

Week 1 | Who Do You Think You Are?

Key Scripture: John 2:1-11, Esther 4:14

Objectives:

- Identify your God given personality strengths (4 Animal Personality Test)
- Understand that God created you how you are **ON** purpose **FOR** a purpose
- God can take what is common and imperfect and make it perfect for His use, but we cannot.

Scripture References:

John 2:1-11 (NLT) 1 The next day there was a wedding celebration in the village of Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, 2 and Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the celebration. 3 The wine supply ran out during the festivities, so Jesus' mother told him, "They have no more wine." 4 "Dear woman, that's not our problem," Jesus replied. "My time has not yet come." 5 But his mother told the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." 6 Standing nearby were six stone water jars, used for Jewish ceremonial washing. Each could hold twenty to thirty gallons. 7 Jesus told the servants, "Fill the jars with water." When the jars had been filled, 8 he said, "Now dip some out, and take it to the master of ceremonies." So the servants followed his instructions. 9 When the master of ceremonies tasted the water that was now wine, not knowing where it had come from (though, of course, the servants knew), he called the bridegroom over. 10 "A host always serves the best wine first," he said. "Then, when everyone has had a lot to drink, he brings out the less expensive wine. But you have kept the best until now!" 11 This miraculous sign at Cana in Galilee was the first time Jesus revealed his glory. And his disciples believed in him.

Esther 4:14 (KJV) 14 For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?

Who do you think you are?

Maybe you've asked or been asked this question with an angry tone, but tonight we're asking ourselves the question nicely. Do you know who you are? Are you comfortable with who you are? What would you change about yourself if you could (think personality). Do you know people that you wish you were more like? Do you know people who you wished were more like you?

Let's do a quick personality survey that will explain everything you've ever wondered about yourself!

Not really, but it may be an interesting experience anyway.

Pass out the surveys and explain how it works. Give a reasonable time limit (i.e. 5 minutes). Once everyone is done, help everyone plot their results if need be. Plot each person's dominant animal so that you can see the mixture of animals within your group (this will be useful next week). Take the time to read or let someone read what each animal personality means.

How were your results the same or different from what you expected?

Which is the best Animal (personality) and why?

Find out which animal personalities are the best to the group. Ask why they believe that personality to be the best. Is it the personality that they are or the one they wish they were.

For the next 8 weeks, we're going to be looking at not only our own personalities, but we will also explore the personality of Jesus. The gospels give us glimpses of Jesus as he interacted with people around him. Every encounter, every reaction, and every word spoken was intentional. If you look closely and prayerfully, God will reveal truth to you in the most seemingly random occurrence.

Tonight we will look at one sentence in John's account of Jesus' first miracle.

Read: John 2:1-11

Weddings were a big deal in Jesus' culture. We don't know a lot about the bride, groom, family, status of family. We know that they were friends of Mary and Jesus. We know that the celebration had been going on a little while. We know that they were out of wine, and this was a big deal. To run out of wine at a wedding feast was a major cultural faux pas. It would've spoiled the celebration and been a mark on the new couple that would've lasted a long time. It would've been taken as a sign that the newly wed's marriage was also headed for disaster.

Jesus is attending the wedding as a friend of the family, not a celebrity. He hasn't begun his ministry yet. Mary approaches Jesus discretely because it is her goal to save the family embarrassment.

Once the request is made and Jesus agrees to help (although he says it's not yet time), Mary tells the servants to "do whatever he tells you to do."

It's at this point that Jesus probably looks over against a wall and sees six water pots that were used for ceremonial cleansing. Verse 6 says that there were 6 water pots standing nearby. That's a nice formal term for small bathtubs. They were for washing. Whether it was washing feet or hands or whatever (does it matter?) is beside the point. Each pot held approximately 20-30 gallons. Jesus told the servants to go and fill the pots with water.

The servants obeyed. They didn't ask out loud, but maybe they were wondering why Jesus wanted water. Maybe he misunderstood the request. Maybe he didn't understand how wine was made. It took time. Grapes had to be harvested and pressed. There was a fermenting process. Nonetheless, the servants obeyed zealously and filled the pots all the way to the brim and brought them to Jesus.

Once the servants got back with the full water pots, Jesus dipped his finger in each pot...nope...he waved his hand...nope...he dipped his hair...gross...he told a servant to dip some out and take it to the master of ceremonies. Once the master of ceremonies tasted the wine, he declared it to be the best of the night.

Jesus performed his first miracle by using what was on hand. He didn't send servants to find special water. He didn't create the water. He used the ceremonial water pots. They were just sitting there. They were available. Probably the last thing anyone would've thought to use. It was significant that there were 6 pots. Six is the biblical number of man. Fittingly enough, it's also the number of imperfection.

One thing that sets this miracle apart from Jesus' future miracles was the fact that he didn't speak to the water. He didn't touch it. He didn't really do anything to it. He did tell the servant to dip some out. I imagine the servant looked down into the water and wondered how he was going to explain to the master of ceremonies why he was bringing a ladle full of water that came from the foot bath by the door. That's right, the wine wasn't wine until the servant gave the "water" to the master of ceremonies.

So this was Jesus' first miracle, but it was also one of his very few unpublished miracles. The only people to even know that the miracle happened were Mary, the disciples, and the servants. Jesus quietly took six ceremonial cleansing water pots and turned it into wine. A lot of wine. Wine that would not only serve all of the wedding party, but everyone in the village for months or maybe years to come (back then wedding feasts were open to the entire village - not just friends and family).

So how does this relate to a personality test?

Jesus found six water pots. Six represents man and imperfection. They were ceremonial cleansing pots, which represented the old covenant (the law). He took those and changed them into wine. Wine represents the new covenant, the blood.

We are, in a sense, water pots that were just standing by. Jesus performed his first miracle quietly using the servants. The servants and disciples were the ones who experienced the true nature of the miracle.

Who are you in this story? Are you the servants? Are you the water pots? Are you the wine? Why?

What they wanted was wine, but Jesus sent them after water. He's not looking for you to bring wine, rather bring what you are, who you are, and he will perfect you.

Paul has planted and Apollos watered, there is no increase till God gives it.

When you look at yourself or your personality, you may only see dirty water or a dirty, common, imperfect vessel. You may feel that you have to provide the grapes, or take the grapes and make the wine, but all of these views are missing the part Jesus played.

Why so much wine at the end of the wedding?

Weddings held large gatherings. The entire village was invited. No one was refused. Even in a small place like Cana of Galilee, there were plenty of people who would drink the wine Jesus was serving. Also, wine could be stored. It would continue to supply the bride and groom and their guests for years to come.

The moral: You are who you are. All Jesus is looking for is you to present yourself as you are - imperfect. Whatever you are now can be made into something that will serve the people around you once Jesus takes what you offer and converts it for his use. You have strengths and weaknesses. Let your weaknesses be made perfect in His strength through the strengths of those around you.

***Esther 4:14 (KJV)** 14 For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?*

In what ways are your personality characteristics a strength? A weakness?

In what ways does God use your personality characteristics for the Kingdom (i.e. spreading the gospel, serving people, encouraging people, teaching, discipling, etc)?

Until Next Week | Pay attention to your personality; make a note of your positive and/or negative versions of your strength

Appendix

4 Animal Personality Test | John Trent

Read the full article here:

<https://www.focusonthefamily.com/marriage/4-animals-personality-test/>

The 4 Animal Personality Test was created to give people a picture of their unique, God-given strengths. Unlike many personality tests, it was created to be accurate and easy to read and something someone could take in just three to five minutes.

This survey has only four boxes — an L box, an O box, a G box and a B box. In each box, there are only 14 words or short phrases, and then below those words, there is one phrase. To complete this survey, think about how you naturally react to situations in your everyday life. Many of us tend to be one personality type when we're at home and someone very different when we're at work.

For now, however, focus on identifying your strengths *outside of work*. Read through all four boxes (the L, O, G and B boxes) and *circle* every word and phrase in each box that describes who you are as a person. There are 14 words or phrases and one statement in each box, or 15 possible responses in each box. After you've gone through all the boxes, circling words that apply to you, count the total number for each box and double the total. Write the doubled total in the box that corresponds to each animal. Finally, you can plot the total from each box on the graph below to see a picture of your unique, God-given strengths.

A “Living” Picture of Your Strengths

While most personality tools use words to describe people, I've often seen people resist the labels they're given or not understand the words that categorize them. So I decided to use a different approach to help people step toward the description of who they are. Since most people love and are very familiar with the way certain animals act, I developed this personality-assessment tool using animals. If you scored high or tied on more than one scale (for example, the Lion and the Otter tied as your highest scores), carefully read *both* descriptions that apply to you. Remember that we're a blend of all four of these basic personality types, with a few of us being purebreds. And know, too, that while this instrument can give you a valid picture of who you are today, that picture can change over time as you grow, mature and go through different life experiences.

The Lion ||

Those who scored highest on the Lion scale have personality strengths that motivate them to naturally take charge and be assertive. They love taking the lead and generally know which way they want to go. That natural ability and confidence to move toward a goal or objective is a great strength for Lions. They're naturally competitive and often self-starters. They don't mind challenges. At work, they often end up as the boss or in a position that lets them jump in and be actively involved in directing activity around them.

Lions want to do things "now!" and hate to waste time when they could be getting something else done. This means they generally want to make decisions quickly, with or without all the facts. Or they want to solve a problem "now" — even if it's 11 o'clock at night!

Lions are fast-paced, competitive and goal-driven. That often means they look at questions from others (particularly from Beavers, who love to ask clarifying questions) as slowing them down, not aiding or helping them. And in everyday conversation, they most often don't want to hear every detail of someone's day — just the high points.

These are all strengths, but as you'll see with Lions, Otters, Golden Retrievers and Beavers, each person's core personality strengths, if pushed to an extreme, can become their biggest weaknesses in relationships (at home or at work).

Lions, particularly under pressure, can be so decisive that they struggle with slowing down to listen to or seek input from others before making a decision. They're often so driven to push forward and get something done, they can communicate by their actions or nonverbal communication that a task is more important than people, or others' feelings. Again, under pressure, if they feel their time is being wasted or a decision is being blocked, they can be impatient, argumentative or even pushy.

Lions are great people and great spouses. They can accomplish much for the Lord and their families and raise great kids. So, if almighty God has given you a Lion to do life with, look forward to accomplishing great things together.

When a Lion gains the wisdom to slow down and seek to include others — proactively asking for their input and valuing their questions and insights — he or she will become a great leader as well. A wise Lion will take the time to really "see" the strengths of the people God has placed in his or her life.

The Otter ||

Otters are fun-loving, enthusiastic, playful and encouraging. They love people and *love* to talk. That's one reason why they know hundreds of people *but don't know anyone's name!* Otters — purebred Otters, in particular — don't focus on details, like names. But they're so naturally friendly and engaging, they can form friendship bonds quickly with others and often end up being the center of attention.

They're creative and full of energy, enthusiasm and life. For example, Otters love *starting* things. Sometimes that means they don't finish everything they start, but not finishing something doesn't bother them the way it does other personalities (like Beavers). Otters have a great time getting things launched.

Overall, Otters are optimistic and can see the potential in ideas they take to heart. But often they don't see the risks associated with those ideas — which means they don't always take time to read instructions (or a prospectus before investing!). Otters lead with their hearts and are excitable. They often use lots of words, energy and gestures when communicating. Take all those great characteristics and push them to an extreme, and Otters can come across as unorganized or too fun-loving. Others may believe they're not serious enough when it comes to important discussions or challenges, or that they're insensitive about not meeting deadlines that affect others.

Otters love people, but again, if their strengths are pushed to an extreme, then under pressure an Otter can become a people pleaser in a way that can put a real strain on a marriage or important relationships. Otters under pressure may say yes to everyone in order to be liked but not realize the impact their people pleasing may have on their loved ones, particularly when there's no time or energy left for their spouse or family after working so hard to please others. All in all, Otters are great to have on a team or in a marriage or family, with all their creativity, optimism, energy and life. But wise Otters know how crucial it is to value people around them who are great at following through, being sensitive and setting a clear path (like Lions, Beavers or Golden Retrievers).

The Golden Retriever ||

Golden Retrievers are considerate, good-natured and strong team players. They're naturally kindhearted and love helping, serving and looking for ways to come alongside others, particularly if they're around people who are hurting. For example, at work, the Lion often organizes the Christmas party (but doesn't actually go), while the Otter loves the idea of a party and tries to talk to everyone there. But the Golden Retriever will sit with *one* person at the party — either someone the Golden Retriever already knows or someone he or she wants to get to know even better or deeper. Golden Retrievers may also sit with someone who is hurting or struggling and seek to encourage and help that person.

Purebred Golden Retrievers in grade school will actually send themselves to timeout if they do something wrong (as opposed to Lion kids who send their *parents* to timeout). Retrievers, like each of the other core personalities, are tremendous people to be married to. But if their strengths are pushed to an extreme, they, too, face issues. For example, Retrievers often tend to avoid problems (or downplay issues) at all costs, saying things like “Let’s talk about that tomorrow.” or “Let’s deal with that later.”

Again, circling lots of words in the G box means you have a great many positive strengths! Golden Retrievers rock! For example, they're world-class at seeking peace and harmony with others and in wanting to see closeness and caring in a home, marriage or workplace. But there are times when problems need to be faced and dealt with *today* — not six months from now. This is why Golden Retrievers need others around them, like a spouse, who has the strength of a Lion or the creativity of an Otter or the detail orientation of a Beaver.

The Beaver ||

Guess what's on the class ring at MIT (the Massachusetts Institute of Technology)? Or at Caltech (the California Institute of Technology)? Both of these colleges are arguably two of the finest engineering schools in the world. And both of them have on their class rings ... *a Beaver!* That's because Beaver personalities are God's little architects and engineers. They're organized, precise and detailed. They catch the spelling mistakes that everyone else misses. And if they're purebred Beavers, they actually *like* to balance the checkbook! They sleep better knowing exactly, not approximately, how much money they have in the bank. In short, they're great at follow-through and completing detailed tasks.

Remember the Christmas party from earlier? The Lions organized the party, the Otters came to the party wanting to talk to everyone there, and the sensitive Golden Retrievers sat with one person who needed encouragement. But the Beavers were the only ones who remembered to bring the food! That's because "Bring food" was on their list. Beavers *love* to check things off lists!

Like every other core personality type we've looked at, when a Beaver's strengths are pushed to an extreme, Beavers can take other people apart by being critical. Perhaps not verbally or in a loud way, like a Lion who "roars" at others. But if you offend a Beaver (or a Golden Retriever, for that matter), that person can hold on to a grudge for a long time, clearly remembering the offense — and what you were wearing when you offended him or her! That's opposed to Lions and Otters who tend to get over things and move on more quickly in many cases.

One more thing. While Beavers can be critical, most often they're really good at taking themselves apart, which means they can be extremely hard on themselves, particularly if they feel they've fallen short of a goal, made a mistake or done something wrong. Thoughts race through their minds, such as *Why did I say that?* or *What did she mean by that?* or *If only I had* ...

It's the Beavers' attention to detail and desire to do things in a quality and correct way that makes them so incredibly beneficial in a marriage, in the workplace and in other relationships. They can spot problems early on, even when an idea is being shared initially — which is one reason it's a good idea to invite a Beaver into a conversation. They can help others limit risk and identify challenges that can block or keep something from being successful. Beavers are also great at wanting issues to be dealt with when they're small, instead of waiting for small problems to turn into crises. For example, they don't like driving for long distances with the warning light on in the car without getting the car checked or fixed! Beavers finish tasks and close loops and plan today for a positive future — strengths that Lions and Otters often lack and need so much.