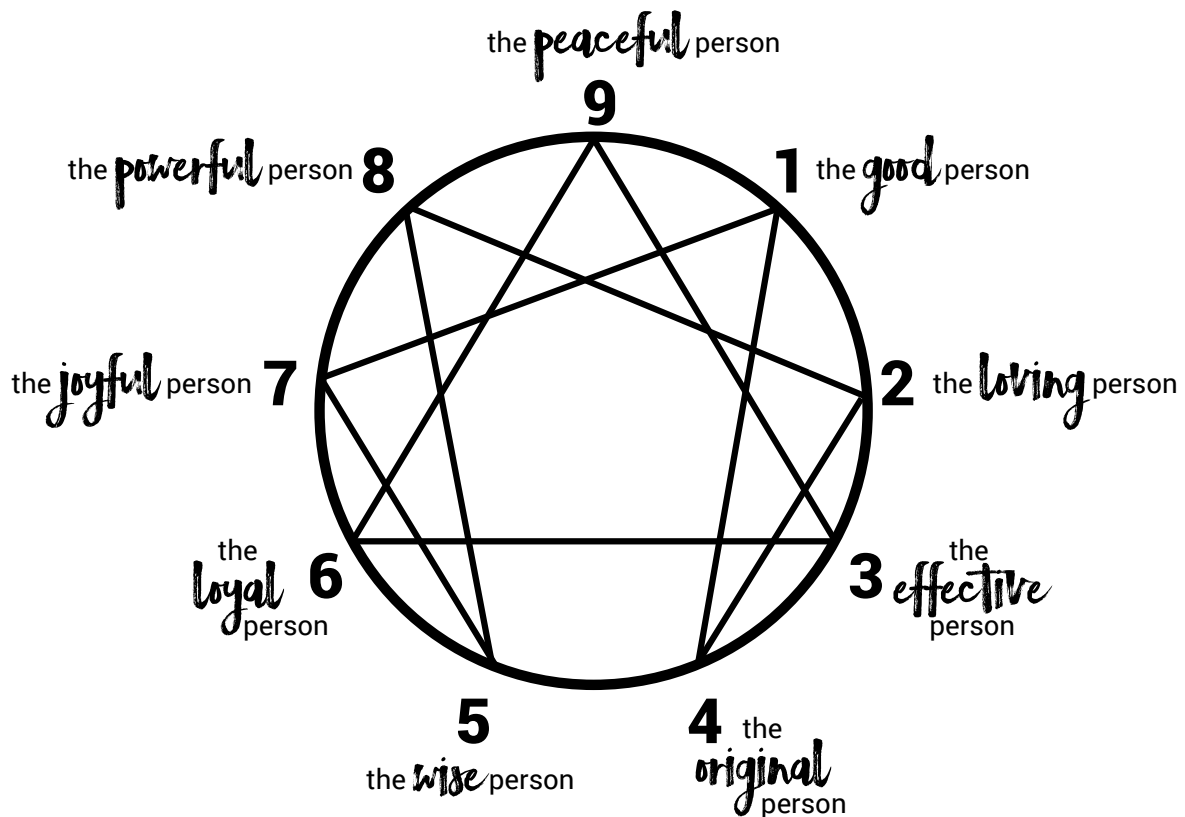


THE ENNEAGRAM

MOVING
FROM
FALSE
SELF
TO
DEEP
CONNECTION



“...that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.” (Eph. 3:16-19)

In the early hours of April 15, 1912, on its maiden voyage from South Hampton to New York City, the Titanic sank when it collided with an iceberg in the cold waters of the North Atlantic Ocean. Tragically, more than 1,500 people lost their lives. At the time, the Titanic was the largest, most well-built and luxurious ship ever conceived. It was thought to be unsinkable. As one crew member reportedly said, “Not even God himself could sink this ship.” But what those aboard the Titanic didn’t know was that hidden beneath the surface of the water something was waiting to sabotage the life of the great ship (and the lives of everyone on board). Ultimately the Titanic sank because people failed to acknowledge and deal with what was going on beneath the surface.

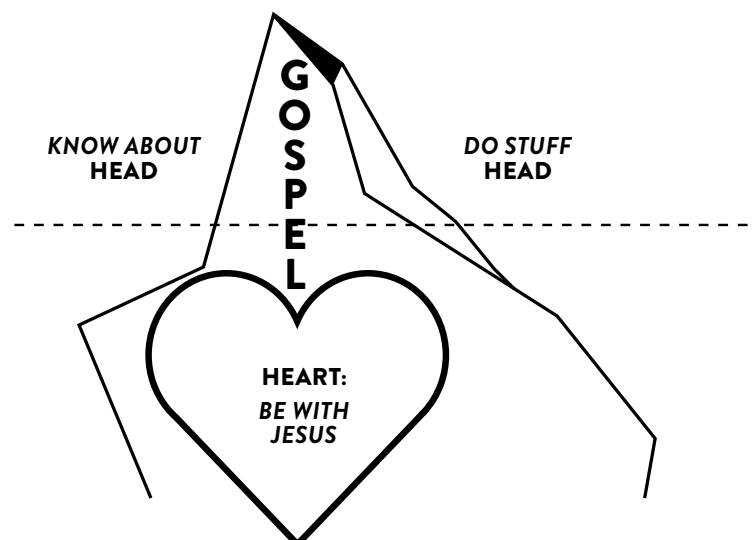
“... THAT ACCORDING TO THE RICHES
OF HIS GLORY HE MAY GRANT
YOU TO BE STRENGTHENED WITH
POWER THROUGH HIS SPIRIT IN
YOUR INNER BEING ... TO KNOW THE
LOVE OF CHRIST THAT SURPASSES
KNOWLEDGE ... ”

EPHESIANS 3:14-19

In the same way, our spiritual life—our relationships with God and others—is in danger of sinking if we don’t become aware of and deal with what’s going on beneath the surface in our lives.

GOING BENEATH THE SURFACE

Human beings are like icebergs—what you see on the surface is only a fraction of the truth. Only about 10% of an iceberg is visible to the human eye, but there is typically a whole lot more going on beneath the surface. Similarly, there are mass layers in our soul that are hidden and remain untouched and unaffected by the gospel of Jesus: mistrust, unrepentant sin, false narratives, guilt, fear, shame, emotional wounds, misplaced worship. To paraphrase Paul’s prayer in Ephesians 3:14-19, we desperately need the gospel to make its way from our heads to our hearts—into the core of our inner being—to the places that need to be healed and transformed by the love of Christ. In a culture obsessed with information and busyness, it’s easy for Christians to drift into a surface-level relationship with Jesus in which we know about Jesus (head) and do stuff for Jesus (hands), but at our core we remain functionally disconnected from relationship with Jesus (heart). Paul essentially prays that we would go beneath the surface, where the real us meets the real Jesus, and we come to know and trust the love of Christ intimately for our redemption and true identity. This is why many have emphasized



that the most difficult and significant journey we could ever take is only eighteen inches long, from our head to our heart.

HOW DO WE GO BENEATH THE SURFACE?

But how do we follow Jesus on this inward journey? How do we drive the gospel beneath the surface to strengthen our hearts in such a way that we can experience deep relationships with God and others?

We have found the Enneagram to be one of the most effective tools we can use to follow Jesus on the inward journey into our hearts. To be clear, there is no power in the Enneagram. The Enneagram is just a tool. All the power for salvation and transformation lies in the gospel of Jesus Christ (Rom. 1:16). The Enneagram is helpful because it has the ability to serve the gospel. The Enneagram is a vehicle the Holy Spirit can use to drive the gospel into the uncharted terrains of the soul, so that we can be strengthened with power in our inner being— to know and grow in the love of Jesus.

“THE MOST DIFFICULT AND SIGNIFICANT JOURNEY WE COULD EVER TAKE IS ONLY EIGHTEEN INCHES LONG, FROM OUR HEAD TO OUR HEART.”

WHAT IS THE ENNEAGRAM?

Unlike other personality theories that measure how you do tasks, the Enneagram is an ancient tool that describes your personality in terms of who you are and how you relate to God, to others, and to yourself. Enneagram is a Greek word—ennea meaning “nine” and gram meaning “diagram.” So, as you can see below, the Enneagram is a diagram that represents nine different yet interconnected personalities or ways of relating.



TRIADS

As the diagram also reflects, the nine personality styles are divided into three triads. The Gut triad consists of 8's, 9's and 1's; these are people who process the world and relate intuitively. The Head triad is made up of 5's, 6's and 7's; these are people who process the world and relate cognitively. In the Heart triad we have 2's, 3's and 4's; these are people who process the world and relate emotionally.

MOTIVATING EMOTION

As you can see, each triad shares the same core emotional struggle: Gut people battle guilt and a sense that they are not good enough, Head people battle fear and a sense that they are not safe, and Heart people battle shame and a sense that they are not accepted. These three primary emotions—guilt, fear, and shame—and the defenses we develop to manage and overcome them form the primary barriers in our relationships with God, others and ourselves. We see this for the first time after the fall in Genesis 3:

- Genesis 3:7 — underlying emotion: shame; defense strategy: I cover
- Genesis 3:8-10 — underlying emotion: fear; defense strategy: I hide
- Genesis 3:11-13 — underlying emotion: guilt; defense strategy: I blame

John Starke writes, *“The Enneagram helps us see how fear might be controlling us, how shame might be motivating us, how guilt might be crippling us. Like a tracer chemical in the blood stream that helps identify the disease, the Enneagram brings to the surface indicators of what might be motivating sinful or harmful actions and patterns. With those resources, we can press into Christ, seeking healing and transformation in the gospel.”*

HEALTHY & UNHEALTHY ARROWS

The above diagram also shows that each personality has stress and security arrows. These arrows indicate the direction of growth or integration and the direction of unhealth and disintegration. In other words, there's a number you slide to when you are growing in health and functioning out of your God-given identity in Christ and there's a number you slide to when you are not healthy and operating out of the flesh. As you grow, you tend to slide over and borrow from the blessings of that type. When you fail to grow, you tend to slide over and borrow from the brokenness of that type.

CHILDHOOD WOUND

The Enneagram resonates with most people as it aids our understanding of how the gospel story intersects with our personal story. The truth is, our present is shaped by our past; who we are is shaped by where we come from. No matter how healthy and godly your family of origin or childhood experience was, on some level every family is dysfunctional, and in a fallen world nobody gets out of childhood unscathed. We all carry emotional wounds from our earliest relationships and experiences. These wounds, if we do not name them and process them, will infect our relationships with God and others. The Enneagram helps us go back so that we can go

forward— identifying the childhood wounds we carry and the false scripts and defensive strategies we learned to help us survive, so that we can bring those to Jesus and begin to heal and re-learn to trust him completely.

Each personality has particular gifts and weaknesses they bring into their relationships. In essence, the Enneagram is trying to introduce you to your false self and the unique ways you bear the effects of the fall, and your true self and the unique ways you bear God's image in your relationships. The false self is an image we create in self-defense to help us feel safe, loved, and accepted apart from trusting in the love of Christ. In this way, the design of the Enneagram helps you take off the mask, so the real you can meet the real Jesus and you can experience the life you were made for in deep relationship with God and others.

3

TYPE THREE

THE EFFECTIVE PERSON

IMAGE OF GOD

Threes reflect the hope and excellencies of God.

IN GENERAL

Adaptable, Excelling, Driven, Image-Conscious

CORE DESIRE

To be authentic and loved for who they are not what they do

FOCUS OF ATTENTION

Tasks, goals, accomplishments

AVOIDANCE

Failure and incompetence

DRIVING EMOTION

Shame

BESSETTING SIN

Deceit and vainglory

CHILDHOOD WOUND

Experienced shame and embarrassment, pressure to look put together, received attention and praise mainly for their achievements.

LIES THREES BELIEVE (FALSE NARRATIVE)

It's not okay to have your own feelings and be yourself. I am loved and respected if I can get you to see me as successful and competent.

SURVIVAL STRATEGY/DEFENSE MECHANISM

I must perform to look impressive to others.

HEALTHY - THEIR BEST

Efficient
Hardworking
Empowering
Visionary
Team builder
Motivating
Competent
Self-confident
Goal-oriented
Energetic
Optimistic

UNHEALTHY - THEIR WORST

Impatient
Workaholic
Exploitative
Fear of failure
Self-promoting
Self-deceptive
Arrogant
Driven by comparison
Overly competitive
Do what it takes to win
Image-conscious

Threes see the world in terms of accomplishments and achievements. Life is about being productive, getting things done, accomplishing goals, and winning. Above all, Threes want to be the best at whatever they do, “basically doing whatever it takes to shine.”¹³ It’s possible that Threes grew up in an environment where there was a high value on looking presentable and put together or maybe there was an unusual emphasis on excellence and being the best. There was a greater emphasis on how you looked and how you performed and less emphasis on who you were. As a result, Threes learned to use popularity and the image of success as a way to feel loved and accepted rather than receiving love through vulnerability and trust. “Threes are driven 3 C’s: Competency, Comparison, and Competition.”¹⁴ This can lead Threes to accomplish great things, but it can also lead to self-promotion and exaggerated feelings of shame.

WEAKNESSES: For Threes, the besetting sin is **deceit** or projecting a false image, and the underlying emotion they are trying to resolve is **shame**. Whereas Ones desire to be perfect, Threes desire to look perfect. Unhealthy Threes relate through performance and perception, striving to be or at least be seen as good enough. The question Threes are asking is, “Who am I if I’m not seen as successful?” Threes tend to shine on the outside in whatever they do, while their inner life remains disconnected. Preoccupied with speed and efficiency in accomplishing their goals, Threes rarely slow down and press inward to get in touch with their emotions.

STRENGTHS: God has gifted Threes to bear His image to the world uniquely. When emotionally and spiritually healthy, Threes are effective, competent, adaptable,

authentic, gracious, humble, hard-working yet restful, tolerant of their failures, accepting of their limits and losses, and interested in others.¹⁵ Healthy Threes are more concerned with faithfulness to Jesus over the appearance of excellency. They're driven by love instead of shame. Their love and effectiveness point to the character of God and the quality of His creative work.

The lies Threes believe: *"It's not ok to be seen as a failure."*

The truth Threes need: *"You are loved for who you are, not for what you do."*¹⁶

SPECIFIC PRACTICES FOR SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Threes are tempted to be preoccupied with their image and live with feelings of shame related to their failures. The Spirit of Christ wants to transform the fruit of self-promotion and shame into love, humility, and rest in the Father's approval (Gal. 5:22-23). Spiritual disciplines should be selected with this trajectory in mind. **Downstream practices** are those that come naturally for this type. **Upstream practices** are those that are more challenging for this type because they confront the false self or flesh.¹⁷

THE DOWNSTREAM PRACTICES

- **Bible Reading Plan:** Threes will enjoy the structure of a Bible-Reading Plan. We recommend the 365-day reading plan by the Bible Project.
- **Fixed -Hour Prayer:** In the New Testament world, the Jewish community oriented life around three specific times of prayer—morning, noon, and evening. The early Church continued this practice, which became known as fixed-hour prayer. Again, the idea of a plan will play to the Threes' sense of achievement. "Interestingly, however, fixed-hour prayer can also be an upstream practice for Threes.

THE UPSTREAM PRACTICES

- **Fixed-Hour Prayer:** Stopping to pray three times a day can be frustrating for Threes because it interrupts their to-do lists. The temptation that needs to be challenged is that there isn't enough time for prayer; there's too much that needs to be done. On the contrary, Martin Luther is famous for commenting, "I have so much to do today that I'm going to need to spend three hours in prayer in order to be able to get it all done." Threes need this perspective. Their greatest accomplishment and use of time is to be with Jesus. Lastly, the interruption of prayer reminds Threes to be OK with the journey of sanctification and less obsessed with needing to feel like they've arrived.
- **Confession of Sin:** James 5:16 exhorts us to "confess sin to one another." Confession can be difficult for any disciple, but especially Threes because it forces them to deal with what's going on beneath the surface of their busyness. Confession requires self-examination and humility, both of which are threatening to a Three's good image. Threes need a context (like fight clubs or DNA groups) to take off the mask and be real, a context to be known and loved, to confess and rest in the gospel.
- **Social Media Fasts:** Threes may be tempted to use social media as a way for self-promotion and projecting their image. Threes must learn to listen to the check in their spirits before they hit "post." Frequent fasts from social media help put to death a false image and give Threes more emotional margin to be themselves with God and others.¹⁹

KEY BIBLE MEMORY VERSE

The Scripture Threes should commit to memory is 1 Corinthians 13:1. Successes or failures don't matter. "What matters is whether or not the motive behind the behavior is love or self-exaltation." Without the core motivation of love, Paul says our efforts are but a noisy gong or clanging cymbal. In other words, we are only seeking to draw attention to ourselves and impress. When ambition and accomplishments are the ultimate goal, love is never present. Threes must remember the love of Christ that leads to humility and looking after the interests of others (Phil. 2:4).

THE GOSPEL THREES NEED FOR HEALING & GROWTH

I am loved for who I am not what I do. My worth and value come from what Jesus has done not my performance. Jesus sees the real me, loves the real me and gave himself for the real me—so I can be my true authentic self with God and others (Gal. 2:20).

¹³ Riso & Hudson, 107.

¹⁴ Sherrill, 29.

¹⁵ Riso & Hudson, 106.

¹⁶ Sherrill, 30.

¹⁷ The language of upstream and downstream comes from Sherrill, chapter 5, Enneagram & the Way of Jesus.

¹⁸ Sherrill, 95.

¹⁹ Ibid., 96.

HOW TO LOVE ME WELL

- Acknowledge my achievements and successes
- Understand that the primary way I give to a relationship is through my effort and diligence.
- Work with me on common goals (I enjoy being productive).
- Give me honest feedback but also be sensitive to my feelings (it is very easy for me to feel judged as superficial).
- Encourage me to slow down and nurture my inner life (I can often be in a hurry).
- Remind me it's ok to fail—it's necessary for growth. (So in a sense show me how failing helps me win!)
- Take an interest in how I feel (I often don't know how I feel so I will need you to help me discover that for myself).

HOW I CAN LOVE OTHERS WELL

- Realize that not everyone is wired like me and shares in my drivenness and that's okay.
- Strive for excellence but don't give an exaggerated attention to it. This can lead me to de-value others by pushing too hard, too fast, and requiring more of people than God has created them to give.
- Recognize that my gift is efficiency but that's not true for everyone. Remember that quality not just quantity matters.
- Be mindful of my temptation to be manipulative.
- Be attentive to the needs of those I'm leading.
- By slowing down and processing what I'm feeling, then sharing that with someone I trust.

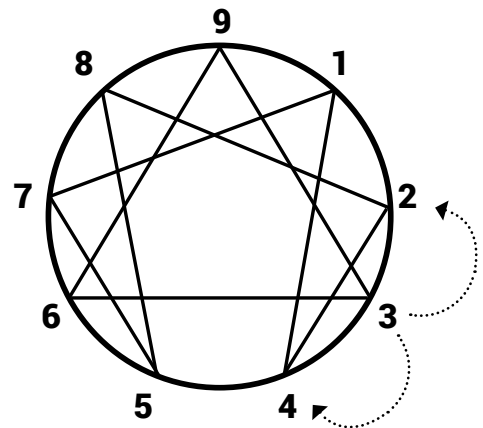
WINGS

Type Three with Two wing — 3w2 “The Star”

They are warmer, more encouraging, sociable, popular, enjoy being center of attention, and seductive.

Type Three with Four wing — 3w4 “The Professional”

They are more focused on work, success, and introspection. They are more sensitive, artistic, imaginative, and pretentious.



STRESS

What we are like when we are UNDER STRESS

Type 3 moves toward Average to **Unhealthy Type 9**

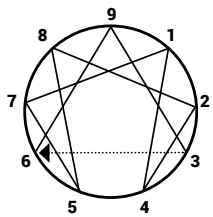
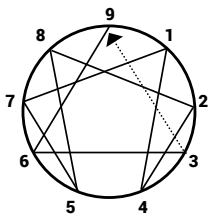
- Driven Threes suddenly become disengaged and apathetic.
- They neglect themselves and possibly numb out by watching TV, playing video games, shopping, eating, etc.

GROWTH

When the Holy Spirit enables us to begin to transform.

Type 3 moves toward **Healthy side of Type 6**

- Vain, deceitful Threes become more cooperative and committed to others.
- Become aware of their feelings and reveal who they are behind their “achieving”



TYPE THREE :: LEVELS OF DEVELOPMENT

The Levels of Development are measuring our capacity to be fully present in our relationships and use our personality and gifts in life-giving ways.²⁰

HEALTHY LEVELS

- **Level 1** (at their best): Self-accepting, inner-directed, and authentic, everything they seem to be. Modest and charitable, self-deprecatory humor, and a fullness of heart emerge. Gentle and benevolent.
- **Level 2**: Self-assured, energetic, and competent with high self-esteem: they believe in themselves and their own value. Adaptable, desirable, charming, and gracious.
- **Level 3**: Ambitious to improve themselves, to be “the best they can be”—often become outstanding, a human ideal, embodying widely admired cultural qualities. Highly effective; others are motivated to be like them in some positive way.

AVERAGE LEVELS

- **Level 4**: Highly concerned with their performance, doing their job well, constantly driving self to achieve goals as if self-worth depends on it. Terrified of failure. Compare self with others in search for status and success. Become careerists, social climbers, invested in exclusivity and being the “best.”
- **Level 5**: Become image-conscious, highly concerned with how they are perceived. Begin to package themselves according to the expectations of others and what they need to do to be successful. Pragmatic and efficient, but also premeditated, losing touch with their own feelings beneath a smooth facade. Problems with intimacy, credibility, and “phoniness” emerge.
- **Level 6**: Want to impress others with their superiority; constantly promoting themselves, making themselves sound better than they really are. Narcissistic, with grandiose, inflated notions about themselves and their talents. Exhibitionistic and seductive, as if saying, “Look at me!” Arrogance and contempt for others is a defense against feeling jealous of others and their success.

UNHEALTHY LEVELS

- **Level 7**: Fearing failure and humiliation, they can be exploitative and opportunistic, covetous of the success of others, and willing to do “whatever it takes” to preserve the illusion of their superiority.
- **Level 8**: Devious and deceptive so that their mistakes and wrongdoings will not be exposed. Untrustworthy, maliciously betraying or sabotaging people to triumph over them. Delusionally jealous of others.
- **Level 9**: Become vindictive, attempting to ruin others’ happiness. Relentless, obsessive about destroying whatever reminds them of their own shortcomings and failures. Psychopathic behavior. Generally corresponds to the Narcissistic Personality Disorder.

²⁰ Riso & Hudson, 78.