

Is Your Head Getting in the Way?
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1 Corinthians 13 NRSV

If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

Wow, it has been a wild and crazy couple of weeks. And of course it was all capped off with our daughter Jessica marrying Sam Fain two weeks ago.

The wedding was wonderful -- but not without a few hiccups (that may become subjects of sermons in the future) ---

In case you are curious:

- The night before the rehearsal --- the creek that runs through our yard became a mighty overflowing river (something our neighbor of 35 years says never has happened before). Of course what made this a big deal is the rehearsal dinner was to be held in that very yard the next evening
- That next night, as we were driving home from the rehearsal, we found out that the caterer had not shown up yet. As you can imagine, if you have 40 people coming to your house for dinner, you need to have food. Somehow, we managed to get food from another vendor and only a half hour late. There is a footnote to this story --- the caterer showed up (two hours later than we expected) --- We had plenty of food!

The wedding itself was beautiful

- I cried at all the right times --- and managed to hold it together when I was supposed to

Following the wedding, we vacationed for a week in South-west Michigan and got to enjoy our other girls.

A week ago yesterday, Haley, our youngest flew back to Chile (South America)

Friday, Lindsey our middle daughter boarded a flight and has returned to Spain

Our house seems awfully quiet!

And a little sad :(

Tomorrow, I am sharing in Richard Jackson's funeral. Craig (his son) and I were talking earlier in the week, and somehow we began talking about Dick Lancaster's sermons.

Craig mentioned how heady they were.

And having read a number of them, I have to agree.

Meridian Street is not a church that struggles with the head triad of the enneagram.

If I had to pick an Enneagram typology for Meridian Street my guess is #5.

The Wise Person

But I will talk about our three types in a moment.

First let me digress and share a story from this week.

Tuesday toward the end of our staff meeting we got into a lively and passionate discussion about the worship service times

--- since the summer is coming to an end ---

What is the plan following Labor Day??

The discussion was very lively and got rather loud --- I like to believe that it was a Spirit filled discussion.

I don't think Raina was so sure about that --- I think we terrified her

But it was a very serious and spirited discussion

- Should we continue with the two service schedule?
- And while we are convinced we should continue with two services --- are they at the best times and are they the styles they should be?

The reason we went to two services was for a number of reasons --- but I would argue that there were primarily three

- The numbers did not justify three services
If you excluded the choir the 9 pm service often only had about 35 people at it
- The times were extremely difficult
I really don't think this needs much justification
three services that overlap --- doesn't make a lot of sense
- There was no time for fellowship
I have been here a year already and there are some of you I really have never met

Matt may not admit the same --- but I know it is true for him as well

We had a phenomenal discussion --- and reached no resolution

- We talked about tweaking the service times
- We talked about the style of worship the 9:30 am service should be

We walked about the reality that some people have left and others will leave if **their** worship service is messed with

I will be completely honest with you:

My HEAD knows EXACTLY what we need to do

It is my heart that is wrestling with me over it

If you have thoughts about how we can best achieve the goal of creating more fellowship time and yet maintain the integrity of our worship --- please let me know!

That is the classic challenge of the HEAD triad

This triad is made up of the number 5, 6 and 7 typologies

Let me give you real quick synopsis of the three typologies

Fives might be called THE WISE PERSON

Fives are attracted to and value wisdom, knowledge, and learning. They want to understand the world and make it a more reasonable place to live in. For Fives, life is about having insights, learning about the nature of things, and seeing how everything fits together.

Sounds like Meridian Street to me!

Some famous Fives would not be a surprise --- Einstein, Darwin, Sir Isaac Newton, Steven Hawkins, and Bill Gates

If there is one verse that typifies Fives it is the Shema:

"Here O Israel: the Lord is our God, the Lord alone."

Sixes are what we might call: THE LOYAL PERSON

Sixes endeavor to be faithful, conscientious, responsible persons, keeping their word and honoring their commitments. They want to make the world a safer and more reliable place in which to live. Sixes crave safety and stability.

Some famous Sixes are George Bush, Richard Nixon, and David Letterman

If there is one verse that typifies Sixes it is 1 Peter 5:6-7

"Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you."

Sevens might be called: THE JOYFUL PERSON

Sevens are attracted to and value joy, variety, and excitement. They want to be happy persons, seeking to make the world a more delightful place to live in. Sevens want to experience all the possibilities life has to offer. Having fun and being positive are what life is all about.

We all know some of these people --- they are the ones at a party that bring it to life. They like to take risks --- they are thrill seekers and adrenaline junkies.

Some famous Sevens are: Franklin Roosevelt, George W Bush, Winston Churchill, Solomon in the Bible, and I would add my daughter Lindsey --- (She is the one who convinced me to jump off a cliff and out of an airplane with her).

I **am not** a Seven!

Their bible verse would be John 15:11

"I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete."

So why have we spent the last few weeks looking at these 9 "types"?

Because, like any tool, they can help us understand ourselves better, so that we can better related to each other and work together as a body.

The three triads tend to approach God, spirituality, and even prayer in very different ways.

By gaining some better understanding of what makes you tick; will ultimately help you understand your relationship to God and maybe more importantly what you look for from God.

I think there has been some outstanding work done drawing the links between the Enneagram and our spiritual lives.

Cron's book: **The Road Back to You**, as challenging it can be to get through, provides an excellent introduction to the Enneagram.

But if you really want to go into how these typologies affect our understanding of God, I would recommend the even more challenging book by Richard Rohr called: **The Enneagram: A Christian Perspective**.

I know for me, I have had my eyes opened in some new ways as I have worked through this material that I think we make me a better person, and hopefully a better pastor.

I think the perfect example was the staff's wrestling with the worship times.

There is no perfect solution --- the history of the middle service proves that.

But instead of insisting on our own solution --- what if we were to lay out our concerns and pre-conceived notions and try to line them up with the bigger picture (what we are trying to accomplish.)

Because regardless of what our typology is --- most of us believe we have the solution.

We all wear glasses that define our personal view of the world, those glasses make it hard for us to see other's potential solutions and pre-conceived ideas.

I chose some rather interesting pieces of scripture today.

The one at the top of your bulletin I think fits this Head triad.

"Wise men and women are always learning, always listening for fresh insights."

~ Proverbs 18:15 (The Message)

That is the gist of the HEAD triad

But did what about what Nancy/Katie read to you?

I think this is the challenge of the Head triad --- to temper our intellect with our heart.

Richard Rohr in his daily devotional shared a paraphrase of 1 Corinthians 13 which he says came from Brother Joseph Schmidt.

I invite you to listen to these words, and see if you can't find yourself in them.

As Richard Rohr says: "Only when we face and embrace our false self with humility can we begin moving toward freedom and wholeness, toward being Love."

If I live my life to perfection, doing what is right and good on behalf of others, but act with compulsion and without love, then I am nothing at all.

If I take care of the needs of everybody in the world, especially the poor, because of my own need to help, but am without love even for myself, then I am nothing at all.

If I am efficient and successful in all that I do for the sake of justice, but act out of drivenness and without love, then I am nothing at all.

If I am cultured and refined, and in touch with the pain of existence, but am absent from the pain of persons in the present moment who need my empathy; and if I act without love and compassion, then I am nothing at all.

If I have the gifts of wisdom, insight, and understanding, but am not engaged with those around me in the present moment and am without a spirit of compassion and love, then I am nothing at all.

If I am faithful, loyal, and obedient, and never deviate from the law, but am judgmental and blaming, and am without love, then I am nothing at all.

If I live in a pain-free world of dreams and plans, enjoying optimism and pleasurable options, but am not addressing present problems and am avoiding people in actual distress and am without love, then I am nothing at all.

If I am strong and powerful, but lose my best self in a spirit of resentment, retaliation, and vindictiveness, and know nothing of the vulnerability of love, then I am nothing at all.

If I am settled and accommodating, holding onto a sense of distance and calm, but am not journeying inward to know and appreciate my weaknesses and gifts, and am neglecting my own legitimate calling to love myself, then I am nothing at all.

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It does not insist on its own way;
it is not irritable or resentful;
it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth.
It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

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—1 Corinthians 13:4-8