, Thompson, and Clarke note that the Bible indicates that love has a body and that

26 Rom. 12:3a.
27 1 Thes. 5:1.
28 1 Cor. 13:4-7.
29 Rom. 15:7.
body is called the Church.\textsuperscript{30} It makes sense, then, that the Church needs to act out love in practical ways. This includes spouses; loving each other is not just practical, it is a command and another indication that someone is a true disciple.\textsuperscript{31} Grant, et al. also point out that Isabel Briggs Myers summed up her lifetime of work and named her seminal book on the subject of personality types by calling it \textit{Gifts Differing}, based on Romans 12:6. The attitudes and functions that Jung initially proposed and developed and Briggs and Myers expounded with great clarity, provide a stellar elucidation of Paul’s “teaching on unity in diversity, harmony in tension.”\textsuperscript{32}

It is vital that any apologetic for making disciples at all must include Christ’s enjoining to His Church (through His apostles) that it is her very mission to make disciples. “And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’” \textsuperscript{33} One could argue that a best way to “go” and make disciples is to first start in the home. Disciples make disciples. If spouses start making disciples by making a disciple of their spouses (and of course, then also of their children), not only has each started making disciples, but each is then also better prepared to go out to the nations to make disciples.

Disciples are members of the body of Christ who are growing spiritually. Part of that growth means every disciple has a greater and greater understanding of herself and the people

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{30} W. Harold Grant, Magdala Thompson, and Thomas E. Clarke, \textit{From Image to Likeness: A Jungian Path in the Gospel Journey} (Ramsey, NJ: Paulist Press, 1983), 196.
\item \textsuperscript{31} John 13:35.
\item \textsuperscript{32} W. Harold Grant, Magdala Thompson, and Thomas E. Clarke, \textit{From Image to Likeness}, 1.
\item \textsuperscript{33} Matt. 28:18-20.
\end{itemize}
around her. Understanding oneself and others is not easy, especially when others are very different. Some behaviors of others may even cause a person to wince or become irritated. This can also be useful, however. “Everything that irritates us about others can lead us to an understanding of ourselves.”34 This is similar to the biblical idea that what a person notices in others, that person is probably also doing, albeit in a dissimilar manner. This can be seen in that what a person sees in others, that person sees so clearly and knows because of seeing and knowing herself.35

In an exchange between a lawyer and Jesus in Luke 10:25-28, the lawyer asked Jesus what he needed to do to inherit eternal life. Jesus asked the lawyer in return to tell Him what the law said about this. The lawyer answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself” (v.27). Jesus said this was correct. Jesus was telling the lawyer how important it is for His disciples to love as part of the call to be complete and holy.36 These four parts of every human- heart, soul, strength, and mind- can be related to the four Jungian functions. The heart would be related to feeling, the soul to intuition, strength to sensing, and the mind to thinking.37 Understanding the four functions and the preferences of a person for two of the functions over the other two, should allow one to be able to both give and receive love more adequately. Doing so will go a long way toward the discipleship of another person.

34 Damian Killen and Danica Murphy, Introduction to Type and Conflict (United States: CPP, Inc, 2013, 17. Quote by Carl Jung.
35 Rom. 2:1.
36 Roy M. Oswald and Otto Kroeger, Personality Type and Religious Leadership (Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 1988), 96-97.
37 W. Harold Grant, Magdala Thompson, and Thomas E. Clarke, From Image to Likeness, 185-195.
Finally, one should not miss the promise contained in the command of the Great Commission. Jesus said, “and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”\(^{38}\) In context, Jesus was saying that He would be with His disciples as they are going to make disciples. A disciple of Christ should consider that if she wants Christ to be with her, she should be making disciples.\(^{39}\) A spouse counts.

**Theory Behind the Use of the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory as a Measurement Instrument**

Psychological type is personality theory started by Carl G. Jung to explain the different ways that people use their minds in everyday life. Jung believed that people act in certain ways because of innate propensities; in other words, people act a certain way because personality makeup causes them to do so.\(^{40}\) Katharine Briggs and Isabel Briggs Myers used Jung’s theories to develop the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory to describe 16 personality types.\(^{41}\) The goal during this thesis project is to observe the use of personality types as a tool for spouses to understand themselves and their spouses better and then use that understanding to disciple their spouse. Discipleship will be attained specifically by communicating and resolving conflict in godly ways and gaining greater understanding of the other person so as to exhort her and spur her on to greater love and understanding of others.

The project is considering communication and conflict resolution between spouses, taking into consideration ways each spouse communicates, how the spouse’s personality type may be affecting how he/she communicates, especially during a conflict, and how each spouse can respond in a way that takes personality into consideration and allows the other to respond in

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\(^{38}\) Matt. 28:20b.  
\(^{40}\) Isabel Briggs Myers, *Introduction to Type*, 6.  
\(^{41}\) Ibid., 7.
a godly manner. Ultimately, the question is whether taking into consideration one’s own and a spouse’s type can impact responses and therefore cause discipleship to happen.

According to Myers-Briggs Type Inventory theory, there are four components to each personality and everyone has one preference over the other in each of the four. The four dichotomies describe where someone gets energy and focuses attention (introversion or extroversion), how a person prefers to take in information (sensing or intuition), how a person prefers to make decisions (thinking or feeling), and how a person deals with the world around her (judging or perceiving). People will generally act a certain way every day and develop an understanding of life and ways of thinking that are associated with their type.”

**Literature Review**

**Books**

*Gifts Differing* by Isabel Briggs Myers is the seminal work about the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory. Myers helped develop the inventory with her mother, Katharine Briggs. In this book, Myers sets forth the foundations, intricacies, and practical applications of using the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory and defends the importance of a personality profile. The book is divided into four sections, background and theory, how the preferences affect a person’s personality, how type can be practically put to use in everyday life, and some of the workings in the progress of understanding type. Every chapter centers around an aspect of the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory. Myers’ book is important because it lays the foundation for the ongoing work of

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42 Isabel Briggs Myers, *Introduction to Type*, 8.
43 Ibid.
44 Ibid.
testing the validity and reliability of the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory, putting it to practical use, and for informing people what the mother-daughter team intended from the beginning for the assessment that would make them famous.

**Personality Type and Religious Leadership** by Roy M. Oswald and Otto Kroeger is a book that introduces the concept that personality type is related to positions in the church and how well different profiles fill the positions. They also provide some cautions for giving certain clergy positions to people with personality types that may not fit well with the overall job description. This is important because it conveys the idea that different types even perform differently in various positions and it is fair to expect different outcomes based on personality type. Oswald and Kroeger also provide close links between a person’s spirituality and type, between ways of praying and type, and why it is vital for clergy to understand type, both in themselves and in others.  

46 Otto and Kroeger introduced the idea that Jesus’ mandate to “love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself” could, in reality, correspond to using all four core preferences as set out in the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory.  

47 This is not to say that Jesus was specifically speaking of types as set out in the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory, but that He knew the importance of personalities and differences in people and provided for the separation of types.

**Disciple Making Is… How to Live the Great Commission with Passion and Confidence** by Dave Earley and Rod Dempsey is a book about discipleship. Earley and Dempsey divide the book into four parts as follows: biblical philosophy of making disciples, what it means to be a

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46 Roy M. Oswald and Otto Kroeger, *Personality Type and Religious Leadership*, 96-123.

47 Ibid., 97.
disciple, how to make a disciple, and why discipleship within the context of a local church is so important. Earley and Dempsey make the point early on that believers have no choice except to practice obedience by both developing as a disciple of Christ and then going out to make other disciples. After the philosophy, basics, and methods of discipleship, the authors develop the idea of the importance of church leaders emphasizing the importance of discipleship and what it might look like within the local body of believers. This last emphasis will not be the focus in this project, although this author acknowledges the significance of discipleship within a local church body.

In *Strengthening Marital Intimacy*, Ronald E. Hawkins puts in clear language what a biblical marriage is supposed to look like. He defines intimacy “as oneness with healthy separateness” and he states that intimacy is God’s design for a marriage and should be the goal for every spouse in a marriage. He goes on the state that commitment is the foundation for marriage and he then provides seven commitments that are necessary: to wisdom’s directives, to reality, to God’s sovereignty, to the other person, to the control and enjoyment of sexuality, to communication, and to companioning. Hawkins devotes a chapter for each of the commitments he believes is vital to a biblical marriage. As he develops each commitment, he does so with biblical backup and he relates how each commitment strengthens the intimacy of a marriage. He never uses the words “Myers-Briggs Type Inventory” (or any other personality assessment), but he often incorporates ideas that would encourage spouses to know and understand each other in such a way so as to promote intimacy. These ideas can be supported by the use of the Myers-

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50 Ibid., 33-139.
Briggs Type Inventory in marriage as a way for spouses to remain committed to the marriage and to grow toward greater intimacy. As one example, Hawkins states that “heavenly wisdom thinks of others’ needs.”\textsuperscript{51} He went on to state that as he and his wife placed great importance on meeting the needs of the other, anger disappeared and tranquility appeared in its place.\textsuperscript{52} The point could be made that recognizing the type of a spouse could contribute to being able to consider her needs above one’s own. Hawkins also makes the point that spouses need to disciple each other; he calls it “spiritual enrichment” and states that spouses should always take responsibility for this “spiritual enrichment” in their spouses.\textsuperscript{53}

Gary Smalley’s book \textit{Secrets to Lasting Love} is about how couples can make marriage last a lifetime. His main thesis is not that another book on marriage is needed, but that this book, possibly more than any other book he has written, can help couples thrive in marriage.\textsuperscript{54} His secret lies in five echelons of communication and three essential skills that, he says, will change a couple’s married life. He invites couples to read the book and put the communication techniques and skills for which he is advocating into practice. Then, he says, the ultimate goal of a marriage will be reached; it is deep and lasting intimacy.\textsuperscript{55}

Theses and Dissertations

Jan Adriaan Pienaar, in his dissertation entitled “The Integration of the Myers and Briggs Type Indicator in a Marriage Counselling Approach,” writes about his research aimed at trying

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid., 25.
\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., 38-41.
to understand whether or not personality type affects problems in marriage and if the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory can be used to help alleviate those problems. His research leads him to determine that knowing something about one’s personality promotes good self-awareness. He further finds through his study of existing literature that personality theory can be used in marital counselling and that the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory is a good resource to help couples come to greater self-awareness. Pienaar examines many different ways of doing marriage counselling, none of which use the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory as part of the process. He ultimately develops a way of doing marriage counselling that incorporates the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory as part of the process of counselling. He shows using case studies that the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory does, in fact, help spouses become more aware of themselves and their partners and even proves to be useful for restoring marital relationships.56

Statement of Methodology

This thesis project will show how taking the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory and using knowledge gained through teaching about the results of the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory can facilitate the growth of spouses in understanding themselves and their spouses for the purpose of promoting spiritual growth in each spouse. This project will focus on the two areas of communication and conflict resolution, providing evidence that knowledge of a spouse’s personality type can enhance growth in these two areas toward overall spiritual growth.

1. In chapter one the rationale for this project, the limitations for the project, the biblical and theological basis for this project and the theoretical basis for the use of the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory is discussed. A review of literature pertinent to the topic is presented, as

56 Jan Adriaan Pienaar, “The Integration of the Myers and Briggs Type Indicator in a Marriage Counselling Approach,” 1-285.
well as a statement of methodology for the project.

2. In chapter two a brief history and description of the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory will be given. Definitions of each Myers-Briggs Type Inventory preference will be given, as well as descriptions for four profiles, which are the ones used in two specific case studies. Descriptions for the four profiles will include what communication looks like for those particular profiles and also how those profiles enter into conflict. Descriptions for the four temperaments designated by the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory profiles will be described. Finally, how the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory is typically used will be addressed.

3. In chapter three the definition and importance of discipleship and specifically of discipleship in marriage is discussed. The specific use of the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory in the Church and in marriage will be considered. Communication and conflict resolution within a marriage will be discussed as two areas that can be impacted with knowledge of personalities so that spouses can better understand how their own and their spouse’s personalities affects these two areas. Two case studies relating to communication and conflict resolution within a marriage will be presented. How the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory can be a useful tool for discipleship in marriage will also be considered.

4. In chapter four the methods of the project and the qualitative and quantitative results of the thesis project will be presented. A correlation will be made between knowledge of the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory results and how it can be used for discipleship between spouses and the ability to use the tool for discipleship within a marriage. Lessons learned from the project will be presented. Two specific case studies from the project will be
given to demonstrate the usefulness of putting the results of the Myers-Briggs Type
Inventory and the teaching regarding the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory to practical use in
the marriage.

5. Chapter five will provide a review of the results of the project. The advantages and
disadvantages of using the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory and the need for further study to
observe the effectiveness of using the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory in marriages as a
tool for discipleship will be presented. Recommendations for using the Myers-Briggs
Type Inventory as a tool for discipleship in marriage and a summary conclusion will also
be presented.

Summary

It could be said that both discipleship and marriage in the church today are in crisis. The
rate of divorce in the church is not much different than in the world; in other words, regardless of
which rates are used and why, the rates remain the same inside and outside the church. Jesus
commanded His Church to go into the whole world and make disciples and current statistics
would also indicate that this is not happening. Something must be done. The Church must do
something to resource couples more effectively to grow spiritually within their marriages and
individuals must do something to make sure their marriages survive and thrive. Using a
personality inventory is one way that both of these might be accomplished, and the Myers-Briggs
Type Inventory is one tool that can be used for both. As spouses gain understanding of both their
own and their spouses’ personalities, they are better equipped to understand their spouses,
respond biblically to their spouses, and encourage their spouses toward greater spiritual growth.
As this happens in the home, people will be more adequately equipped to be obedient to the
Messiah by helping fulfill the Great Commission. The world is depending on the Church, even
without knowing it. The Church must, of course, lead in the area of spiritual growth, but Christ’s body must also lead in making marriage work. The reason is simple; “everything rises and falls on leadership.”

CHAPTER 2

History and Description of the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory

Carl Jung established the theory of psychological types and published his theory in a book by the same name. His book, Psychological Types, was translated into English in 1923. Having already begun to work on her own, observing and trying to create a theory on personality, Katharine Briggs spent 20 years after Jung’s book was translated into English, studying his work.1 Katharine, along with her daughter, Isabel Briggs Myers, eventually devised an assessment and they called it the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory. The mother-daughter team believed that studying personality types was a good way to describe differences in personalities between people and that every person, if they knew their own type, could put that to use in their daily lives.

Jung initially believed that personality differences between people could be explained by two basic attitude types, extraversion and introversion.2 Subsequently, however, he decided that there was more to the personality differences between people and he added four mental functions to his typology system. Those four functions were sensation, intuition, thinking, and feeling.


2 Richard M. Ryckman, Theories of Personality (United States: Thomson Wadsworth, 2004), 88-89. Jung used this spelling of “extraversion,” which came to be mostly known as “extroversion.” The latter will be used in this paper, unless used in a quote where the original author used the different spelling.
Katharine Briggs believed Jung was correct in his classification of personality types, but she (and eventually her daughter) also believed that a fourth category could be added to explain how individuals relate on a daily basis to the outside world. As a result of this belief, they added a fourth dichotomy; these two attitudes were judging and perceiving, defined as how a person deals with the outside world. “Although Jung did not explicitly identify this pair of opposites, Briggs and Myers found it to be implicit in his writings.” Jung called the first set of functions, which are sensing and intuition, perceptive functions and the second set of functions, which are thinking and feeling, judging functions. Jung’s labels of these four functions was the reason Briggs and Myers included these categories in the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory; they believed the category originated with Jung even though he did not implicitly state them as such.4

Definitions of Each Myers-Briggs Type Inventory Preference

The first dichotomy in the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory is the E-I dichotomy, a pair that reveals where a person prefers to focus her attention or get energy. People who prefer extroversion (E) prefer to pay attention to the world outside themselves, to the people around them, and what is going on around them, and they receive energy from doing so. They learn best by participating in activities or by talking about topics with people, they are inclined to enjoy the company of lots of people, and they will probably immerse themselves in a lot of different relationships and activities at once. They are energized by large groups of people where they can hold multiple conversations, engage in multiple activities, and often be the center of attention. Extroverts tend to often take the initiative in activities and with others; they act first and reflect


4 Isabel Briggs Myers, Gifts Differing, 39.
 Introverts (I), on the other hand, focus on their internal world. They both focus on and gain energy from their own inward world of ideas, experiences and reflections. They learn best by thinking about topics or about what is happening and they tend to be self-contained and content to work through the necessities of life by reflecting on what is needed. Introverts take the initiative mainly only when something is of significance to them. They think about things first and then act on them later.⁶

The differences between extroverts and introverts may often seem obvious. When information is presented to an extrovert, she will immediately do something with it: thinking types, “tend to criticize or analyze or organize it; feeling types may champion it, protest against it, or try to mitigate it; sensing types may enjoy it, use it, or good naturally put up with it; and intuitive types tend to try to change it.”⁷ When information is presented to an introvert, she will immediately turn inward and begin to reflect on it. Extroverts may generally be more understandable since they are more vocal, but they also may not think enough about a situation and may miss valuable insight. Introverts are less prone to external distractions, but may miss what is going on around them because they too quickly turn inward.⁸ Katharine Briggs called extroverts “afterthinkers” because they have to experience things before gaining any understanding about them.⁹ Briggs called introverts “forethinkers” because, she said, they have

⁵ Isabel Briggs Myers, Introduction to Type, 9.
⁶ Ibid.
⁷ Isabel Briggs Myers, Gifts Differing, 92.
⁸ Ibid., 93-94.
⁹ Ibid., 95.
to first understand what is happening and only then can they do something about it.\(^\text{10}\) She also noted that extroverts are probably easier to know since they more often appear to be effervescent and uninhibited whereas introverts tend toward being diffident and reticent.\(^\text{11}\)

The second dichotomy in the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory is the sensing-intuitive (S-N) preference. This is the dichotomy that Jung referred to as the perceptive function and it reveals how a person takes in information.\(^\text{12}\) People who prefer sensing consider information that is taken in by their five senses as what is valid. They are in the current moment, they like facts, and they acquiesce to what is real and understandable. They take in information in a methodical manner and only then form conclusions based on facts provided by their senses. In other words, they gather parts and then see or form the whole.\(^\text{13}\) They trust experience because they know it to be true.\(^\text{14}\)

People who prefer intuition take in information by looking at the whole first before they parse out the parts. They look at patterns, possibilities, and connections between data and facts. They usually live in the future, seeing possibilities and they remember important facts only as they are connected to the overall picture. They trust inspiration.\(^\text{15}\)

Katharine Briggs stated the difference between sensing types and intuitive types simply as the sensing types prefer reality whereas intuitive types prefer what is possible.\(^\text{16}\) She also noted that intuitives and sensors define intelligence differently. Intuitives may believe they are

\(^{10}\) Isabel Briggs Myers, \textit{Gifts Differing}, 95.

\(^{11}\) Ibid., 96.

\(^{12}\) Isabel Briggs Myers, \textit{Introduction to Type}, 6.

\(^{13}\) Ibid., 9.

\(^{14}\) Isabel Briggs Myers, \textit{Gifts Differing}, 98.

\(^{15}\) Isabel Briggs Myers, \textit{Introduction to Type}, 9.

\(^{16}\) Isabel Briggs Myers, \textit{Gifts Differing}, 98.
more intelligent because information they take in moves quickly to the unconscious and an
answer comes immediately. Sensors do not think so highly of quick answers; they believe
intelligence means something is completely understood based on the surrounding facts and they
take much longer in coming to cogent conclusions.17

The third dichotomy is the thinking-feeling (T-F) pair and it relates to how a person
makes decisions. People who prefer thinking make decisions by considering what is logical and
reasonable and just makes sense. They need to be objective, analyzing issues and looking for
solutions that will apply to other situations or issues that are analogous. They may be seen as
level-headed, even unsentimental, and they believe fairness relates to everyone getting the same
treatment.

People who prefer to make decisions based on the feeling preference are attentive to the
people involved in any decision. They care about the values of people, including their own, and
they consider decisions in light of the impact of the decisions on people. They are seen as
sensitive, considerate, and devoted, and fairness to them means every person is treated according
to what that person needs.18

Katherine Briggs called the person who prefers thinking “impersonal” and noted the
difference between thinkers who think logic is more important and feelers, who believe the
values of people are more important. She also thought feeling types were more likely to be
diplomatic and thinking types more likely to be outright truthful. She stated that both types were
likely to ignore the opposite preference when it seemed to conflict with (thinking) or be

17 Isabel Briggs Myers, Gifts Differing, 101.
18 Isabel Briggs Myers, Introduction to Type, 10.
objectionable to (feeling) their own way of making decisions. Briggs noted that the T-F dichotomy is the only one that is gender specific, in that more women are feeling types than men. She also stated that this does not mean that women are less intelligent than men, that, in fact, people who are intuitive types are more likely to be more intelligent than those who are thinking types. Finally, Briggs noted that thinking types only make good decisions when the facts are in order and the logic is trustworthy and disputes may arise with other thinking types if the “truth” is not the same to both. Feeling types, on the other hand, may not necessarily have disputes with other feeling types since both are merely stating what is valuable to each of them.  

The final dichotomy, the judging-perceiving (J-P) preference, indicates how a person deals with the outside world around them. Some would say this preference is about how a person sees reality. Judging types prefer a scheduled, orderly life; they want to manage life and they are systematic and methodical. They prefer for decisions to be made so they can act on them and move on to the next thing. They usually do not like the stress of procrastination or things being left open-ended.  

People who prefer to deal with the world around them using a perceiving process are more likely to do things extemporaneously, adapt easily to changes, and like options to remain open. They do not want to manage life; they want to experience it. They can easily adapt to changes, even until the last minute, and are invigorated by pressures that may arise while waiting for the last possible moment when something can be done or decisions are made.  

Katharine Briggs stated that people with the judging preference figure out the best way to

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19 Isabel Briggs Myers, Gifts Differing, 109-112.
20 Isabel Briggs Myers, Introduction to Type, 10.
21 Ibid.
do things and then continue to do things that way. They often also know, and may state, what
others should be doing or how they should be doing it. She notes they also like order and
schedules, prefer things to be decided, and may greatly appreciate routine, unless counter-
balanced by strong intuition. People preferring perception, according to Briggs, tend to live in
the present moment even at the risk of leaving something important undone, are always waiting
for new information, and seek to understand others’ point of view rather than adamantly stick to
their own. They are tolerant, knowing their standards may not be the only good standards,
curious, looking for new and interesting ways of seeing or doing things, and adaptable, finding
new ways to accomplish goals when difficulties arise.\(^\text{22}\) Finally, Briggs makes interesting
statements about this dichotomy preference when she states the following: “… readers may have
difficulty evaluating their own JP preference because of an inconsistency between what they feel
they should do, what they actually do, and what they naturally tend to do. It is the natural
tendency that reveals the basic preference. A person’s idea of what is right may be an acquired
ideal, borrowed from another type, and the person’s actual behavior may reflect a somewhat
uncongenial good habit learned from parents or accepted because of the person’s own dogged
efforts.”\(^\text{23}\)

**Descriptions of Temperaments**

David Keirsey and Marilyn Bates noticed in their research of type theory that some
combinations of the letters of the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory have a very tight connection so
that they become the dominant theme in a person’s life and create what they call the four basic

\(^{22}\) Isabel Briggs Myers, *Gifts Differing*, 116-119.

\(^{23}\) Ibid., 119.
temperaments.\textsuperscript{24} This concept simplified the study of the 16 Myers-Briggs Type Inventory types by linking four of these types to each of the four temperaments.\textsuperscript{25} This was a different way of looking at the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory as it focused on just two indicators to determine how people could better understand themselves and others. “One’s temperament is that which places a signature or thumbprint on each of one’s actions, making it recognizably one’s own.”\textsuperscript{26}

The key for Keirsey and Bates was to look at the sensing versus intuitive preferences as the springboard for determining temperament. How people collect data from their surroundings is key to knowing them well and comprehending them so that good communication can ensue. Whether a person sees the forest (N) or the tree (S) or if a glass is half full (N) or half empty (S) is all about how that person takes in the information around her, and thus is the key to the first letter of the temperament pairings.\textsuperscript{27} Likewise, the next letter of the temperament pairing is completely dependent upon the first. If that second letter is S, then it is paired with either the J or P to determine temperament. If that second letter is an N, then it is paired with either the F or the T. Thus, the four basic temperaments are SJ, SP, NF, and NT.\textsuperscript{28}

If one looks more closely at the connection of the pairings, one sees the intuitive (N) takes information in from a more visionary or ideological way and therefore what becomes most important to her is then how she analyzes that data or information. If she looks more objectively, she is an NT (intuitive-thinking) temperament. If, however, she is more apt to view that data

\textsuperscript{25} Roy M. Oswald and Otto Kroeger, \textit{Personality Type and Religious Leadership}, 57.
\textsuperscript{26} David Keirsey and Marilyn Bates, \textit{Please Understand Me}, 27.
\textsuperscript{27} Malcolm Goldsmith and Martin Wharton, \textit{Knowing Me Knowing You} (Great Britain: Biddles Ltd, Guildford and Kings Lynn, 1993), 77.
\textsuperscript{28} Roy M. Oswald and Otto Kroeger, \textit{Personality Type and Religious Leadership}, 57.
subjectively, she will be an NF (intuitive-feeling) temperament. If the first letter of the temperament pairing is an S, that indicates the preference for taking in information is more focused on the reality of the present, what is known. In these instances, what is done with that data becomes the most important. If a person is most apt to take that information and organize and structure it, she will be using her judging function most (J) and will have the SJ (sensing-judging) temperament. When someone evaluates the information gathered by continuing to search for more information, she is perceiving most (P) and therefore has the SP (sensing-perceiving) temperament.29

While one can get a good feel for personality from using these four temperament pairings, it is crucial to keep in mind that the most understanding and full picture is gained only when all four preferences noted in the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory are used.30 “Very simply, temperament determines behavior because behavior is the instrument for getting us what we must have, satisfying our desire for that one thing we live for. The god (or temperament) we were born to has left each of us a hunger that must be fed daily.”31

SJ Temperament

First, the SJ temperament will be reviewed. Making up 38% of the population, the SJ longs for duty and the ability to be useful to those around her. She has no desire to freeload or be dependent upon others as this feels in some way negligent of her duties. She is a giver and caretaker, always looking out for those around her and tending to their needs.32 This is the person

29 Malcolm Goldsmith and Martin Wharton, Knowing Me Knowing You, 77.
30 Ibid.
31 David Keirsey and Marilyn Bates, Please Understand Me, 30.
32 Ibid., 39-40.
that everyone wants in their corner as she is helpful and loyal to the point of exhaustion, though she may, unfortunately, often be taken for granted. The SJ person exists in the here and now, sensing what is in the moment around her based on her five senses; she then acts on those very senses to support and help those around her that may be hurting or in need. She offers practical support and serving, which often causes her to be pulled in more directions than she can fulfill, which can often lead to burnout.33

One strong characteristic of an SJ is her ability to bring about change due to her persuasive nature. While an NT temperament may see a change that is needed, it is often the SJ that can actually maneuver the environment around her to drive that change into action. Another defining feature of the SJ is her internal compass to do what is right. This compels her to what she should or should not do. Amazingly, this causes a positive form of peer pressure, in a sense, as others around her feel the same sense of rules and shoulds versus should nots in terms of the circumstances that surround her that compel her to act morally or socially in a specific manner.34

The SJ lives in a “work ethic.” While neither is bad, the SJ will be dutiful and intentional, working diligently to prepare for what lies ahead, not just for herself, but even for those around her who may fail to prepare themselves. She believes in rainy days and setting aside to prepare for them. She may even tend toward pessimism, but this is part of her drive to expect and plan for the worst. Another contribution the SJ will make to society is in the way she participates in social groupings; she will, however, expect that social entity to take care of her needs in exchange for her participation or membership in that group. While it is the duty of the SJ to serve

33 Roy M. Oswald and Otto Kroeger, *Personality Type and Religious Leadership*, 75.
34 Ibid., 76.
and care for others, she will indeed take note when others lack gratefulness, though the SJ is certain not to ask for it nor expect it.\footnote{David Keirsey and Marilyn Bates, \textit{Please Understand Me}, 41-42.}

An example of an SJ being true to her nature is when she is a guest invited to a party or gathering. One will most often find her looking for ways to be useful or serve, cleaning up or assisting much as if she herself were the host. She will long, however, for others to show appreciation and may sometimes struggle with becoming bitter when her efforts do not bring gratefulness. She often accepts more responsibility and weight than she can possibly bear and will work ensuring the tasks are accomplished at great sacrifice, even if others fail to pull their weight or lean too heavily on the SJ. Though frustrating to the SJ, her sense of duty and responsibility causes her to feel of no use unless she is pushing through to get things done.\footnote{Ibid., 43.} It is, then, the SJ that is stable, reliable, and strong and ultimately keeps society running.\footnote{Ibid., 47.} The adage fitting the SJ is “early to bed, early to rise.”\footnote{Paul D. Tieger and Barbara Barron-Tieger, \textit{Do What You Are: Discover the Perfect Career for You Through the Secrets of Personality Type} (Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Company, 2001), 57.}

SP Temperament

In contrast, the SP is not interested in accomplishing as is the SJ. The SP is most interested in acting to bring about a sense of satisfaction. She is, in fact, compelled to action. She is connected to her five senses and longs to live and experience the reality of the moment around her through her senses. She sees the needs around her in the here and now, continuously looking for opportunities to spring into action and thereby bring self-fulfillment.\footnote{Roy M. Oswald and Otto Kroeger, \textit{Personality Type and Religious Leadership}, 58.} A free spirit, the SP
does not desire to be tied down or obligated to anything other than doing what she wishes, when she wishes.\(^{40}\) For the SP, action is its own end rather than serving some purpose or achievement. She can act on impulses or urges, which causes her to feel truly alive, and give great satisfaction as she releases those actions upon impulses. There is a sense of compulsion driving the SP into action. The compelling may not resolve until the SP has acted on her very impulse. There is no practice or rehearsing, simply action by impulse for the SP, releasing her free spirit and avoiding boredom of the mundane that is the reality for most. She will change up her routine, her work, and her habits for the sake of adventure, embracing randomness in any given moment.\(^{41}\) An SP will always live in the moment at hand, for “to an SP a life of action which repudiates long term goals, objectives or plans is a life at its freest and most intense.”\(^{42}\) An SP is not moving toward a goal. Her goal is found in the action itself, simply doing the action at hand is the completion of her focus. This focus on the action of the moment can sometimes push the SP to continue in the moment beyond all reason, and certainly far beyond the duration through which most other temperaments could persist. For the SP, “A hole is to dig, a door is to open, a hall is to run in, a bell is to ring, a mountain is to climb.”\(^{43}\) And, it is just that simple. There is no desire for closure or completion, only for the process of any given action.\(^{44}\) In a marriage, the SP may master grand gestures but miss the beauty of the everyday moments that are treasured by other temperaments. Planning a grand surprise trip or proposal would come easily for an SP, but remembering to call

\(^{41}\) Ibid., 33.
\(^{42}\) Ibid., 34.
\(^{43}\) Ibid., 35.
\(^{44}\) Ibid., 36.
over her lunch break may never enter her mind. The adage fitting the SP is “eat, drink, and be merry!”

NF Temperament

The intuitive temperaments are the minority in the population, representing about 12% each, compared to the 38% each in the sensing temperaments. This makes the intuitives a little more mysterious and complicated to understand for the majority of people who represent the sensing temperaments. The NF (intuitive-feeling) temperament represents those who are often drawn to caring for those who are suffering or are in need of help. The NF longs to develop deep relationships with these people in her quest for fulfillment. The NF will dive into the search for self as she longs to become rather than to act or achieve. Her goal is often not attainable since the goal is really about self-actualization and authenticity of self, so she is constantly seeking to find what makes her unique and embrace that essence so she is noticed in society and does not get lost in the crowd. The NT, SJ, and SP temperaments have at least a limited ability to understand each other, but all three will struggle to understand the NF temperament. The NF will struggle to understand the other three temperaments as well.

NFs may struggle with emotional lability, swinging between emotional highs and lows of the moment. When others refuse to support the ideals of the NF, it causes her distress and she becomes disheartened. Likewise, those close to an NF may find themselves fatigued over time as they attempt to relate to the NF interpersonally. An NF is a people pleaser and longs to have

45 David Keirsey and Marilyn Bates, Please Understand Me, 38.
46 Paul D. Tieger and Barbara Barron-Tieger, Do What You Are, 58.
47 Roy M. Oswald and Otto Kroeger, Personality Type and Religious Leadership, 82.
48 David Keirsey and Marilyn Bates, Please Understand Me, 58-59.
49 Roy M. Oswald and Otto Kroeger, Personality Type and Religious Leadership, 89.
others happy with her. This can sometimes create a struggle in her personal and professional lives. An NF temperament, however, is very persuasive in any given situation, mostly because she is so passionate and believes so deeply in whatever it is she is communicating that it draws others in and causes them to buy in to the belief as well.\(^{50}\) This ability to persuade can also create issues when it gives the impression to others that while the NF is empathizing with many other types of people, the others take her empathy to believe that she agrees with them when she actually does not. Sometimes, in these instances, the NF will go along with this just to avoid conflict.\(^{51}\)

The NF temperament type will long for recognition for her individual contributions in society and various relationships, as this acknowledgment gives meaning to her own quest and search of self. She wants to make a difference in the world and thus finds her experiences to hold great significance as this is accomplished. She is not fake or masked and will go to great effort to pour into relationships, which may end in great disappointment to her if hopes and dreams go unrealized. An NF will not mind being the one to invest the most in a relationship, looking quite lop-sided from the outside, so long as there is some reciprocation of at least a minimal investment of energy and resources.\(^{52}\) An NF is a great influencer among the masses, writing books, dramas, movies, and becoming prominent speakers, teachers, and behavioral health workers.\(^{53}\) A struggle for the NF is that she is all in for whatever work to which she is committed, expending energy and resources without restraint. She will work toward her vision of

\(^{50}\) Roy M. Oswald and Otto Kroeger, *Personality Type and Religious Leadership*, 85.  
\(^{51}\) Ibid., 87.  
\(^{52}\) David Keirsey and Marilyn Bates, *Please Understand Me*, 60.  
\(^{53}\) Ibid., 60-61.
perfection, tirelessly attempting to create the perfect work whether a painting, a story, or a relationship. The finished work, however, often fails to live up to the ideal in the mind of the NF thus creating disappointment; yet time and time again this will not dissuade the NF from going full throttle ahead in anything she longs to achieve. The adage fitting the NF is “to thine own self be true.”

NT Temperament

Where the NF thinks in terms of people possibilities, the NT temperament thinks of possibilities in terms of principles, even though both are focused on the future and what might be. This vision is what causes an NT to be a great leader, bringing great energy to whatever she does. She is an intense individual who strives for competency in all situations, including her own skills. People are often drawn to the competence of the NT. Again, making up only 12% of the population, the NT often feels as if she is surrounded by people much different than she, and INTs even more so as they comprise only 3% of the general population. An NT will long for power, which may cause her to appear in many less than desirable ways to those around her. She may seem too demanding or lose patience with those around her or she may come across as arrogant because she longs for perfection and has an intolerance for those who cannot dive into the deep with either conversation or connection. She can become frustrated with those who cannot move at her pace and with those who refuse to accept the change that an NT brings about

54 David Keirsey and Marilyn Bates, Please Understand Me, 65.
55 Paul D. Tieger and Barbara Barron-Tieger, Do What You Are, 60.
56 David Keirsey and Marilyn Bates, Please Understand, 65.
57 Roy M. Oswald and Otto Kroeger, Personality Type and Religious Leadership, 66.
58 David Keirsey and Marilyn Bates, Please Understand Me, 47.
in order to improve the environment around her.\textsuperscript{59} NTs are about competence, capabilities, skills and intelligence. She often has a scientist within and desires power over understanding and explaining rather than over people around her. “Only he can judge his capability and he does so with ruthless self-criticism.”\textsuperscript{60}

One way to better understand the NT is to consider how she can be seen as a mirror image of the SP. The SP will do without regard for betterment. The NT must improve without interest in action. The NT has a sense of urgency or perhaps even a compulsion where improvement is concerned. Her ability sets the SP free to only perform in the moment, while for the NT, the performance is simply the means to enable her to gain abilities.\textsuperscript{61} As the NT longs to gain competencies and abilities, she is perhaps her own worst critic and is definitely more inclined to judge herself harshly more than any other temperament. She seeks after both knowledge and skill in relentless fashion, constantly adding to her list of what she should be able to do or know. And, while it may seem odd, an NT often will feel she is ever so close to failure. She struggles to see the likelihood that she will succeed and thus her expectations of herself push her to the brink of exhaustion as she strives to avoid a sense of inadequacy and defeat. Even at play, the NT will give herself no permission to relax or let up in self expectation, pushing herself to perform with skill.\textsuperscript{62}

The NT will often doubt whether others can understand her or her ideas. This attitude can come across as insulting to those around her. She will communicate in succinct manners that are

\textsuperscript{59} Roy M. Oswald and Otto Kroeger, \textit{Personality Type and Religious Leadership}, 73-74.
\textsuperscript{60} David Keirsey and Marilyn Bates, \textit{Please Understand Me}, 48.
\textsuperscript{61} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{62} Ibid., 50-51.
logical and she may avoid stating the obvious to ensure others are not bored by her. She also tends to apply the same pressure to others to perform with accuracy and perfection that she expects of herself, and yet even she is unable to achieve. This can make others feel inferior in skill or intellect and cause them frustration so eventually they leave the NT feeling alone and isolated. The NT is often outstanding in her field, working hard to figure out puzzles and gain knowledge and understanding. The more complex and precise, the better for an NT as she has a special knack for making absolutely everything in her life work, investigating her environments, creating systems, and evoking change. The NT will struggle with isolation and loneliness and she gives off a signal of distant and cold-heartedness. This will not deter her from her ever-enticing future where she sees hope of something new that could be. To make a mistake a second time would be incomprehensible to the NT. An NT will not easily be hurt by the criticisms of those around her, but when she does succumb to such attacks, she will respond most often with a sarcasm that can wound deeply him to which it was directed. The adage fitting the NT is “be excellent in all things.”

Temperament Case Study

Having gained some understanding of the four temperaments that can be taken from the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory to most simply evaluate personality, one can best see it in action if one analyzes a pairing in the form of a husband and wife example. Nick is an ISTP on the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory, making him an SP temperament, a free spirit, flexible, action-

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64 Ibid., 53-54.
65 Ibid., 55.
66 Ibid., 57.
oriented and embracer of variety and change. Joan is an INTJ, making her an NT temperament, a high achiever, competitor, and independent architect of change.

Nick will long to live in the moment, enjoying each action for the sake of the action itself. He will not be focused on the long term or even goals beyond the doing of any given activity. Nick has the potential to focus so much on what is right in front of him that he even fails to see a bigger picture of God at work. Joan will have to make allowances for his spontaneity, making sure that she does not quickly get upset. This will encourage her to learn to be more flexible and will in turn support the living in the moment that her husband enjoys. A lover of impulsivity and variety, Nick will strive to do things differently each time he does them. Joan can learn to tolerate his driving a different route or cooking their favorite dish a little differently now and then. Nick will do most things in grand style, making sure that he does not neglect the desires of his five senses in any given moment.

Joan, in contrast, will be a visionary with goals for her future and working hard to hone her skills and knowledge to perfection for any occasion at work or play. She may seem so focused on her quest for improvement that she turns everything in life into work and is unable to let up even in leisure. Nick may see her as cold, direct, intense, and holding higher expectations of him than he can ever achieve, but he will do well to learn to embrace her quest for knowledge and skills and can take it as a challenge to learn something new himself. She will not forgive herself easily of any mistakes she may make or bring into the relationship. She will struggle to “stop and smell the roses” with Nick, not understanding how he can be so easily caught up in the moment. She may be easily frustrated by his seemingly simple-mindedness and she may not

draw him into conversation much because she loathes surface talk and fears he will be bored by or not understand the topics which are of interest to her. As Joan will tend to make plans for the future in great detail and with exacting expectation, Nick can learn to embrace her need for a future plan from time to time; this will help him learn to appreciate her ability to take care of details beyond today. Joan will need to make sure she does not get so caught up in the future that she fails to love the people around her every day.69

With Nick living in the moment and Joan looking toward the future, they will have to work hard to understand one another and support the natural desires of the other as their personality and preferences are revealed. When given the ability to acquire this information and gain understanding of the temperament of the other, Nick and Joan may begin to make changes necessary to enjoy a more harmonious and accepting marital relationship. They must choose to embrace each other for the unique temperament they bring to the marriage and not seek to change the other, but instead, accept them for who they are and how they live out their preferences in the world.

**Descriptions of Four Myers-Briggs Type Inventory Profiles**

It would be a worthwhile endeavor for anyone to learn all 16 Myers-Briggs Type Inventory profiles since everyone will encounter every profile during a lifetime. What is especially important, however, is for an individual to know her own profile as well as the profile of her spouse. Descriptions of only four of the profiles will be given here; they are the profiles of the four project participants who will be used as two different case studies in Chapter 4.

The INTJ Profile

The INTJ profile represents introverted intuition with extroverted thinking. These individuals see future possibilities with great clarity and have the passion and compulsion to accomplish their ideas through detailed organization and structure. They implement strategies and commit to achieving their goals. They expect competence of themselves and work hard to gain the knowledge and skills required to manage any task at hand. INTJs are individuals who have the view from 30,000 feet; they see things from a global perspective and they will take in and assimilate new data in ways that relate to overall patterns. INTJs are driven by what could be and can be so focused that they become intensely stubborn. Challenges and roadblocks will encourage the INTJ as they love to work through problems and find new ways to solve them. “INTJs are the most independent of all the sixteen types and take more or less conscious pride in that independence.”

People from the outside will not see the extensive internal processing the INTJ exhibits as they use their intuition to create an image of the future with all the complicated and detailed structures and systems their mind is developing. This skill allows the INTJ to be creative and visionary in how they see the future and pull together new ideas and systems. In addition, the INTJ makes decisions that are logical because of their thinking. They will spot each detail without overlooking a thing, they are extraordinary problem solvers, and they will get things done in a succinct, objective, logical way without any personal attachment preventing them from doing what needs to be done. With this in mind, the INTJ will make a wonderful leader because

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70 Isabel Briggs Myers, *Introduction to Type*, 18.
71 Ibid.
72 Isabel Briggs Myers, *Gifts Differing: Understanding Personality Type*, 167.
73 Ibid., 171.
they will plan with every detail for the future. They are self-confident and independent and they have a firm belief that they can trust their abilities and decision-making as they integrate their acquired knowledge in the workplace.

INTJs do not like chaos or disorder and they dislike inefficiency. They abhor the dullness of routines that squelch creativity. These things can get them into trouble interpersonally and they have to work hard to avoid offending those around them because of their expectations and demands. While the outside world sees the INTJ as a confident, determined, and knowledgeable person, the INTJ may be socially challenged in interacting with others. People may feel that it is difficult to get to know an INTJ or that they are unmoving in their thoughts because of the apparent decisiveness. Interestingly, the INTJ will actually be more than willing to change their mind about something when presented with a superior alternative.\(^74\)

As communicators, INTJs will be task-oriented, self-sufficient, and private. Once they have taken in information, they may be quick to offer solutions to help fix a problem. They will desire to hear from people whom they deem qualified to speak. They will look for new ways to fix problems and will often begin the process without telling others what they are doing. They are hard on themselves and others and may not easily receive instruction from others. Only as they mature will they begin to deal with the personal side of issues as well as the impersonal and make known to others their feelings or perspectives.\(^75\) INTJs will enter into conflict when there is dissent over some type of authority. True to their nature, in conflict, INTJs will strive for closure

\(^74\) Isabel Briggs Myers, *Introduction to Type*, 18.

\(^75\) Donna Dunning, *Introduction to Myers-Briggs Type and Communication* (United States: CPP Inc., 2003), 24-25.
and may disallow emotions until there are too many to keep sequestered. They will be gratified when a contentious situation is over and will most likely move on quickly.\textsuperscript{76}

The INTP Profile

The INTP profile represents introverted thinking with extroverted intuition. “INTPs are perhaps the most intellectually profound of all the types. Intuition brings a deeper insight than is granted to thinking alone.”\textsuperscript{77} INTPs make great researchers and often work their way into the STEM fields as their curiosity and ability to comprehend challenging concepts sets them apart from others.\textsuperscript{78}

INTPs will not shy away from the challenging problems of the world and they will examine them in a logical and objective manner. They work best alone because they will come at a problem from a unique viewpoint and will present final outcomes that can then be accepted by others. Like the INTJ, INTPs will do much of their processing internally. However, INTPs will introvert their thinking rather than their intuition and will note links and patterns that may apply to the future as they internally work on problems. This means they work out each logical detail internally that allows them to create systems and approaches that will work for others.\textsuperscript{79}

With a great intrigue for things that might be, INTPs will seek out information and see the opportunities that lie in the future. As they analyze all that exists around them, they will be likely to find errors and problems in logic and will seek to find solutions others may not even

\textsuperscript{76} Damian Killen and Danica Murphy, \textit{Introduction to Type and Conflict}, 12.

\textsuperscript{77} Isabel Briggs Myers, \textit{Gifts Differing}, 141.

\textsuperscript{78} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{79} Isabel Briggs Myers, \textit{Introduction to Type}, 23.
know are needed. They will not enjoy the mundane in the workplace and will be energized by special projects and complicated problems that need solving.  

INTPs like to find answers but do not necessarily enjoy being implementers of them; to the outside world they will appear a bit withdrawn unless asked to speak about some area on which they are particularly expert. They are much better at organizing and structuring projects and solutions rather than people. They will appear flexible up to a point but will step up if their work is being questioned. They love accuracy, which comes out in the way they speak and interact with others and they will be bothered by those who do not speak in complexities or who feel the need to talk about what is already readily known.

As communicators, INTPs will be rational, aloof, and disinterested. They will desire to understand what is happening, to be creative in coming up with solutions, to keep things adjustable, and to hear new ways of thinking about things. They will be relaxed and patient with people who are familiar to them. When speaking to others, they look for potential outcomes and reasons for patterns they notice but may not give enough details for others to understand their perspective. They prefer a debate of ideas and rarely resort to personal interaction. INTPs enter into conflict when they experience a remonstrance of trust. They will see a lack of harmony with others a waste of time, even though those involved with them in conflict may see them as the cause or as the main contributor to the conflict. When it occurs, INTPs hope that dissension brings a way to move forward and will continue to give serious thought to what happened after it has ended.

80 Isabel Briggs Myers, *Introduction to Type*, 23.
81 Ibid.
83 Damian Killen and Danica Murphy, *Introduction to Type and Conflict*, 12.
The ISTJ Profile

The ISTJ profile represents introverted sensing with extroverted thinking. ISTJs are very dependable, have great work ethic, are down to earth, and extremely comprehensive in their approach to all matters, leaving nothing to question.84 The ISTJ is apt to be dominant in their stressing of all that is analytical and concrete, and will be able to come to quick conclusions through their thinking in this manner.85 The ISTJ will love to pitch in and help others where they see need, so long as it does not contradict what is logical or reasonable to them. Interesting though, is the fact that an ISTJ may actually act out of their nature when something does not make sense to them if they can discern that the need for the other is so great they feel compelled to help meet it.86

ISTJs are extremely committed and loyal to all they believe in, whether it is to people or to organizations. They spare no energy in working on projects in which they believe but will be extremely resistant to devoting time or resources toward ideas and tasks they find illogical. They will work with others, but their preference is to work alone and then present their impeccable findings. They will desire that others are as dependable and thorough as they expect of themselves.87

ISTJs use their sensing preference internally for the most part. This is where they will hold the details and facts which they use to evaluate their current situation. This causes them to be down to earth and regimented in how they approach life. Their thinking is extroverted,

84 Isabel Briggs Myers, Gifts Differing, 157.
85 Ibid., 159.
86 Ibid., 160.
87 Isabel Briggs Myers, Introduction to Type, 14.
however, so others will see them take on large projects as a whole and process those endeavors through a critical and specific approach. They will arrive at their conclusions and biases after very intentional evaluation with reflection upon their own understanding and experiences. They will cling to the tried and true way of doing things unless someone can clearly show that a different approach is superior.\textsuperscript{88} ISTJs can be comfortable socially when they are in their element, although they ideally prefer to share their deepest feelings and ideas with their closest relationships. As their thinking is extroverted, others will be most apt to notice the outcomes, decisions, regimented programming, and routine more than they will notice the depth of the person with their private internal responses.\textsuperscript{89}

As communicators, ISTJs are blunt, pragmatic, and productive and are focused on presenting and using facts, details, and outcomes. They will do what is expected of them with efficiency and determination. They therefore want to know what is expected and need detailed and logical explanations for what needs to be accomplished. They will remain in the moment, focusing on what is needed to accomplish goals and get results. They will not find it easy to be people oriented, to try new things, to be interrupted, or for plans to change.\textsuperscript{90}

ISTJs, just like INTJs, will enter into conflict when there is dissent over some type of authority. Again, true to their nature, in conflict ISTJs will strive for closure and may disallow emotions until there are too many to keep sequestered. They will be gratified when the contentious situation is over and will most likely move on quickly.\textsuperscript{91} Unlike INTJs, who will

\textsuperscript{88} Isabel Briggs Myers, Introduction to Type, 14.
\textsuperscript{89} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{90} Donna Dunning, Introduction to Myers-Briggs Type and Communication, 18-19.
\textsuperscript{91} Damian Killen and Danica Murphy, Introduction to Type and Conflict, 12.
tend to focus on inconsequential facts or withdraw to gain a sense of control under stress, ISTJs will be anxious about the future and all the detrimental possibilities that may come to fruition. Whereas INTJs may feel devastated by emotions, ISTJs will find themselves more likely unable to figure out what the next step might be.\textsuperscript{92}

The ENFP Profile

The ENFP profile is characterized by extroverted intuition with introverted feeling. ENFPs are aware of all that exists around them, perceiving what others think. They are spontaneous and will spur others as well as themselves into quick action when such desire arises. They are more apt to be starters rather than finishers when it comes to getting things done. Their source of driving force comes from the intrigue of the moment rather than from sheer mental desire or drive. They will be all in when it is about something of particular intrigue to them but will not be quick to get routine tasks done. They love flexibility and ingenuity and are likely able to motivate others.\textsuperscript{93}

ENFPs see life as a journey filled with fun and opportunity for exploration. They possess a tremendous ability to perceive the workings of both people and the current and yet to come situations. They feel deeply and while they will be quick to share encouragement with others, they will require gratitude and approval from those around them. They are charismatic and will flex to fit in whatever situation they find themselves. They can be extremely influential, especially in matters close to their heart.\textsuperscript{94}

\textsuperscript{92} Mary McGuiness, You’ve Got Personality: An Introduction to the Personality Types Described by Carl Jung & Isabel Myers (Australia: MaryMac Books, 2004), 31, 35.

\textsuperscript{93} Isabel Briggs Myers, Gifts Differing, 162-163.

\textsuperscript{94} Isabel Briggs Myers, Introduction to Type, 21.
As mentioned, the ENFP makes a great founder of new projects, bringing enthusiasm and a magnetic draw for others to join in with them. As they are more external in how they use intuition, the people, thoughts and happenings around them will bring them motivation and drive. They may also find meaning where others do not because they are able to visualize pieces of a puzzle through their imagination and intrigue. They will long to please others and for peace in relationships. ENFPs will put their internal sense of feeling to good use as they take their beliefs into account to make decisions that value others. They are kind and approachable and nurturing of others. They are easy to get along with and bring encouragement to those around them. They see the best in others and are able to spur them on to what they may be that the other has yet to see. With their eager encouragement, others may be apt to move forward in ways no one else could stimulate them to go.95

Others will see the ENFP as boisterous, networkers with an exciting social life filled with many friends. They live life with a passion and zeal others long to possess. Despite their apparent large social circle, ENFPs will not shy away from deep connections and genuine vulnerability with those to whom they are closest. One will notice that the ENFP is not likely to adhere to a calendar or detailed agenda as they prefer flexibility. In most cases, the ENFP is a very capable communicator, even when put on the spot, but they may struggle to articulate their most personal thoughts and feelings to others.96

As a communicator, the ENFP will be warm, excited, congenial, and empathetic. They will be focused first on people, how to encourage them, partner with them, and discover their potential. They will be interested in the reflections of others, in growth for everyone, and in

95 Isabel Briggs Myers, Introduction to Type, 21.
96 Ibid.
general principles. They will often stay positive and will consider others when making decisions and creating a climate of collaboration and sensitive motivation. They may find it difficult to receive feedback and also may be slow to offer it in a negative context.\(^97\) An ENFP will enter into conflict when their or someone’s values are incapacitated. They will not typically look for or enter into conflict but will if something is important to them. They will be seen in conflict as the person who takes everyone involved into consideration and they will assent to emotions even when they are not looking for them. They are gratified when they can continue to examine what happened or what needs to happen.\(^98\)

**How Myers-Briggs Type Inventory is Typically Used**

The Myers-Briggs Type Inventory is used in the United States in various ways. It is used as a management tool, in field education, to improve team performance, and in other situations. Duhe came to the conclusion that the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory could improve team performance because with the personality information in hand, team members were better at communicating, staying professional, and getting the work accomplished that needed to be accomplished. She also noted that when there were disagreements, an understanding that it may be due to personality rather than to a lack of diligence or kindness also helped the team.\(^99\) Clinebell used the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory with college students to promote understanding of personalities in order to increase the function of teams and noted that it also prepared students for future work in the corporate world as well as with varying types of personalities.\(^100\)


\(^{98}\) Damian Killen and Danica Murphy, *Introduction to Type and Conflict*, 13.


\(^{100}\) Sharon Clinebell, “Teaching Teams to Be Teams: An Exercise Using the Myers-Briggs® Type Indicator and the Five-Factor Personality Traits,” *Journal of Management Education* 27, no. 3 (June 2003): 378-379.
Myers-Briggs Type Inventory was shown to be useful to social work field instructors, to resource them to know their own personalities in order to work more congenially with students on the field. Nurse managers found it helpful to use the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory as a way to understand their staff members better, communicate more effectively, and create an environment for growth, among many other things. Individual Myers-Briggs Type Inventory assessments of family members in combination with a family system model can be used as an effective resource for a counselor to help a family. Arguments have been made both for and against counselors using the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory to help clients. Other research has shown that although greater differences in personality types between a husband and wife cannot predict the challenges they will face in a marriage, it was still recommended as a means to better understand a spouse and as an effective tool to resource spouses to concede that differences may just be a matter of seeing things differently. It has also been shown to be applicable to spirituality; Hall showed that you can apply psychological type theory to faith.

CHAPTER 3
Definition and Importance of Discipleship


103 Anna K Hultquist, “Psychological Type and Family Functioning Exploring the Interface Between the Self and the System,” *Journal of Systemic Therapies* 21, no. 2 (Summer 2002): 90-91, 106.


Rod Dempsey states that “a disciple is a person who has trusted Christ for salvation and has surrendered completely to Him. He or she is committed to practicing the spiritual disciplines in community and developing to their full potential for Christ and His mission.”  

1 Greg Ogden is more succinct, although no less thorough, when he states that disciples are “self-initiating, reproducing, fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ.”  

2 Ogden and Dempsey are specific with different components of the definition, but they are both saying that a disciple is someone who follows Christ fully and seeks to help fulfill the mission of Christ, the Great Commission. There are many other great definitions of discipleship, but those who understand the biblical notion of discipleship know that a vital part of being a disciple is making disciples of others. How exactly that is accomplished may not be explicitly stated in the Bible, but the imperative to make disciples was first on the Master’s mind while He was on earth. Regarding making disciples, Robert Coleman states, “In fact, where fruit bearing is seen in its larger context of reproducing the Christ life in human personality, first in ourselves and then in others, practically everything which the Master said and did pointed to this principle.”  

3 If making disciples was what Christ emphasized the most, surely Christians can agree that it should be most important to His body.  

Furthermore, if making disciples is most important for Christians, where should it most urgently begin, if not in the home? If spouses can properly disciple each other, each person has multiplied her/himself and both are better equipped to go from the home and make more disciples. In other words, the imperative to make disciples can begin in the home and proceed outwardly. Nothing can ever replace the Bible as the primary source of knowledge about and

1 Dave Earley and Rod Dempsey, Disciple Making Is, 28.  

2 Greg Ogden, Transforming Discipleship: Making Disciples a Few at a Time (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 54.  

inspiration for both the disciple and for the topic of discipleship. In the church, however, numerous tools are used for discipleship, including godly, “self-help” books, Bible study books, classes, retreats, and Sunday school. The Myers-Briggs Type Inventory is one tool that can be used for discipleship in the home. The Myers-Briggs Type Inventory can be more than a heuristic tool to both grow spiritually and help a spouse grow spiritually; outside of God’s Word, it could be the most consequential and actionable tool a spouse could use.

Earley and Dempsey also say that a disciple is someone who actively and intentionally reads, studies, memorizes, and meditates on the Bible. Henrichsen says a Christian should “continue in the Word” as a fundamental assumption of discipleship since Jesus said a person is a disciple if she does this. When a person stays in the Word, she will know truth and be changed by it. She will also be able to combat the lies of the Christian’s enemy. In the context of using the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory in a marriage, these are important ideas. If a person understands her spouse according to his personality (i.e. knows the truth about her spouse), it will allow her to not only notice his godliness, but she will also be better able to maintain her own godliness as she deals with how he is different from her. Knowing his personality will also allow her to combat the discouragement of differences and instead, be able to celebrate the differences and see them as complementary to her. Intentionally pursuing God’s Word will also allow a spouse to be convicted and to be brought back to the idea of not allowing a person “to think more highly

7 Isabel Briggs Myers, *Gifts Differing*, 334.
of himself than he ought to think.”8 Every time a Christian desires to do things according to her own desires and needs, even if it means using a personality preference, that person is thinking more highly of herself than others. Being aware of a spouse’s personality preferences and needs will allow a person to focus on the other. This does not mean a person can never act according to her personality; it means that being aware of the other’s personality will allow a spouse to consider the other person and how responding appropriately to his needs and preferences can spur him on to greater love and works for the kingdom.9 Any method of discipleship should allow for a disciple to remain true to who God created her to be while lovingly responding to the other person based also on their preferences and needs. This allows for discipleship, ultimately, of both individuals as they share a unified desire for God’s honor and His kingdom.10

While Jesus walked the earth, His focus on people provides encouragement to Christians today. Jesus spent most of the time He had during His ministry years with His disciples, living life with them, teaching them, encouraging them, and challenging them toward greater spiritual growth. He knew that if the good news was going to spread to the whole earth after He left the earth, He needed to instill in His disciples the importance of their own growth and the importance of the growth of others. He inculcated the 12 disciples with the significance of discipleship with His laser focus on it. Jesus knew that His disciples would have to be relational thinkers. 11 “Relational” thinking is defined as the process of relating activities and knowledge to an objective. “Terminal” thinking is defined as the process whereby activity and knowledge are

8 Rom. 12:3.
9 Heb. 10:24.
objectives and ends within themselves."

Thinking relationally meant Jesus’ disciples would have to be intentional about discipleship.

Another aspect of Jesus’ ministry relating to discipleship is that the last thing He told His disciples before He went back to heaven was to go and make disciples. This means He considered it vital to the cause of reaching the world for Him. Also, the directive of Jesus telling His disciples to go and make other disciples is the only directive found in all four of the gospel messages of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John as well as in Acts. This emphasis on the imperative to make disciples also indicates His purposeful focus on making disciples and the actions of His disciples after He ascends proves that His disciples received the message as vitally important as well.

Every Christian, then, should clearly understand the essential need to make disciples. Discipleship is the process of making disciples. A husband or wife who works to help their spouse become a disciple is participating in the process of discipleship. Adequate definitions of a disciple have previously been given. They are all appropriate. The operational definition of discipleship for this project, however, is the following: if a Christian spouse can help create an environment in the home that is less antagonistic and more accepting and can communicate and resolve conflict in godly ways, then discipleship will occur. In other words, godly actions in a home will cause spiritual growth to occur. Discipleship, then, in a home, between spouses does not need to involve materials or a program. Discipleship does involve becoming a person who

\[\text{\textsuperscript{11}}\text{ Doug Hartman and Doug Sutherland, Guidebook to Discipleship (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1960), 31.}\]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{12}}\text{ Dave Earley and Rod Dempsey, Disciple Making Is, 2.}\]
learns about and follows Christ’s example. It is always important for Christians to follow a biblical lifestyle. Discipleship, however, is not just about all the things that a Christian does; it is also a corollary to what she becomes. What she becomes will be impacted by who she is and therefore greater understanding and acceptance of a spouse’s ways can certainly bring about discipleship.

**Discipleship in the Church**

Since Jesus thought so highly of making disciples, it cannot be emphasized enough that His body should value it to the same extent. He told His disciples to go into the whole world and make disciples. He knew that in order to reach the whole world, His disciples would have to make other disciples. In John 15:8, Jesus related bearing fruit to proving to be His disciples. God instilled in His body a purpose of being fruitful and thereby being disciples. In this regard it can be seen as the role of the church to encourage each other toward bearing fruit and so fulfilling one of the roles of disciples. It is not optional for the body of Christ, it is imperative. The method of discipleship may be flexible, but every believer must engage in some form of discipleship. In the church there is known value in the corporate connection of believers. Boa stated, “Growth in spiritual maturity is a gradual process of formation into the image and character of Jesus Christ that is fostered by the power of the Spirit, by spiritual disciplines, and by the loving support of a genuine community.” The members of Christ’s body need each other

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to spur one another on in the journey of spiritual growth and discipleship. The church needs individuals who will do the difficult labor needed to grow as both spiritual and emotional beings which will in turn cause them to have more influence around them as disciples for Christ.\textsuperscript{17}

Relationships are key to flourishing. It is among other believers that individuals can be encouraged, led, trained, challenged, and guided into spiritual growth and maturity where they commune with God more intimately. Learning to care for imperfect people just like oneself is key to self-maturation and ultimately connection.\textsuperscript{18} This is where discipleship in the church becomes so important. As growth is fostered, it can create a climate of spurring others on to growth as well.

\textbf{Discipleship in Marriage}

If both husband and wife are Christians and are willing to be discipled by their spouses, married couples have easy access to a potential disciple, who can then go and make more disciples. “In a discipling relationship the partners equally share responsibility for preparation, self-disclosure and an agenda of change.”\textsuperscript{19} This cannot be more true than in a marriage. A spouse is also a readily available potential disciple. By already living together, husband and wife are in perfect proximity to speak and hear the Word from the other. This speaking of the Word to each other is one responsibility of Christian community and a sure way to make disciples.\textsuperscript{20} The community in the context of a marriage is the spouse. The method for discipleship then becomes

\textsuperscript{17} Peter Scazzero, \textit{The Emotionally Healthy Church: A Strategy for Discipleship That Actually Changes Lives} (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 37.

\textsuperscript{18} Richard Plass and James Cofield, \textit{The Relational Soul: Moving from False Self to Deep Connection} (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 117.

\textsuperscript{19} Greg Ogden, \textit{Transforming Discipleship}, 125.

the issue.

The body of Christ must then examine what it means for spouses to disciple each other. Surprisingly, this was determined to be an imposing issue during this project. Seemingly, most Christians never even consider that it may be important to disciple their spouses. This may be an issue for a different project, but at the very least, it is concerning. Nonetheless, one premise of the current study is that it is necessary, even biblical, that spouses make disciples of each other. A secondary issue relating to this concept is that women in the church may believe it is not appropriate for them to disciple their husbands. This is why the secondary operational definition previously stated is necessary for the sake of this project. Again, the operational definition is the following: if a Christian spouse can help create an environment in the home that is less antagonistic and more accepting and can communicate and resolve conflict in godly ways, then discipleship will occur. It is simply the idea that as spouses fulfill their God-given roles in the marriage, spiritual growth and therefore discipleship will occur. For the woman, God said in the beginning that she was to act as a helpmate.  

21 According to the operational definition, if the woman is being a godly helpmate to her husband, she will cause spiritual growth to occur in him. For the husband, if he loves his wife as Christ loves the Church and gives himself up for his wife, he will woo her to grow spiritually as well. As one example, a husband exhibits patience, one of the fruits of the Spirit.  

22 As the wife watches the husband live in a biblical way by continually exhibiting patience, the wife, if she is a spiritual woman, will be drawn to be patient as well. The point is that spiritual growth can occur without sermons, or Bible study, or a program. Discipleship in a marriage also does not have to be a program, class, or certain

\[\text{21 Gen 2:18.}\]
\[\text{22 Gal. 5:22.}\]
materials. It can simply be spouses living biblical lives and demonstrating to each other the power of Christ-centered living, in order to establish an environment where both can grow spiritually.

**Myers-Briggs Type Inventory in the Church**

Thinking about the body of Christ, one can reflect on the biblical instruction of each member of the body doing what she was designed and created to do as referenced in Ephesians 4:16. ‘As the body of believers experiences the “building up of itself in love,” each individual Christian is built up in Godliness as well. Put directly, as each believer disciplines herself for the purpose of Godliness, her individual spiritual growth helps to build up the local body of believers when that believer is in fellowship with them.’

God never intended for all of humanity to look alike, sound alike, behave alike, think alike, or interact alike. Instead, He created a variety of personalities, temperaments, and preferences and knew that by doing so, all the various roles of serving Him and discipleship of others would occur. Some profiles and preferences are designed to be amazing at hospitality while others are fit for administrating or teaching. This does not speak to one’s spirituality but rather individuality of temperament. What about those who can easily seclude to pray intensively for hours or those who have the boldness to preach to crowds of thousands at one time? The differences in people make it apparent that God never intended for all humanity to think and act the same, but rather to fill the specific roles He gifted them to do with preferences that made it “natural” for them to be so inclined. It is also recognized that people will function more smoothly in life and in the church

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when they are at ease and others understand them and are willing to allow them to be themselves in the various capacities in which they function.\textsuperscript{25}

It is when we understand clearly that God had unique design in mind with mankind that we can realize the value of understanding those differences and the role they play in accomplishing His will, including the discipleship of others. One type of person or another is neither good nor bad, but simply unique to her design by a perfect Father. When the church understands that, discipleship will occur as each member fulfills their God given roles through the gifting and uniqueness with which He created them.

\textbf{Myers-Briggs Type Inventory in Marriage}

It is important to recognize the body of Christ is created with unique members, designed to function in roles that fit beautifully with their preferences and allow them to meet the needs of the whole world. It would then follow that these same uniquely created individuals as husband and wife would have distinctly different roles and preferences and yet would accomplish what God had designed them to do as well. As each fulfills those roles, it would follow that there would be potential challenges for the spouse to overcome in order to recognize the uniquely created differences and preferences of her mate. That stated, these challenges can be overcome in part by understanding the personality of another. God has given people the ability to know others unlike themselves, however, it must be recognized that this is a process and takes time to fully develop this depth of relationship.\textsuperscript{26} There is no shortage of authors who discuss personality or preferences in some form as a factor to be considered in marriage. There are numerous books

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{25} Mels Carbonell, \textit{How to Solve the People Puzzle: Understanding Personality Patterns} (Blue Ridge, GA: Uniquely You\textregistered Resources, 2008), 13.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
that look at temperament, personality, and profile preferences and relate them to the ability to find success in marriage, communicate well with a spouse, or grow in relationship with God and the spouse as considerations of the individual wiring is taken into account.

Some authors, without even knowing it, have used the concepts behind the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory as their tool to teach people about love, growth, and discipleship in marriage or just to talk about married couples in general. Britzman and Duba offered an approach to married life where partners focus on their attitudes so there is reinforced actions as they gain a better comprehension of the spouse’s view of the world, others and themselves; the authors came to the conclusion that this can remove negative actions from within the marriage as there is greater knowledge of their spouse and can encourage kind actions on a daily basis.27 Harley describes a “love bank,” an inner reservoir of emotional needs that every person has that relates directly to how a person’s spouse is meeting needs in a marriage. If something is uncomfortable or bad in any way, points are subtracted from a person’s love bank; if things are good, points are added.28 This can relate to how a person might use the information obtained from a spouse’s type profile to relate to the spouse. By understanding something about a spouse and communicating or resolving conflict differently according to the other’s needs, points could be added to what Harley calls the spouse’s “love bank.” According to Harley, spouses “need to know each other’s basic needs and how to meet them;” doing this, he believes, will decrease the likelihood of an affair and divorce.29 Harley’s book addresses how husbands and wives can help fill each other’s


needs. Even though Harley does not use personality type as a way to accomplish or even describe what he thinks needs to be accomplished, personality type could be relevant to everything about which he writes.

William J. Petersen, in his book *25 Surprising Marriages*, describes 25 Christian marriages, some that worked well and some that did not work well. Every chapter is about a different marriage. Petersen describes the people involved and why their marriage did or did not work well. In every case, the husband and wife can be given a complete or almost complete Myers-Briggs Type Inventory profile from the descriptions he gives. As one example, Petersen describes DL Moody as outspoken and dominant, in tune with what was happening immediately around him, making decisions based on what made most sense, and occasionally roaming from thing to thing as he so desired.\(^{30}\) The descriptions of Moody would make him an ESTP. His wife, Emma, on the other hand, was described as “reserved” and not enjoying attention, thoughtful of the future and of people, and pragmatic and organized.\(^{31}\) The descriptions of Emma would make her an INFJ.

In a more recent example, Gary Smalley directly relates personality type to some of his keys to love that endures in a marriage. In a section on differences in his book *Secrets to Lasting Love*, Smalley describes his wife as someone who is structured, detailed, “less extroverted,” steady, and “concerned with truth, right and wrong, justice.”\(^{32}\) Later in the book, he describes her again as needing time alone, needing to reflect on what she hears before she desires to talk about


\(^{31}\) Ibid.

it, and needing to make plans and adhere to those plans. He is describing his wife as an ISTJ without using the profile words. His wife describes Gary as someone who enjoys large gatherings of people and gains energy from them and is also willing to help people. He describes himself as a procrastinator and someone willing to bend the rules, while also somewhat scattered. He also writes that he needs to talk about what is in his mind. Both Smalley and his wife are describing him as an ENFP. He makes the point that they both need to know and understand these things about each other in order to love each other better. He makes a fair and profound point. The label of “type profile” is not what is needed from Smalley’s perspective; what is needed is the understanding a type profile brings. It is also not to say that the profile will dictate every behavior of a spouse, but that the profile will provide understanding so that a person can love the spouse with appropriate and godly behavior.

Many more examples could be given. The point is that knowing a person’s profile can help recognize how to better meet needs and love that person. Understanding what a person needs and loving that person better because of their needs is biblical. Christians are to love others and a spouse certainly falls into that category. If a Christian caters only to self, she will become more and more self-absorbed and less and less like a loving Savior. A life in Christ, however, means everything about a person changes, including the heart. As the heart changes, that previously self-absorbed person can pay close attention to the needs of her spouse. By loving a

33 Gary Smalley, Secrets to Lasting Love, 208.
34 Ibid., 113-114.
36 Ibid., 208.
spouse, that spouse will, in turn, grow spiritually and will see by example how to meet needs and love others also. Loving others well is essential to discipleship.

Myers-Briggs Type Inventory for Communication in Marriage

One of the most important aspect of the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory is the fact that there are no right or wrong, good or bad personalities, only different personalities.\(^{39}\) This is not to say that a person does not sin nor is it to say that personality is a justification for sin. It is to say that every personality profile has both positive attributes and potential growth areas.\(^{40}\) Unfortunately, it is true that in a marriage, each spouse’s innate dissimilarities are most frequently what causes a lack of understanding of what is going on inside the other person.\(^{41}\) Many authors who write on the topic of marriage state that communication is one of the greatest sources of conflict in marriages.\(^{42}\) Good communication can lead to greater intimacy from the very beginning of a marriage and provide what is needed to continue along the road toward the ultimate godly union.\(^{43}\) Hawkins states that “the entire Bible is about communication.”\(^{44}\) He notes that while God intends to communicate with His people, He also intends for His people to communicate with each other. Since communication is broken as a result of sin, it is difficult to be clear and to understand another clearly. But believers who desire to live biblical lives will go to extra effort to communicate with their spouses since this would be one way to emulate God,

\(^{39}\) Isabel Briggs Myers, *Introduction to Type*, 42.

\(^{40}\) Ibid., 14-29.

\(^{41}\) Gary Smalley, *Secrets to Lasting*, 121.

\(^{42}\) See Tim Muehlhoff and Todd V. Lewis, *Authentic Communication* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2010), 31 for one example.


\(^{44}\) Ronald E. Hawkins, *Strengthening Marital Intimacy*, 111.
Whose heart is to communicate clearly with His people. Adams states it this way:

“Communication is essential to all human relationships, but it is especially important for developing and maintaining the deep intimacy that God designed for the marriage relationship.”

Another reason for good communication in a marriage is that it can help develop godliness in both husband and wife. It may be true that people become more whole when they are around others who live in healthy ways. If this is true, it should hold that a person becomes more godly when she lives with someone who is godly. It is a biblical notion. “He who walks with wise men will be wise, But the companion of fools will suffer harm.”

If communication is an essential way for couples to develop the intimacy that God intended in a marriage, it must be effective for both spouses. Methods of good communication abound. It may involve learning to speak more clearly or more succinctly, giving more details or less details depending on the situation. It may involve making sure to speak about only one topic at a time, as a powerful speaker to large audiences may do. In spite of the fact that good communication can be supported in the biblical narrative and therefore is something every Christian should use, it will certainly be more difficult for some than for others. There may be multiple reasons why some forms of communication, including listening, are especially difficult for anyone. One key reason that cannot be denied is that every person longs to be heard. And, even if unfair or unreasonable, one likely will not choose to listen well if she feels she has not

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received the courtesy of being heard. It is obvious that one is not being heard when the listener is focused more on responding back or getting their words in than they are on the patient and quiet reflection of attentively and willingly lending their ear toward their spouse’s every word. Furthermore, a spouse must pay careful attention to not just listening well with their ears, but also with their body language. Leaning in, smiling, asking appropriate questions, reflecting and repeating what has been heard can all be reassurances that show love and genuine active listening of their spouse. True success in communication, therefore, may begin with respectful listening.

Likewise, quality communication from the person talking is also important. The speaker must work to be kind in the words that are spoken, paying attention to facial expressions and non-verbal cues, ensuring that she is not harsh or sarcastic or throwing in the ever-annoying eye roll, when speaking to one’s spouse. Looking at one’s spouse in the eyes, standing or sitting facing them, leaning in or appropriately touching a shoulder or an arm, for example, are cues that can mean even more than the words being spoken. One example of intently connecting with someone visually is referenced by Taylor when he said, “President Case of Boston University avoids the habit of looking past his conversationalist, or gazing around, as if he were bored but looks at the person in front of him in complete attentiveness, as if no one else mattered at that moment.” Additionally, the spouse who is articulating to the other will be wise to ask what

50 Dallas Demmitt and Nancy Demmitt, Can You Hear Me Now?, rev. ed. (Colorado Springs, CO: Cook Communications Ministries, 2018), 70-76.
51 Gary Smalley, Secrets to Lasting Love, 167.
52 Dallas Demmitt and Nancy Demmitt, Can You Hear Me Now?, 46.
53 Ibid., 58-59.
their spouse has just heard them say, in a way that is palatable to the other and not condescending. Alternatively, the listening spouse may also review what has been said and make a summary statement of what they heard in effort to ensure clear communication has occurred. This ensures that there is little room for miscommunication between each other and increases satisfaction within the marriage where communication is concerned.

When moving away from the general communication practices just discussed, one can become more specific in appealing to the style a spouse prefers based on personality type. For example, if a husband has a type that prefers the direct and no-nonsense approach, the wife who drones on and on with needless details and embellishments will not reach him; in fact, she will likely do more harm than good as she alienates her husband and causes him to shut down from any active or quality listening at all. Likewise, if the wife prefers stories, embellishments, and details, there will likely be offense taken if her husband says little at all or offers nothing in terms of the who, what, where, when, and why something happened. It is not about the right or proper way to speak or be spoken to when the preference of a spouse is under consideration. It is about honor, respect, and choosing to set self aside in order to please a partner. When both husband and wife gain the perspective that theirs is not the only way to do things, but that the spouse may prefer something different, the real understanding has begun and the ability to learn and adapt to the needs of one’s spouse can truly begin. This is part of what it means to love the other; it is to sacrifice the desires of self for the sake of pleasing the other. Any married person’s experience will probably prove that often the very things that attracted one person to another are the very

55 Dallas Demmitt and Nancy Demmitt, *Can You Hear Me Now?*, 80-83.
56 Phil. 2:3-4.
things that later on will cause the greatest distress in a marriage. It is often difficult to please someone who has preferences that are distinctly different than one’s own, not because the desire does not exist, but because people are often ill-equipped to do so, falling short each time an attempt is made. It does not have to be this way, however. Taking time to study and learn the preferences of one’s spouse can be an investment with a great return when taken seriously. At the same time, one does not have to give up who they are in the process. Both husband and wife can maintain their own identities, with preferences and their sense of style and still learn to honor and respect the needs of their spouses.

Communication is one of the areas most impacted by a person’s type. Every profile has varying ways of taking in information, using that information, and how others see them using that information (or not). Finally, the concept of how communication is impacted by personality profile may best be understood with an illustration indicating profile differences between a husband and wife. How the two different profiles of a husband and wife may interact can reveal the importance of knowing how profiles impact communication and how needs can be met while more clearly communicating.

**Communication Case Study**

Mary assessed as an ISTJ. This means her dominant function is introverting sensing, her auxiliary function is extroverted thinking, her tertiary function is feeling, and her inferior function is extroverted intuition. According to the standards set forth by Wharton, because Mary is over 50 years old, she has (theoretically) developed all of her functions to some extent. She

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59 W. Harold Grant, Magdala Thompson, and Thomas E. Clarke, *From Image to Likeness*, 24.
is also a Christian and therefore believes it is her responsibility to interact with her husband in a
godly manner, including being cognizant and understanding of his needs while communicating.
Jonah, her husband, assessed as an ENFJ. This means his dominant function is extroverting
feeling, his auxiliary function is introverted intuition, his tertiary function is sensing, and his
inferior function is introverted thinking. Jonah is also over 50 years old and is a Christian so
what hold true for Mary, holds true for Jonah in respect to development of type with age and
Christian beliefs.

Generally speaking, Mary is practical, task-oriented, and knowledgeable. She is also
loyal, diligent, detailed, and no-nonsense. She is unlikely to focus on personal issues, but rather,
desires to accomplish tasks and leave emotions behind.60 Jonah, on the other hand is warm,
collaborative, nurturing, and always desires to develop, support, and guide other people. He
desires to accomplish more in teams with others and believes a congenial environment, where he
has a keen eye for what others are feeling and experiencing will accomplish what needs to be
accomplished.61 Because Mary is an ISTJ, when communicating with her, Jonah needs to
communicate in a calm, logical, and direct way. He needs to make sure the information he
presents to Mary is correct, with as much detail as possible and he needs to make sure he is not
focused only on emotions or emotional issues. He needs to be able to give Mary plenty of time to
process what he is saying and not expect immediate responses from her.62 All of this will not be
easy for Jonah. He is highly enthusiastic and often emotional and he desires to help others;
because of that desire, he may not always be objective in what he is saying. Whereas Mary

60 Donna Dunning, Introduction to Myers-Briggs Type and Communication, 18.
61 Ibid., 46.
62 Ibid., 19.
prefers to be focused on one thing at a time, Jonah tends to become overcommitted and this can cause stress for Mary. He needs to be cognizant of this and careful to not expect the same response from her that he has with others.63

For her part, Mary needs to make sure she is not just conveying the facts as she sees them. She needs to know that Jonah is also interested in accomplishing tasks, but he takes people into consideration along the way. As she communicates with Jonah, Mary needs to make sure she is also considering the growth of people involved in the tasks and is expressing some interest in making sure people grow along the way to accomplishing tasks. While she is not quick to embrace change, she needs to be flexible and ready to change when it is needed. She also needs to be careful of her criticism of people involved and to not show a lack of concern or warmth for others.64 Mary can give feedback but should try to remain aware of how Jonah is feeling when doing so. One goal of giving feedback is to aid and encourage change.65 She needs to consider new ways of seeing or doing things, remain steadfast even with interruptions, and listen with care without always offering answers to problems. Especially with Jonah, she needs to make sure she includes her own and others’ feelings as part of the communication process.66 This will not be easy for Mary either. Her detached, blunt, task-driven, impersonal approach may distance Jonah, while his gregarious, emotional, people-driven, amiable approach may distance Mary. They both will have to work to communicate well, being true to how God made them while

63 Donna Dunning, Introduction to Myers-Briggs Type and Communication, 47.
64 Ibid.
65 Charles Allen Kollar, Solution-Focused Pastoral Counseling: An Effective Short-Term Approach for Getting People Back on Track (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1997), 139. Kollar offers this as a role of a counselor, but this author believes it is true of any feedback.
66 Donna Dunning, Introduction to Myers-Briggs Type and Communication, 19.
always considering their spouse and what the spouse needs. Their heightened awareness of their
own preferences and how they come across to each other, as well as the others’ preferences and
needs, can allow them to more fully act appropriately for the contentment of both. They also can
live more biblically, putting the others’ needs ahead of their own and setting an example to their
spouse of what it means to live a biblical life by being steadfast, kind, and understanding. The
example of communicating with godly character will lead to discipleship of both spouses.

Myers-Briggs Type Inventory for Conflict Resolution in Marriage

Conflict “is a broad term that describes many types of interactions, but most people
identify it as some type of interaction with a negative emotional charge.”67 Conflict, like
communication, is at least in part affected by a person’s type. It is natural for arguments and
disagreements to occur when profiles of spouses are varied. Conflicts are not guaranteed,
however, just because profiles are different between two people since it is possible to learn to
value even the differences and adjust in ways that cause godly reactions.68 If a spouse is to
influence their spouse, ultimately they must get along. Learning to adjust based on the profile of
one’s spouse, while not losing oneself in the process, is the key to leading and influencing.69

Culture has not helped where conflict in relationships is concerned. Being self-absorbed
and talking “at” each other is a real problem. Having unhealthy mechanisms of communicating
about differences is contributing to this undesirable culture of argumentation. Individuals go into
disagreements with hostility and a need to be heard. This prevents the needed understanding that

67 Damian Killen and Danica Murphy, Introduction to Type and Conflict, 1.
68 Ken Voges and Ron Braund, Understanding How Others Misunderstand You: A Unique and Proven
69 John C. Maxwell, The 360° Leader: Developing Your Influence from Anywhere in the Organization
comes from appropriate listening. The goal is not to win a battle as culture might have one think and it is sad that Christians have joined the bandwagon of falling into the pitfalls of this culture right along with everyone else. 

Killen and Murphy wrote a book called *Introduction to Type and Conflict* and presented their extensive research and views on how type enters into conflict. Killen and Murphy’s goal was to resource people with wisdom to know how their own type impacts their approach to conflict and to suggest how to steer through conflict with someone of a different type. According to Killen and Murphy, the last two dichotomies in a person’s profile are what most impacts how they enter into conflict. The first reason for this is that the J-P dichotomy, which indicates how a person deals with the outside world, is the hardest to cross over to the nonpreferred function. As discussed earlier, judging types prefer closure and perceiving types prefer openness. This particular difference between two people by itself can cause tension. In addition, the third dichotomy, which indicates how a person makes decisions also leads in conflict. Killen and Murphy refer to these last two pairs for any profile the “conflict pair.” This means there are four conflict pairs and they are TJ, TP, FJ, and FP. The first letter in each pair indicates where a person concentrates during conflict, the actual conflict itself, opinions, analyzation, brief and meaningful exchange, keeping a forceful posture (T) or the people involved, their values and desires, civil exchange, and a shared and mostly equal ebb and flow of ideas (F). The second letter in each pair indicates how a person reacts to the conflict, looking for

71 Damian Killen and Danica Murphy, *Introduction to Type and Conflict*, 1.
72 Ibid., 5.
73 Ibid., 4-5.
74 Ibid., 5.
resolution, finding answers, considering the past and future, the end goals, and the gratification that comes when the conflict is past (J) or looking for clear meaning, the process of the conflict, considering the present situation, making sure everyone is allowed to participate, and the gratification that comes when good answers are found (P). This means, of course, that different personality types see things differently, hear things differently, and react to things differently when there is conflict. This also means that a husband and wife need to know their own ways of entering into and dealing with conflict as well as their spouse’s way of entering into and dealing with conflict. If they do not, they will probably not recognize what is happening and conflict may continually escalate without coming to any sort of resolution. When each understands the other, both are equipped to be more understanding of what is happening and both are more capable to responding biblically to the other. The chart below summarizes what conflict looks like for each of the four conflict pairs according to Killen and Murphy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Likely cause of conflict</th>
<th>TJ</th>
<th>TP</th>
<th>FJ</th>
<th>FP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Challenges to/of authority</td>
<td>Challenges to/of trust</td>
<td>Challenges to/of beliefs</td>
<td>Challenges to/of values</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desired outcome</td>
<td>Closure or resolution</td>
<td>Defined process or progression</td>
<td>Intact relationships</td>
<td>Respectful listening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deal with emotions by</td>
<td>Denying they exist</td>
<td>Excluding them</td>
<td>Including them</td>
<td>Accepting them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others’ impression</td>
<td>Detached OR aggressive adversary</td>
<td>Catalyst of or contributor to conflict</td>
<td>Seeker of communication and harmony</td>
<td>Someone who includes other’s values and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied when</td>
<td>Conflict is over</td>
<td>They can subsequently analyze the outcome</td>
<td>There is no lingering bitterness</td>
<td>There is open exploration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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75 Damian Killen and Danica Murphy, *Introduction to Type and Conflict*, 11.
76 Damian Killen and Danica Murphy, *Introduction to Type and Conflict*, 12-13.
Conflict Resolution Case Study

Knowing there are such things as conflict pairs puts spouses in a position to positively affect conflict and look for resolution that is pleasing to both husband and wife. As one example, Amy assesses as an ENFP and Zach as an INTJ. This means Amy’s conflict pair is FP and Zach’s conflict pair is TJ. Zach will tend to look quickly for an answer, some type of closure or resolution, whereas Amy tends to keep things going in order to make sure every point is covered. Both are interested in involving everyone who needs to be involved, Zach as the one who desires to make sure the process is pertinent to everyone and Amy as the one who wants to make sure all views are heard. They can build on this common ground. Zach will be able to be logical about the process and is less likely to talk about the feelings of people involved. Amy will tend toward facilitating the conflict rather than addressing it directly. Zach desires to finish the conflict, whereas Amy wants to make sure everyone has equal space. Zach’s ultimate goal is to find closure and push toward a resolution. Once things are over in Zach’s mind, he is not likely to return to the topic, but will move on to other things and act upon that to which they have agreed.

For Amy, values need to continue to be a consideration as she will not be in a hurry to resolve the conflict. Where Zach may be brief and direct and this is what he prefers from Amy, Amy will tend to continue to explore reasons for the conflict and keep things open too long for Zach. Zach may be critical and logical; Amy will take people into consideration and think less about the details surrounding the conflict. Zach will need to know that Amy is in conflict mainly because she is passionate about the topic, she is most interested in everyone having an equal voice, and she may avoid resolutions that are difficult for people to achieve. Amy needs to know that Zach is in conflict because some sort of authority has been challenged, he is most interested in hearing brief and direct input, his criticism is not personal, and he will be less likely to address
emotional components of the conflict.77 As they take these conflict pairs into consideration and have a greater understanding of the other, they will learn over time how to better communicate in the midst of conflict, taking the preference and style of the other into account.

**Myers-Briggs Type Inventory as a Discipleship Tool**

The Myers-Briggs Type Inventory has been successfully used in both the church and in marriage to assist with understanding preferences of varying personalities so that individuals and groups alike are able to benefit from learning how others will best fit and work in any given environment. When people are allowed to work in the gifts and preferences in which God designed them to function, they will be less hindered from exhibiting the fruits of the Spirit or from making disciples as they go about their daily living. According to the operational definition of discipleship for the sake of this thesis, individuals who are understood well and accepted for who God created them to be, will function at their best and in godly ways. As a husband or wife is allowed to act within their preferences and personality styles, they are likely to have more joy, patience, and love and exhibit a greater number of godly characteristics. This godly living will be so attractive to the spouse that they will naturally grow spiritually themselves and in so doing will be discipled by their husband or wife. The project that follows will examine exactly how the use of the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory as a tool in marriage is able to accomplish just that, teaching individuals on who they and their spouse were created to be personality wise, understanding and embracing each other for those God given qualities, and then producing behaviors within the marriage that will allow both spouses to be discipled.

77 Damian Killen and Danica Murphy, *Introduction to Type and Conflict*, 20-21. All of the information on the case study comes from this source.
CHAPTER 4

Methods of the Project

Each participant in this thesis project was first asked to take a 10-question survey.1 Questions 1 and 10 were open and participants were able to type in answers. Questions 2 through 9 were Likert scale questions with options to answer given as “strongly disagree,” “disagree,” “neither agree nor disagree,” “agree,” or “strongly agree.” The questions were as follows:

1. What is your full name?
2. I am presently satisfied with my marriage overall.
3. I understand the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory components of my own personality well.
4. I understand the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory components of my spouse’s personality well.
5. I am currently able to use Myers-Briggs Type Inventory components of my personality to grow spiritually in my marriage.
6. I am currently able to use Myers-Briggs Type Inventory components of my spouse’s personality to help my spouse grow spiritually.
7. I am at least somewhat equipped to tell the difference between spiritual maturity issues and personality issues in my marriage.
8. I am at least somewhat equipped to use my and my spouse’s Myers-Briggs Type Inventories to communicate in a way that would exhibit biblical values.
9. I am at least somewhat equipped to use my and my spouse’s Myers-Briggs Type Inventories to resolve conflict in a way that would exhibit biblical values.
10. Name one or more reasons why learning about your and your spouse’s Myers-Briggs Type Inventory results will be an advantage to you. (Please leave this blank ONLY if you do not know of any advantages.)

After completing the first survey, participants were asked to take a 64-question online Jung Typology Test and send the results of the assessment to the researcher.2 Both husband and wife

1 Before starting the project, each participant was informed about the project by letter and after agreeing to participate, signed a consent form. After each step in the project, each participant was sent instructions by email to indicate what needed to be accomplished next. The entire project could be finished by participants in 20 days; most participants took three to five weeks to finish the entire process.

completed his and her own test. The test consisted of each participant reading a statement and responding in one of five ways, indicating how strongly they agreed or disagreed with the statement based on their usual preference in a particular situation. The participants were to answer every question. The entire test took no more than ten minutes to complete online. At the conclusion of the test, the participant received her Myers-Briggs Type Inventory profile and this is what was then used for the next portion of the research project with each participant.

After both spouses had taken the first survey and then the Jung Typology Test, they were sent handouts where they could take notes during the meeting with the researcher about each of their profiles, each of their communication styles according to their profiles, and how they deal with conflict according to their personality types. The last page is also where they were able to write up to 10 items about communicating with their spouse to consider and put into action in the two weeks following the online meeting with the researcher. They were also asked to consider both their profiles and how they enter into conflict for the next two weeks.³ They were asked to print two copies of the handout so each person could use it to follow along and/or take notes during the teaching session. They then met as a couple with the researcher for 60-90 minutes using online video format with their handouts in front of them so they could take notes and do the exercises on the last page of the handout. Most participants took notes and every participant filled in at least a few of the blanks on the last page of the handout.

During the teaching session with the researcher, a very brief history of the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory, the purpose of the project, and the operational definition of “discipleship” was given. The four dichotomies were explained as well as what each dichotomy indicated about a person. A brief explanation was given about how the dichotomies interact and what it means for

³ See Sample Handout in Appendix.
a preference to be dominant, auxiliary, tertiary, and inferior. The profiles of each person were reviewed and differences and similarities in their dichotomies were highlighted. Biblical support for the importance of godly communication and conflict resolution was then given. Paul said, “Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves.”\(^4\) It was noted that paying attention to what a spouse needs instead of pushing for what one needs for herself is one way to regard the other as more important. Paul also said, “Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing.”\(^5\) It was noted that making adjustments to how a person communicates in response to the other’s needs will, in fact, encourage and esteem the other. Finally, Solomon pointed out that

“The heart of the righteous ponders how to answer, But the mouth of the wicked pours out evil things. The Lord is far from the wicked, But He hears the prayer of the righteous. Bright eyes gladden the heart; Good news puts fat on the bones. He whose ear listens to the life-giving reproof Will dwell among the wise. He who neglects discipline despises himself, But he who listens to reproof acquires understanding. The fear of the Lord is the instruction for wisdom, And before honor comes humility.”\(^6\)

It was noted that considering how to respond based on how the other takes in information and whether they are mulling over facts or reflecting on the hurts of others is pondering how to answer and exercising discipline with humility. Participants were told that obedience to these three passages alone could cause spiritual growth in both spouses and as a result, discipleship would occur in the marriage.

\(^4\) Phil. 2:3.  
\(^5\) 1 Thes. 5:11.  
\(^6\) Prov. 15:28-33.
The participants were challenged to obey these passages in the following two weeks in the context of using type to resource his/her spouse to draw closer to Christ, so that discipleship of the spouse would occur. A brief summary of how their profiles are likely to enter into conflict were also given, including information specific to their “conflict pair,” which is the last two letters in their Myers-Briggs Type Inventory profile. Finally, the following seven statements were given to make sure the participants understood some specific information about the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory and this project:

1. The reasons for recognizing another person’s type are to notice that there are differences between the way people see things and to grasp the worth of those differences.  

2. Recognizing the differences might resource a person to consider the other person’s perspective as valid rather than antagonistic or merely wrong or even a sin.

3. There are no “good” or “bad” types, only differences in types between people.

4. People who have differing preferences may find themselves unable to understand well, agree on values, and walk together in peace. One goal is to recognize these tendencies and work instead to notice and appreciate them toward sharpening others to be more Christ-like.

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7 Damian Killen and Danica Murphy, *Introduction to Type and Conflict*, 12-13.
8 Isabel Briggs Myers, *Introduction to Type*, 36.
9 Ibid.
10 Ibid.
5. There is much more involved in human relationships than personality type.\textsuperscript{11} Certainly, sin can never be justified because of type.

6. Another reason to understand types is to recognize that we may be blaming stereotypes or coming to general conclusions (that may not always be true) about a person rather than working to understand that person better.\textsuperscript{12}

7. The goal of this marital exercise is to better understand your spouse, better communicate with your spouse, solve conflict in a godly manner, and therefore, push your spouse toward more intimate fellowship with Christ.

The participants were asked to keep their notes handy and to review them each day if possible as they tried to apply the information they had gained about themselves and their spouses. One week after the online session, the researcher checked in with the couple by email to see if they had any questions and to encourage them to keep going. After two weeks, both participants were sent the second survey. They did not know ahead of time that it was the exact same survey. After taking the second survey, participants were thanked and they were officially finished with the project.

The purpose of the project was to see if the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory could be used as a tool for discipleship between spouses. The Myers-Briggs Type Inventory was chosen because it is “one of the most widely used psychological instruments in the world.”\textsuperscript{13} A person’s profile is easily assessed and the online Jung Typology Test is a fast, easy, free, and seemingly

\textsuperscript{11} Roger R. Pearman and Sarah C. Albritton, \textit{I'm Not Crazy, I'm Just Not You: The Real Meaning of the 16 Personality Types}, 2\textsuperscript{nd} ed. (Boston, MA: Nicholas Brealey Publishing, 2010), 36, Kindle.

\textsuperscript{12} Isabel Briggs Myers, \textit{Introduction to Type}, 42.

accurate way to access a person’s Myers-Briggs Type Inventory profile.\textsuperscript{14} It also is straightforward, it can be clearly explained when the theory is understood, and it can be understood by people as a way to know themselves and others better. The Myers-Briggs Type Inventory was not presented as the only way to know one’s personality or as a substitute for living biblical lives; it was presented only as a tool to enhance understanding of the participants’ personalities in order to resource them to live more biblical lives. The Myers-Briggs Type Inventory does not promote any personality type as better than the others or certain profiles as good and certain profiles as bad, “for all the functions are of equal value and worth, and every person has gifts.”\textsuperscript{15} As an example of how knowing about personalities might bring greater understanding toward more biblical living, participants were given information about how they and their spouses communicate and what they need during communication. By noticing what was needed on both sides, participants were then instructed to choose from options by Dunning given on the handout to focus on in the following two weeks.\textsuperscript{16} By understanding more about what their spouses need, husband and wife could work to communicate in specific ways, living out the biblical mandate to think more highly of others than they do themselves.\textsuperscript{17}

**Results and Analysis**

**Differences Between Surveys**

The results of this project were favorable toward the original desired outcome of this

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{14} “Jung Typology Test\textsuperscript{TM},” Humanmetrics Inc., accessed May 28, 2020, http://www.humanmetrics.com/cgi-win/jtypes2.asp#top.
\item \textsuperscript{15} Malcolm Goldsmith, *Knowing Me Knowing God: Exploring Your Spirituality with Myers-Briggs* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1997), 98.
\item \textsuperscript{16} Dunning’s book focuses on how the 16 different Myers-Briggs Type Inventory profiles communicate including Do’s and Don’ts for communicating with each profile and what each profile should be aware of regarding the tendencies of their profile during communication. See pp. 24-25 for the example of this for the profile INTJ.
\item \textsuperscript{17} Phil. 2:3.
\end{itemize}
researcher and indicated that, in fact, the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory as a tool can be used effectively within marriage to spur one another on toward spiritual discipleship. The results were obtained for both the testing group as a whole, including the husband and wife pairs, as well as for each participant as an individual. The eight Likert scale answers were converted from strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, and strongly agree to numerals in order for comparison and chart formatting possible. The final open-ended comment question was reviewed individually for pertinency toward the project. The data reviewed will be presented in the following section.

When analyzing the data from the project, the goal was to evaluate movement toward or within the agree and strongly agree categories. Ultimately, these categories indicate the ability of the participant to have a favorable outcome when using both spouses’ Myers-Briggs Type Inventory profiles for spiritual discipleship within their marriage. This analysis, therefore, will focus on the percentage of answers in the agree and strongly agree categories combined, both before and after the two-week project exercise, though to emphasize such movement some attention will also be given to the initial percentages of participants answering as disagree or strongly disagree.

When looking at the first Likert scale statement “I am presently satisfied with my marriage overall,” there was initially 38% who strongly agreed and 47% who agreed with that statement. On the subsequent survey there was 25% who agreed and 53% who strongly agreed. This represents a movement from 85% in these 2 categories combined to 78% after. When the researcher analyzed this data, what was notable was that there were several individuals who had originally answered the majority of their survey as strongly agreed initially and then after the training seemed to have had some new insight into an honest evaluation of their marriage and
this became reflected in their post exercise answers. There were also quite a few participants, however, that did move up from their original pre-exercise rating. The category that shows this is the response of strongly agree as it moved from only 38% initially to 53% on the second assessment.

There are several reasons this question could have given these results. One reason is that which was already alluded to, that participants had an optimistic or skewed view of their marriage to begin with, perhaps living somewhat in denial as to the health of it overall. Another plausible reason for these results is that the majority of the participants knew the researcher at some level, some even relatively closely, and they may have at first felt uncomfortable being truly honest about the state of their marriages. Over the course of the teaching session and follow-up, participants may have gained clarity about there being no judgment of them or their marriage based on their responses and that there was no reason to avoid an honest assessment of their marriage for the sake of the researcher. One final reflection on the possibility of the shift on this question may have been that as spouses began to learn more about the other and understand their preferences, they may actually have become more aware of the dissatisfaction of their spouse in certain areas and this may have opened their eyes to the fact that their marriage was not, in fact, in as good a place as they previously thought.

The next question on the survey was the statement, “I understand the Myers-Briggs Type
Inventory components of my own personality well.” This question had some amazing results. On the first survey, there was a scattering of answers across all five categories with only 44% of participants answering with an “agree” or “strongly agree” response. On the post survey responses, however, 100% of participants answered the statement with “agree” or “strongly agree” as their answer. This clearly shows that the exercise the participants were taken through did indeed help them learn more about their own personality.

The question which followed was similar to the previous question, only geared toward the spouse. The statement read, “I understand the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory components of my spouse’s personality well.” In this category, again, all five categories were represented on the first survey, however 41% of participants answered in the negative with a response of “strongly disagree” or “disagree” and only 25% answered with an “agree” or “strongly agree” and of those 25% only 3% answered “strongly agree.” In contrast, the second survey had 100% of participants answer this same question with either “agree” or “strongly agree,” with 19% indicating “strongly agree.” These results followed the results of the question before in that not only could individuals benefit from using the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory to understand themselves better, as it turns out, it also worked as a tool for them to better understand the personality of their spouse.

The next statement on the surveys read, “I am currently able to use Myers-Briggs Type
Inventory components of my personality to grow spiritually in my marriage.” Prior to the teaching session the participants answered with 53% “disagree” or “strongly disagree;” only 9% answered with “agree” and 0% answered with “strongly agree.” After the teaching and exercise, there were no participants who answered either “disagree” or “strongly disagree” and 94% answered in the “agree” and “strongly agree” categories. This result was not originally expected. The main result that was expected was in how one spouse, in learning about the other, would be able to spur the other toward spiritual growth. It was not originally expected that an individual participant would think they would grow spiritually simply because they learned more about their own personality through the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory.

The fifth Likert scale statement was similar to the previous one, but related to the spouse, “I am currently able to use Myers-Briggs Type Inventory components of my spouse’s personality to help my spouse grow spiritually.” This question had some very striking movement on the responses. On the first survey, the participants answered 63% as “strongly disagree” or “disagree” with 0% in either the “agree” or “strongly agree” categories. In stark contrast, on the follow-up survey, the participants answered 81% “agree,” 3% “strongly agree” and 0% in either the “strongly disagree” or “disagree” categories. This represents very clear data suggesting the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory can play a distinct role in resourcing husbands and wives to help their spouses grow spiritually.
The next question was one that the researcher felt to be a poor question after reviewing the initial pre-teaching survey results. The statement read, “I am at least somewhat equipped to tell the difference between maturity issues and personality issues in my marriage.” Participants answered nearly 66% “agree” and 13% “strongly agree” for a total of just over 78% affirmative responses to this statement. These results were not anticipated. It was anticipated that individuals would not be able to identify the difference between maturity issues and personality issues before training so these initial responses were surprising. This result was not something further evaluated in this project. In the second survey, the results still showed some positive movement as the participants answered a hearty 97% in the affirmative with a response of “agree” or “strongly agree.”

The final two Likert scale statements would address the areas of communication and conflict resolution within a marriage. The first statement read, “I am at least somewhat equipped to use my and my spouse’s Myers-Briggs Type Inventories to communicate in a way that would exhibit biblical values.” On the first survey, the responses ranged across the bottom four answer categories with 41% answering “disagree” or “strongly disagree” and 0% answering “strongly agree.” In the follow-up survey post training, however, there were 100% of participants who answered “agree” or “strongly agree” with 22% answering “strongly agree.” This result was very positive; it indicated that couples who learned the personality preferences of each other at least believe they are much more likely to communicate in a way that is God-honoring, respectful, and honoring to one another as well.

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18 The benefit to having participants understand this key difference is that when they recognize that personality issues can create a picture that can occasionally appear like spiritual immaturity to those not fully understanding their spouse, it can help to break down barriers within the marriage for potentially improved spiritual discipleship.
The last Likert statement in the survey read, “I am at least somewhat equipped to use my and my spouse’s Myers-Briggs Type Inventories to resolve conflict in a way that would exhibit biblical values.” The data for this statement was very similar to the one on communication, with 38% answering “strongly disagree” or “disagree” on the first survey and 100% answering “agree” or “strongly agree” on the final survey. This was also an extremely positive response. Again, with the use of the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory, spouses at least believe they can resolve conflict in a more godly manner.

In reviewing results specific to each individual, similar patterns emerged. The similar patterns give validity to the idea that the results are likely applicable to a majority of individuals (rather than the movement toward the affirmative was the result of just a few individuals moving to a large degree). All of the individual results will not be presented, but they all show a large number of participants moving in the direction of affirmation of the statements rather than a few individuals moving to a greater extent.

The question with the least amount of change when reviewing the data of individuals, was the first Likert question regarding marital satisfaction. Most participants did not move on this question and most marked “agree” or “strongly agree” both before and after the training that they were satisfied with their marriage overall. The other question that did not have a lot of
individual movement was the question on understanding the difference between spiritual
maturity issues and personality issues within their marriage. While some did make significant
moves on this answer, 59% responded the same on the first and second surveys.

On every other question in the survey, there was a minimum of 72% or greater participant
movement in a positive direction after having received the teaching provided by the researcher.
This suggested the movement in a positive direction happened regardless of temperament or
Myers-Briggs Type Inventory profile. This provides great hope for application of this study to
future participants in terms of the positive benefit the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory can provide
when considering its role in fostering spiritual maturity and thus spousal discipleship.

Anecdotal Results

In addition to the Likert scale questions on the first and second surveys, participants were asked to name one or more reasons why learning about their and their spouse’s Myers-Briggs Type Inventory results would be an advantage to them (which was question 10). While there were very encouraging and insightful responses even in the pre-exercise portion of the surveys, the post-exercise survey responses were particularly favorable in terms of the value this project held for the participants after just two short weeks of implementing the information they had learned in the teaching session with the researcher. Below are a few samples of some of the responses that were given by both husband and wife participants.19

- Wife A: "Understanding how we do things differently has helped us approach conflict
differently. When we are not on the same page, I can step back and recognize it might be

19 All of the quotes are directly from the last question on the surveys of the individuals. Any mistakes in grammar or sentence structure are from the participant and not the researcher.
a personality difference rather than a problem with something I have done. It has led me to pray for us in different ways, too.”

• Husband C: “I think it particularly brings attention to the differences that we probably already knew, but it reinforces the importance of recognizing our differences and working to consider them accurately when communicating and experiencing conflict. It also allows us to understand that some areas of conflict are simply due to our lack of willingness to adjust our communication style to help our spouse understand better. I need to keep in mind that we see things very differently due to the "filters" we use to process information and deal with those around us. I found this combined inventory to be beneficial, partially because we saw our results side-by-side. Thanks for inviting us to participate!”

• Wife C: “Understanding that my spouse needs closure can help me “stick with a discussion” until resolution instead of becoming frustrated and wanting to stop. Understanding that my spouse has a personality that can become frustrated when I take too long to decide or change my mind once I have decided, will encourage me to give him faster and more unwavering decisions. (also to meet deadlines on items he has asked me to complete/address) Understanding my own personality has challenged me to be open minded and willing to consider new ideas /possibilities.”

• Husband F: “Understanding both of our types helps me to better communicate and to better understand my spouse. This helps me avoid misunderstandings which might lead to or escalate existing conflict. And this helps me work to resolve conflicts better too.”
• Wife F: “I have found that understanding my instinctive response to conflict helps me recognize when it’s happening. Hopefully I’ll grow in being able to work through that instinctive response to a healthy, biblical response. Knowing my spouse’s instinctive response helps me to be patient in the moment and not take words, actions or facial expressions personally. It helps me see past the tense moment and see him for who God created him to be. “

• Husband I: “1. Learning how she processes information gives me a perspective on what to do or not to do in our relationship. Knowing how different my spouse and I think helps me approach our marriage / conversations in a better light. I’ve learned to really listen not just be present when we interact.”

• Wife M: “I think learning about our personality types is an advantage because it helps me understand better what makes him “tick” and why he does some of the things he does, or reacts in ways that he does to certain situations. Understanding those things gives me a chance to step back and take my feelings out Of the equation to realize that it’s not all about me, but that I need to understand and respect our personality differences and try to resolve conflict and communicate in ways that he understands based on his type.”

• Husband O: “I want to have Christ at the center of our marriage. If knowing her MB traits helps me do that better, we both benefit.”

• Wife P: “Learning more about our personality types opened up better avenues for communication than what we were experiencing. It made me pause to consider his viewpoint before responding or reacting.”
These responses make it clear that the participants, whether husband or wife, gained understanding about their spouse by having participated in the project and training exercises. Having gained understanding about their spouse regarding their unique preferences and potential needs in terms of communication and conflict resolution led to a more patient and loving approach to interacting with each other even in early stages of understanding one another better.

In terms of spiritual application, reading comments such as being led to pray in different ways for a marriage could indicate that spiritual growth occurred and even that the wiring God has given each person causes him/her to respond in unique ways. Acceptance of one’s spouse, better communication, and more appropriate conflict resolution skills were a few of the themes present in the comments; the comments suggested that participants gained something that was needed to grow in godly understanding. These are all components which foster discipleship between husband and wife and transform marriages into what God designed them to be, exhibiting more and more fruits of the Spirit.

**Lessons Learned: What Do Results Mean Practically?**

The results indicate that the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory can be used as a tool for discipleship between spouses. The data as well as the anecdotal responses confirm these positive results. The first observation is that spouses being able to better understand both their own and their spouses’ personalities can lead to more godly interaction and thus create a greater potential for discipleship within the marriage. Part of this positive result might be that as people learn about their spouses, they are more likely to accept them for who they are. Acceptance creates an environment for growth; when people know they are accepted, they can be vulnerable and open
to change. Understanding another person, including how she is different, is also vital to growth in that it is required for influence and effective communication. Sometimes people can look at others who are different as “less than;” this may come from having to prove as a child that they were worth something. Accepting and loving others for who they are creates a safe place to grow as disciples. Knowing someone well and a resulting acceptance is also necessary to make sure others know a person is loyal and will stay in relationship with them; placing labels on people as a form of nonacceptance, causes separation and as a result, people may not be open to growth.

It is significant that a spouse believes that greater understanding of a spouse brings the opportunity for discipleship of the spouse. However, a person must first understand herself before she can more fully understand others. Knowing the other provides for acceptance of the other, but the results also indicated that spouses could grow spiritually just by knowing more about their own personalities. ‘St. Teresa of Avila wrote in The Way of Perfection: “Almost all problems in the spiritual life stem from a lack of self-knowledge.”’ If St. Teresa of Avila is correct, greater knowledge of self can mean a person is in a better position to grow spiritually by addressing those problems. As one example, a “problem” of today is a lack of satisfaction, in

23 Max Lucado, God is With You Every Day (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2015), 305.
25 Peter Scazzero, Emotionally Healthy Spirituality: It’s Impossible to be Spiritually Mature While Remaining Emotionally Immature (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 65.
anything. Everyone wants it and few people find it, but a lack of satisfaction comes about in part because people are not meeting each other’s needs.\textsuperscript{26} By knowing each other more intimately, spouses can better meet each other’s needs, satisfaction can increase, and discipleship can occur.

Greater understanding of self and one’s spouse brings about an environment for growth and therefore, discipleship. Greater understanding of self and one’s spouse also allows for more godly communication. Communication is always difficult and is often one of the principal characteristics of marriages that are in trouble.\textsuperscript{27} In fact, it is seemingly odd that “those we love are the ones we are most likely to hurt and may not always be the ones with whom we communicate the most effectively.”\textsuperscript{28} Despite best efforts to treat those we love well, issues like a breakdown in communication can continue to create barriers which lead to hurting one’s spouse. Language itself is confusing.\textsuperscript{29} A lack of good communication, including ineffective listening, can cause numerous misunderstandings.\textsuperscript{30} Good listening, however, is a responsibility that every Christian has; one author even called listening a “ministry.”\textsuperscript{31} If Christians have a responsibility to other Christians to be good listeners and if miscommunication in marriage is a cause for struggle, then Christians need to make sure they doing everything possible to become better communicators. One way to do that is to learn about a person’s personality profile. If two

\textsuperscript{26} Sean Vollendorf, \textit{Unsatisfied: Finding the Life You Can’t Stop Looking For} (Fayetteville, AR: CMM Press, 2016), 7, 144.

\textsuperscript{27} Becky Hunter, \textit{Being Good to Your Husband on Purpose} (Lake Mary, FL: Creation House Press, 2001), 112.

\textsuperscript{28} Frank D Fincham, F. Georgia Paleari, and Camillo Regalia, “Forgiveness in Marriage: The Role of Relationship Quality, Attributions, and Empathy,” \textit{Personal relationships} 9, no. 1 (March 2002): 239.

\textsuperscript{29} Mortimer J. Adler, \textit{How to Speak How to Listen}, 136.

\textsuperscript{30} Becky Hunter, \textit{Being Good to Your Husband on Purpose}, 112-113.

people see reality in different ways, which is what happens when different needs while communicating according to profile are unknown, communication is hindered. Knowing a person’s profile allows for communication with biblical values. As couples communicate in more godly and loving ways, it would seem to follow that they will foster a marital environment that will encourage spiritual growth and thus, discipleship will occur.

Godly communication is not the only thing that is increased with knowledge of personality profile. How to resolve conflict in more godly ways was also a result of spouses participating in the project. Husbands and wives seemed to realize that by gaining better understanding of the profile of their spouses, they could take a step back in the moments where conflict and disagreements arose in order to recognize the perspective of their spouse. According to some of the statements on the second survey, simply gaining some perspective on how each person does things differently led to approaching conflict differently for participants. Removing the blame that might otherwise be present in a conflict situation was another benefit of understanding personality and profile of one’s spouse. When one does not see the preferences of her spouse as the reason for reacting a certain way in conflict, it is easy to take comments and actions personally and quickly get put on the defensive. Defensiveness only further escalates conflict. The project teaching seemed to foster the ability of participants to acquire key information to understand their spouse in order to respond in a more godly way during conflict. Participants even cited their ability to be more like Christ in the midst of conflict by having participated in the study and exercises.

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Learning specifics about personality in one’s spouse also led to improved conflict resolution as adjustments were made in the need for closure with a conflict or leaving a conflict open for a bit to revisit later, depending on spousal preferences. Husbands and wives gained the ability to speak to each other in terms of what would resonate with a given profile type or personality preference. Recognizing a spouse might need more time to process was another key benefit that some types gained from their participation in these exercises. Couples spent some of the teaching time learning about areas of potential struggle and areas where trouble might occur between profiles. The mere awareness of these high-risk areas proved to be beneficial with couples noting they were able to actually avoid conflict by simply being aware of these pitfalls they might face.

All of these specific adjustments to communication ultimately were instrumental in more godly conflict resolution by creating fewer misunderstandings which led to avoiding some conflicts in the first place. As couples move toward being able to resolve conflict in a way that reflects biblical values, they are likely to have less distraction in the home due to conflict. Less distraction from conflict allows for more peace in the home and fosters an environment where it is most possible to encourage spiritual growth and discipleship of each other.

Summary of Lessons Learned

1. Learning about a spouse’s personality profile creates an environment for discipleship.
   This probably comes about because knowing someone better allows for acceptance, love, and loyalty to the other.

2. Greater self-knowledge allows for spiritual growth in a person because they are in a better position to solve spiritual problems so discipleship occurs.

3. Greater understanding of self and spouse brings about the opportunity for more godly
communication, creating an environment for discipleship to occur.

4. Greater understanding of self and spouse brings about the opportunity for more godly conflict resolution, creating an environment for discipleship to occur.

**Two Specific Case Studies**

**Married Couple #1: INTJ Wife and INTP Husband**

Two case studies will be presented using two couples who participated in the study. The profiles for each of the four people involved in the case studies were given in Chapter 2. The first couple had the same type except for the last dichotomy, the J and the P. Sandra assessed as an INTJ and her husband, Alex, assessed as an INTP. While there will be many preferences and characteristics which overlap due to their identical first three dichotomies, it is quite interesting to see how the final dichotomy variation between the two can impact the overall profile and the way they may interact, communicate, have conflict, raise children, or come to understand one another.

Generally speaking, the INTJ profile will view life from an “everything has room for improvement” lens while the INTP will have “a love of problem-solving.” Sandra, as an INTJ will be organized with a broad, “big picture” view of most things in life though she will also be able to see a lot of details. She will need closure by finishing everything in excellence with confidence and self-assuredness. Sandra will be able to take care of herself without the help of others better than any other type as an INTJ and will love to make everything better, even working to ameliorate relationships, when there is a lack of improvement. Sandra will struggle with faultfinding, but not just with others as this is common even within themselves as INTJs.

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34 Ibid., 226-230.
As someone who prefers to achieve at high standards and work without failure, Sandra will need to focus on her God-given strengths to overcome even minor deterrents.\(^{35}\)

In contrast, the INTP profile will seem more like “the absentminded professor” as his profile causes him to evaluate (T) the many possibilities (N) around him by using inner reasoning (I).\(^{36}\) Alex, the INTP, will be unlike his INTJ wife, Sandra, however, in that he will not need closure but rather will always welcome new information which he allows to change the data he is evaluating. Alex will use that new and constantly changing data to put each new piece into place and thus the overall picture for the INTP will constantly be changing, which can in fact become quite a problem for this type. While both Sandra and Alex strive for excellence, a key difference in the P preference will be that Alex will never hesitate to make additional corrections as he takes in new data and this can exhaust others and even himself. This constant review of new information and inward processing of it can make Alex seem aloof to others. While Sandra will want to finish everything to closure in actuality, Alex will seek to have mental closure and if the information he has acquired allows him to move on he may not finish what he starts in reality.\(^{37}\)

Others may see both Sandra and Alex as detached or uncaring, but they do not see themselves this way. Others may not want to discuss the way Sandra does and may even take offense at how she seems argumentative. Sandra as an INTJ may also feel alone in the world.\(^{38}\) Alex will be caught up in his thinking about what he is experiencing and considering ways to


\(^{36}\) Otto Kroeger and Janet M. Thuesen, *Type Talk*, 243.

\(^{37}\) Ibid., 243-247.

\(^{38}\) Ibid., 226-228.
challenge others which may create barriers with his type.39

When it comes to parenting, Sandra and Alex may not see eye to eye in all things. For example, Sandra, as an INTJ, will want to push their kids toward self-reliance and autonomy; the process will not be as important as the end goal, even if it means her child is uncomfortable.40 While Alex, her INTP husband, will also want their children to be independent, his parenting will be focused on the independence of thought. Alex’s emphasis on independence will cause him to provide the children information or his recommendation but he will not force them to do things in certain ways.41 Alex will also fail to be good with giving the children detailed instructions and will likely not provide close monitoring of the children when left in charge.42

Sandra and Alex have a lot in common in the ways they communicate and what they need when communicating. They both desire to do things without the help of others, both will give appraisals and probe for more information, and both are creative thinkers. Interestingly, neither will be initially emotional or want to be given details, especially before they know the broader picture (INTP) or structure of things (INTJ).43

Where Sandra and Alex will struggle with communicating with each other is in that Alex will want to continually consider new information and make needed changes, while Sandra will feel settled at some point and then cannot easily make changes. Alex will not necessarily express frequent appreciation of Sandra and she, as an INTJ, will need to hear it. When it comes to decision-making, Alex will need information in broad-brush strokes and may need more time to

39 Otto Kroeger and Janet M. Thuesen, *Type Talk*, 243-244.
40 Ibid., 227-228.
41 Ibid., 240-241.
43 Ibid., 24-25 (INTJ), 32-33 (INTP).
come to his decisions. Sandra, in contrast to Alex, will need sound, empirical information and will tend to come to quick solutions.  

One of the most critical components within a successful marriage will be how a couple handles conflict. With that in mind, Sandra, the INTJ, will be frustrated with others’ refusal to see her way is the best way and will dislike having to explain to others the choices she has already made. In reality, Sandra may not see things as clearly as she thinks and may focus too much on unimportant details. Alex, as an INTP, will need to take in a lot of information and will need a considerable amount of time to determine what is needed. Additionally, Alex may get too focused on even slight discrepancies and become confused while exhibiting passive-aggression and resistance to what he considers imposing requests. These two types may struggle in the midst of an argument as they each search for the closure that is comfortable to their type.

Both Sandra and Alex are also the NT temperament. While the NTs exhibit great leadership and drive and do things with excellence and great competency, being married to the same NT temperament could present some challenges. Both may be competitive and stubborn as they each cling to their belief that they are right and are not quick to give in to the other. They might attempt to improve what is around them, but they may not agree on what it means to be an improvement in any given area, so conflict would have the potential to arise in that discrepancy. The NT is also the temperament where there is a world of possibilities and the

45 Damian Killen and Danica Murphy, *Introduction to Type and Conflict*, 27.
46 Ibid., 31.
focus is on the future and what could be. Both could also be very demanding and this could frustrate someone who is equally demanding. NTs are historically unforgiving of mistakes made and are as hard on themselves as they are on others. This could create a bit of a discouraging atmosphere in the home when both husband and wife are of the NT temperament. On a positive note, however, both Sandra and Alex will get a lot of things done and there will not be a lot of idle time. Their home will likely be one filled with productivity and excellent work.  

Overall, the INTJ (Sandra) and the INTP (Alex) will work well together if they can learn to account for these key differences in communication, conflict, and child-rearing and adjust accordingly. They may choose to make concessions in the different areas of marriage and family life, allowing each to have room to express themselves as the unique individuals they are with their preferences varying only in the fourth dichotomy of the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory profiles they possess.

Married Couple #2: ISTJ Wife and ENFP Husband

The second case study will appear drastically different from the first in that this couple’s profiles are opposite in every one of the four dichotomies. Trudi assessed as an ISTJ and her husband, Larry, assessed as an ENFP. This creates many opportunities for them to learn each other’s differences and find ways to express their complementary natures. This, of course, puts the emphasis on the positive even though the truth is this couple will naturally struggle in many areas. They both may become easily frustrated with their lack of understanding the other’s perspective and preferences.

Larry and Trudi have very different Myers-Briggs Type Inventory profiles, which means they also have different temperaments. While the temperament is simply a subset of the Myers-

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Briggs Type Inventory that looks at only two of the dichotomies, it can prove to be a helpful overview of personality. Trudi as an SJ temperament will work hard to be dutiful and useful to others. She will be nurturing and generous to others.\textsuperscript{49} She will be focused in the present and will be practical. She can be influential in the environment around her such as her home and family.\textsuperscript{50} She will likely be seen more as the worker rather than as someone who is all about play. Trudi will be known as one who pushes through and makes sure things are getting done around her.\textsuperscript{51}

In contrast, Larry is an NF temperament and this is a temperament that is less common and much more challenging to understand for basically anyone who is not an NF.\textsuperscript{52} He will probably be drawn to be a voice for the voiceless and helper of those who cannot fight for themselves.\textsuperscript{53} He will work to be true to himself and to continue to understand who he is meant to be. He will probably feel a bit alone in the world as he will also struggle to make sense of the other temperaments which will account for about 88\% of the population.\textsuperscript{54} He may seek accolades for what he has accomplished or done, but this may not be granted by his wife or family. That said, Larry will likely be willing to invest great amounts into any relationship that is important to him.\textsuperscript{55}

While Larry and Trudi may not be working in the same way or toward the same thing, they will both be committed to the work that they are drawn to and they will be diligent and hardworking to accomplish it.\textsuperscript{56} Trudi will also be more apt to respond to things that are

\textsuperscript{50} Roy M. Oswald and Otto Kroeger, \textit{Personality Type and Religious Leadership}, 75-76.
\textsuperscript{51} David Keirsey and Marilyn Bates, \textit{Please Understand Me}, 41-43.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., 58-59.
\textsuperscript{53} Roy M. Oswald and Otto Kroeger, \textit{Personality Type and Religious Leadership}, 82.
\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., 60.
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., 65, 47.
immediate needs around her and Larry may not readily see those; these different perspectives could be one source of marital frustration as they may not often share the same goals and insights.57

Generally speaking, the theme for the ISTJ profile of Trudi is living a life of “doing what should be done” while her husband, Larry, will exhibit a key life theme as an ENFP of “giving life an extra squeeze.” Trudi, the ISTJ, has the profile most conditioned to do what needs to be done, but will also be the most furtive and she will take in information according to what is happening immediately around her and then internally and objectively place it in its proper place. Trudi may appear to be extroverted to others because she will always strive to excel in every activity and as a result, will likely land in places of leadership. Most likely, she will be neat and organized and will expect others to mirror her own qualities in this regard.

Larry, in contrast, as an ENFP will be social, friendly, and spirited. He will enjoy dealing with lots of people and situations, will love praising others and being praised, and will be very aware of what is happening in the people surrounding him. Larry may make others uncomfortable if he reveals what he knows, but others will love that he is loyal, sincere, and thoughtful of them. Larry may feel at times as if he does not know himself because he is working so hard to relate to others. As an ENFP, Larry may appear to desire something he lacks, which may cause some anxiety for his ISTJ wife.

Others may see Trudi as rigid and prone to tradition but also as dependable and determined. Trudi may not show much verbal affection because likely she will be more about showing care by doing rather than speaking. In contrast, others may see Larry as friendly and outgoing, but also as someone who gets easily distracted by all the people and situations so he

57 Roy M. Oswald and Otto Kroeger, Personality Type and Religious Leadership, 75.
does not follow through on what is most needed.

When it comes to raising children, one will see some distinct differences in how Trudi and Larry see parenting roles. Trudi will be very serious about parenting as she holds firmly to her belief that everyone has a proper position in the family and everyone, including her spouse, Larry, should follow the directives they have set in place. It is difficult for Trudi to relax and she will make sure that time is not wasted and that everyone stays on top of fulfilling their familial duties. Larry will tend to make everything fun; the more people are having fun, the more fun family life is and even work in the home becomes just another creative way to find enjoyment in life. In approaching parenting in this manner, Larry’s children will be nurtured, family activities will be festive, and growth will be encouraged. Both parents will add an important dimension to parenting, however, Trudi may be seen as the parent who gets things done and Larry may be seen as the fun one by his children.

When it comes to communication within the marriage, Trudi will be true to the ISTJ nature as she remains pragmatic, diligent, task oriented, and attaches details to what she is doing. She will trust her life experiences as she communicates with Larry and she will desire to hear what it is that Larry needs to have her get done. She will expect the family to follow instructions and she will remain focused and will clearly express what is relevant to the current topic of discussion. When communicating through feedback, Trudi will be likely to give reformative feedback rather than encouraging feedback. 58

Larry and Trudi will likely struggle within communication because Trudi will want to get things accomplished and Larry will want to make sure everyone is doing well in every activity.

Trudi will keep track of everything that needs to be done with exactness and Larry will remain focused on making everything fun. This will likely bother Trudi since she will be task-oriented and will want things accomplished efficiently without sidetracking for play. If family members are less than productive, she may become critical. Larry will remain focused on people and what is happening with them and will, therefore, likely not accomplish enough for Trudi. He will likely be more focused on encouraging family members toward growth rather than telling them what to do differently, and this will mean things will be delayed in getting fixed or accomplished. Trudi will tend to be matter of fact, possibly without being thoughtful and Larry will be thoughtful, possibly without saying difficult things that need to be said; both sides are needed in order for them both to be effectual.\(^{59}\)

As one can imagine, a marriage between an ISTJ and an ENFP will not be without conflict. Their opposing pairs in every area will leave plenty of room for growth over the course of their marriage as Larry and Trudi work to understand each other better and make adjustments. That stated, conflict will likely arise as Trudi prefers to live life according to rules, focusing on having more information rather than embracing her emotions. If her authority as wife or mother is being challenged, or if tasks, esteeming of rules, and follow through are lacking, she will find herself in conflict. She will want to solve any of the problems and then move on, keeping people and relationships out of the equation. The stress of conflict may, at times, cause Trudi to appear impertinent or even retreat entirely.\(^{60}\) She would do well to be intentional to affirm Larry on a daily basis. As Larry receives affirmation, even his brain chemistry will change and he may even

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\(^{60}\) Damian Killen and Danica Murphy, *Introduction to Type and Conflict*, 24.
accomplish tasks at the “higher standard” that Trudi desires. Larry will also need to make sure Trudi feels valued. As he notices all she accomplishes, he will do well to recognize her for that; recognition of her strengths will bring out the best in Trudi. Larry will, in contrast, make every effort to be enthusiastic and a good listener and will most assuredly make sure people are considered. Larry will be in conflict when he senses an attack on his values or on someone about whom he cares. People will follow Larry because of his kindness and energy. While Trudi will finish everything, Larry will frequently leave things undone, failing to finish what he started. Trudi will be grounded in facts and will need time to think about what she is facing. Under stress, Larry may try to do more activities than he is able and may become frantic with emotions and tunnel vision.

While to others and even themselves, Larry and Trudi may appear to be opposite and conflicted at every turn, the reality is they can make an amazing team as they complement each other. Isabel Myers seemed to believe that the more alike a husband and wife’s profiles were, the more likely a marriage would be to last. This does not have to be the case. When a person is attracted to and marries her opposite profile, both spouses will do well to embrace the differences and notice what each can contribute rather than choosing to fight at each point hoping they can somehow change the other. Larry and Trudi will struggle with these differences and may often find themselves feeling frustrated, but if they can focus on realizing that their spouse is merely expressing opposing preferences and that neither is right nor wrong, they will be more likely to

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63 Damian Killen and Danica Murphy, *Introduction to Type and Conflict*, 34.

64 Isabel Briggs Myers, *Gifts Differing*, 324.
create an environment where there is hope for a lasting and peaceful relationship. That environment will, in turn, allow for spiritual growth and discipleship will occur.

CHAPTER 5

Review of Results

This project was about spouses using each other’s personality types as a tool for discipleship of each other. The first component is just to make sure that spouses are making disciples of each other. It seems few in the Church consider this a need, but before anyone can go and make disciples in the world, everyone should consider first making disciples at home. The second component is for spouses to use the personality types of both themselves and their spouses to make sure they are spurring each other on to love and good deeds.¹

“The fear that your marriage may not make it poses the greatest threat to your marital climate.”² Husbands and wives may be afraid that the commitment they have made may not last. They may be looking for answers to this problem in hopes of securing a lasting love with their spouse. When understanding of each other can occur and kind and loving respect and honor for the preferences of the other can be lived out in daily life, the marriage is likely to be strengthened. A strong marriage may set the climate for discipleship and good deeds to occur. This was the ultimate goal of this project.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Using the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory

There are both advantages and disadvantages to using the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory in any exercise. One advantage is that millions of people have used the assessment and it

¹ Heb. 10:24.
² Tim Muehlhoff, Marriage Forecasting: Changing the Climate of Your Relationship One Conversation at a Time (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2010), 40.
continues to be one of the most popular ways for people to gain greater understanding of themselves and the people around them.\textsuperscript{3} It is also easily accessible. It provides a way for people to observe the actions of others and identify them as personality-driven rather than being personal or even antagonistic, which is especially important in a marriage.\textsuperscript{4} Another advantage for spouses is that the differences that were seen as attractive at the beginning of a relationship but become annoyances can be understood as part of who the other person is. True understanding of a spouse can then allow for differences to be seen as complementary and not nonreciprocal.\textsuperscript{5} Understanding another person’s personality profile “can unfreeze a frozen relationship, maintain a working one, make a good one even better, and bring calm to even the most turbulent interpersonal waters.”\textsuperscript{6}

Understanding personality profiles can also enable spouses to communicate and resolve conflict in ways more true to who they are and to who their spouses are; peaceful communication and conflict can then promote godliness in both spouses. For example, where a person lands on the J-P dichotomy can impact every conversation. Whereas a P may talk about any number of topics just as points of conversation, without having any conviction about any of the topics, a J would prefer to talk about one thing at a time and will most likely state strong views about that topic. The strong reaction from the J may cause the P to duplicate a strong reaction in opposition to the J, resulting in the P strongly defending a view on a topic when she really only wanted to have a discussion.\textsuperscript{7} As another consideration, in conflict, an F will not even desire to get into an

\textsuperscript{3} Kendra Cherry, “An Overview of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator.”
\textsuperscript{4} Otto Kroeger and Janet M. Thuesen, \textit{Type Talk}, 143.
\textsuperscript{5} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{6} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{7} Ibid., 132-133.
argument, will make everything a personal issue, and may just want to move on so everyone is at peace again. A T will be make logical decisions and will fail to understand the need for any emotions at all.\(^8\) Understanding profiles and therefore understanding that these types of interactions can occur, in communication and conflict, but also in everyday situations, can equip spouses to remain calm and respond in ways that will allow both people to be who they are.

There are disadvantages to using the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory as well. Isabel Myers presented one glaring example, although she did not present it as a disadvantage. It is that each person must ultimately determine their own true type.\(^9\) People, then, need to figure things out for themselves and cannot completely rely on the assessment; this points toward an assessment that may or may not accurately describe a person’s personality. The need for caution is best demonstrated by a journal article written by James Michael. Michael adamantly advocates for caution when using the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory because Myers and Briggs did not hold tightly to Jung’s theories.\(^10\) One example of this lack of consistency between Myers and Briggs and Jung is the E-I measurement; Myers and Briggs promoted the idea that everyone is one or the other, but Jung probably would have said that anyone can switch back and forth on the E-I preference.\(^11\) Michael also notes that knowing one’s type may cause some people to think they are limited in how they can see or do things.\(^12\) Finally, Michael points out that the Myers-Briggs

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\(^8\) Otto Kroeger and Janet M. Thuesen, *Type Talk*, 145.


\(^11\) Ibid., 73.

\(^12\) Ibid., 74.
Type Inventory does not always predict behavior, especially in companies where the company’s intrinsic demands call for certain behavior; whether or not a certain profile can perform well cannot be based entirely on Myers-Briggs Type Inventory results.\(^{13}\)

There are other disadvantages to using the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory. People may be hired for certain positions or in certain companies based only on their personality assessment results. Using only a personality assessment to find qualified individuals will limit applicants.\(^{14}\) This limit would also be inappropriate when one is looking for a mate or even while trying to understand a spouse. Berens advocates for making sure someone using typology does not stereotype; this indicates a potential for people to generalize and stereotype too much to truly understand a person or situation.\(^{15}\) Stereotyping rarely accomplishes best outcomes and goals. Another tendency that is inappropriate when using the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory is for people to think the assessment results limit their behaviors; this type of thinking may unnecessarily limit growth in an individual.\(^{16}\) [As a side note, this way of thinking is the responsibility of the person taking the assessment or the person informing someone about the results of the assessment. “Type theory has always spoken of its polarities as preferences, recognizing that the demands of an individual’s circumstances, responsibilities and moral

\(^{13}\) James M. Michael, “Using the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator as a Tool for Leadership Development? Apply With Caution,” 76-78. Michael is not advocating for the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator to never be used. He believes it can, in fact, be an adequate tool, but people who are training should take the limitations of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator into account in order to train employees how to act proficiently within the company.


\(^{16}\) Ibid., 20.
convictions often modify behavior from what is intrinsically preferred.”¹⁷] For Christians, a personality type may seem to be a type of unfair, stereotyping that, in addition, does not take into consideration the role of the Holy Spirit to bring conviction and cause changes to be made in a person’s life.¹⁸ One author even called the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory a “modern astrology” and stated the profiles “read like horoscopes from Camelot.”¹⁹ It would be a definite disadvantage for any Christian to use their personality profile to replace Scripture as the template for biblical living or the need for repentance from bad behavior or to think an understanding of their profile is enough to make personal changes so that the Holy Spirit no longer has a role of conviction and comfort in a person’s daily life.

Need for Further Study

The Myers-Briggs Type Inventory is just one tool that can be used for discipleship. It can be an effective tool, especially if utilized with understanding of how and why it works as a personality assessment and if people who use it are using it to gain understanding rather than thinking it will dictate all behavior. There is need for further study, however. While it may not be effective to try to determine whether or not each dichotomy is attracted to the use of a personality assessment as a tool for discipleship, it would be interesting to see if different temperaments or personality types are initially drawn to the idea of a personality assessment as a tool for discipleship or the extent to which they might use any tool for intentional discipleship. This means that a large number of people with each type of temperament and profile should be

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followed to see if the effectiveness of the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory as a discipleship tool would reveal any differences. For this project, “the focus was on personality rather than on marriage, with the latter simply providing the context for inquiry.”\textsuperscript{20} Obviously, the current project is not the first project to use marriage as the context for observing the use of a personality assessment, but it is still important to note that the state of a marriage before entering into a process that requires openness for greater understanding and change may impact the results.

There are also other factors that need to be studied in order to determine the effectiveness of the tool. Age of participants may be a factor since the dominant, auxiliary, tertiary, and inferior preferences are developed at different ages.\textsuperscript{21} Which attitude or function of the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory is being developed or used may impact the effectiveness of the tool. The number of years a couple is married may be linked to age, but also may be a factor in itself. Christians who are older, either in physical years or in number of years they have been Christians, may be more willing to use the tool because they have a greater understanding of the necessity of discipleship. They may also be less willing to try something new because they have tried many programs and materials previously and may feel they are in a good place in marriage so a new tool is not needed. Responses of some of the participants may have been predisposed toward a positive impact since many of them were relatives and close friends of the researcher.

There are numerous facts that may also influence the use of the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory as a tool for discipleship. Other assessments that have been taken and how much is known about personality assessments may influence some positively or negatively, depending on


\textsuperscript{21} W. Harold Grant, Magdala Thompson, and Thomas E. Clarke, \textit{From Image to Likeness}, 20-24.
experience. The number of marriages or children, gender, or even the number of years participants have attended church may all be factors to consider. The amount of time a couple has to implement the tool, the amount of accountability (i.e. a researcher or a small group), the amount of understanding a couple gains before using the tool, and promotion of the tool as part of a program in a church may all impact the effectiveness of the tool. One might postulate which factors might positively or negatively affect outcomes, but with so little research that has been done using the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory as a tool for discipleship, it is difficult to predict. Multiple studies could be taken, using numerous groups of people, over a large number of years. Finally, although the data for this project seems to indicate the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory can be an effective tool for discipleship in a marriage, a small sample of couples, only 16, was used for the data. More studies with a more voluminous sample size would be greater proof for the effectiveness of the tool.

**Recommendations for Using the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory in Discipleship**

“The main purpose of the MBTI is to help individuals and couples to become self-aware and develop awareness of the differences between their types and how it can be used to enhance a better relationship (Hinckley 1996:XV). When they realize that their partner’s actions were motivated by personality type preferences and not by stubbornness and willfulness it is easier to forgive them and let go of their demands.”

Understanding the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory is particularly helpful for a couple who considers themselves to be in a good marriage where there

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22 Jan Adriaan Pienaar, “The Integration of the Myers and Briggs Type Indicator in a Marriage Counselling Approach,” 250.
is a minimum amount of affliction. It can most likely be used in difficult marriages as well, but only after resolving some of the conflicts the couple is currently facing.23

The concept of using a personality assessment as a tool for discipleship can lend itself to areas beyond marriage within the church. As individuals become better acquainted with their own personality type and preferences they may better fulfill the call of God on their lives and best find their place within the church, in ministries, and for disciple making. It would be recommended that certified trainers of the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory administer and train on this tool, however.24 With proper training and understanding, individuals may be able to make changes in behavior which could enhance relationships and encourage one another on to spiritual growth. Christ’s followers need to display kindness and understanding instead of mercilessness and contempt; even when a person’s behavior has caused difficulty, a Christian should remain loving.25 If the whole of the body of Christ were to understand the preferences of others as God’s unique design rather than a flaw of character, and then embrace those differences, more godly behavior could be exhibited. As this transformation takes place, it could then lead toward exhortation of the body and discipleship at large could occur.

**Overall Conclusion of the Project**

Many say the soul is the mind, will, and emotions of a person.26 One could say that personality type is included in that; in other words, a person’s soul encompasses her personality

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type. According to Matthew 16:24-28, it does not profit anyone to gain or fight for one’s own soul in this age; believers are to lose their souls or lives here in order to gain them in the coming age. If the soul encompasses personality type, then every time a person is fighting for her own life or any time she is trying to get things done in a way that fits her own personality type, she is potentially saving her own life in this age. In order to lose her life here and therefore gain it in the coming age, she must consider the personality types of those around her, including her spouse. It is therefore important, even vital, that every spouse knows both their own and their spouse’s type. That way, they can fulfill the biblical mandate to think more highly of others than they do themselves, to do onto others as they would have them do in return, to speak encouraging words to the benefit of those around them, to listen more than they speak, to spur the other on to love and good deeds, to make assembling together a benefit and joy to those around them, and ultimately, to make disciples by living out all the biblical mandates and the requirements of every disciple of Christ. It is not merely a pipe dream that the Church would live biblically nor that spouses would grow spiritually together as they continually develop understanding of their types and live thoughtfully of each other in order to both make and be a disciple, as well as set a firm example to their children.

The small sample of couples who participated in this project provided amazing and encouraging results. Participants proved that just taking a shortened Myers-Briggs Type Inventory-type assessment and then receiving a brief amount of information about the meaning of the profiles is enough to bring greater understanding of spouses. Participants also proved that the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory can be an effective tool to help their spouses grow spiritually,

especially by increasing awareness of the spouse’s communication style and how they enter into and participate in conflict. Greater understanding and a push toward spiritual growth as an outcome of this project is encouraging given the spiritual mandate to make disciples. Each person must decide for herself how she will approach living and integrating faith on purpose into her life so that she can fulfill biblical mandates such as discipleship. Using a personality assessment seems to be one effective way to disciple others.

The Church can learn a lot from this project. First, it is a good idea to make disciples of a spouse by fulfilling marital roles as God gave them. It will then allow the body of Christ to make disciples in the home first. Making disciples of a spouse will never be easy, especially since much more than personalities may threaten the process. Disciples, however, need to be willing to work at and even lead in the process. (Yes, women can lead in this process also, by at least fulfilling their God-given role of godly helper and by respecting their husbands in the marriage.) “It is always easier for leaders to lead from what is comfortable, predictable, and more easily controlled.” The man or woman of God must work to disciple his/her spouse by paying close attention to the other’s personality and preferences; this will not be comfortable, predictable, or easily controlled. It is a worthwhile endeavor, however, as it can lead to discipleship of a spouse. Discipleship of the spouse will help fulfill the Great Commission as individuals learn first how to be disciples within their home and then are able to transfer that process beyond the home and into the world at large.


29 Joseph M. Stowell, Redefining Leadership: Character-Driven Habits of Effective Leaders (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 93.
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APPENDIX

Survey

Survey – Ripberger Thesis Project

1. What is your first and last name?

2. I am presently satisfied with my marriage overall.
   Strongly agree   Agree   Neither agree nor disagree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

3. I understand the Myers-Briggs components of my own personality well.
   Strongly agree   Agree   Neither agree nor disagree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

4. I understand the Myers-Briggs components of my spouse’s personality well.
   Strongly agree   Agree   Neither agree nor disagree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

5. I am currently able to use Myers-Briggs components of my personality to grow spiritually in my marriage.
   Strongly agree   Agree   Neither agree nor disagree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

6. I am currently able to use Myers-Briggs components of my spouse’s personality to help my spouse grow spiritually.
   Strongly agree   Agree   Neither agree nor disagree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

7. I am at least somewhat equipped to tell the difference between spiritual maturity issues and personality issues in my marriage.
   Strongly agree   Agree   Neither agree nor disagree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

8. I am at least somewhat equipped to use my and my spouse’s Myers-Briggs Type Inventories to communicate in a way that would exhibit biblical values.
   Strongly agree   Agree   Neither agree nor disagree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

9. I am at least somewhat equipped to use my and my spouse’s Myers-Briggs Type Inventories to resolve conflict in a way that would exhibit biblical values.
   Strongly agree   Agree   Neither agree nor disagree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

10. Name one or more reasons why learning about your and your spouse’s Myers-Briggs Type Inventory results will be an advantage to you. (Please leave this blank ONLY if you do not know of any advantages.)
Sample Handout

Handout for Study Participants – Trudi and Larry

**Trudi - ISTJ**

“Quiet, serious, earn success by thoroughness and dependability. Practical, matter-of-fact, realistic, and responsible. Decide logically what should be done and work toward it steadily, regardless of distractions. Take pleasure in making everything orderly and organized—work, their home, their life. Value traditions and loyalty.”

**Larry - ENFP**

“Warmly enthusiastic and imaginative. See life as full of possibilities. Make connections between events and information very quickly, and confidently proceed based on the patterns they see. Want a lot of affirmation from others, and readily give appreciation and support. Spontaneous and flexible, often rely on their ability to improvise and their verbal fluency.”

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**Ways of Communicating**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extroverted</th>
<th>Introverted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Let’s talk this over.”</td>
<td>“I need to think about this.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sensing</th>
<th>Intuitive</th>
<th>Thinking</th>
<th>Feeling</th>
<th>Judging</th>
<th>Perceiving</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Just the facts, please.”</td>
<td>“I can see it all now.”</td>
<td>“Is this logical?”</td>
<td>“Will anyone be hurt?”</td>
<td>“Just do something.”</td>
<td>“Let’s wait and see.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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2 Ibid.

Description of an ISTJ

Description of an ENFP

5 Isabel Briggs Myers, *Introduction to Type*, 21.
Communicating with an ISTJ

Communicating with an ENFP

[Note: The reference is to Donna Dunning’s work.]

7 Donna Dunning, Introduction to Myers-Briggs Type and Communication, 39.
Notes:

Type and conflict information

What to watch out for when I am communicating:

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 

What to be aware of when communicating with my spouse:

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 

Bibliography


8 Damian Killen and Danica Murphy, *Introduction to Type and Conflict* (United States: CPP Inc, 2003), 12-13.
February 25, 2020

Marcy Ripberger
IRB Exemption 3523.022520: Using the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator as a Discipleship Tool in Marriage

Dear Marcy Ripberger,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under exemption category 46.101(b)(2), which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:101(b):

(2) Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:

(iii) The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by §46.111(a)(7).

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any changes to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by submitting a change in protocol form or a new application to the IRB and referencing the above IRB Exemption number.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible changes to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
Research Ethics Office

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