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Assessment Paper
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To walk in relationship with God we must constantly engage with Him to know Him intimately. Throughout our lives, we must pursue the process of knowing God so that we can learn more about ourselves and the areas of our lives that must be submitted to Him for our spiritual growth. The real questions in the life of a believer become, “What spiritual gifts has God given to me? What do these gifts mean for my life? How does God want me to use these spiritual gifts for His kingdom?” All of the foregoing questions are compelling ones that requires one to engage the ongoing process of reading scripture, seeking, communing, talking to and listening for God in order hear Him clearly and rest in Him.

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the current state of my spiritual reality as identified by the results of spiritual assessments that speak to areas of spiritual gifting and personality traits along with revelations that God has graciously shared with me. In this paper I intend to discuss these results, how they may or may not be consistent with my own understanding of who I am, what God has shown me in my quiet time about my spiritual reality and how this information can be useful in ministry.

I was not surprised about the personality type determined for me through the Enneagram assessment. I rated as a type eight personality. I do not agree with all of the characteristics that define this personality type as it applies to me because I am not a person that enjoys being alone, I do not try to control others and I am rarely impatient.

The type eight personality is defined as “the asserter.” According to this personality profile, asserters have characteristics that include direct, self-reliant, self-confident and protective behaviors. I am an assertive person in that I am direct in my communication and

interactions yet not overbearing or intimidating to others. I have had experiences where people have perceived my direct communication style in a negative way even though my intention was not to be offensive or rude. In instances of misunderstandings, I explain the basis for what I say in order to avoid offending anyone or to clarify my intentions.

In order for someone to get along with me, I do not have an expectation that people accept screaming, cursing or stomping around because I don't do those things. In fact, I don't like to see those types of behavior as they remind me of a person having a tantrum. These behaviors bring back memories of my childhood when I was on the receiving end of this type of communication. I did not like those experiences and I decided that I would not engage in screaming, cursing and stomping behavior when I became an adult because of those experiences.

As I sat before the Lord after reading the results of the Enneagram type eight personality, I asked what He showed me what this result means for me in my spiritual reality. I felt that a lot of the characteristics of the type eight personality do not apply to me as I see myself. Others might disagree. After sitting silently in prayer before the Lord for some days, He began to show me that I do not allow people to get to know me easily because I am cautious. The Lord also showed me that these feelings stem from my dominant childhood feeling of fear and insecurity resulting from the standard of perfection that my parents held me to as a child as well as the considerable periods of time I spent alone after school as a "latch-key kid." The Lord revealed that my parents motives were not ill-intended but arose out of their wanting me to achieve more than they had. The Lord revealed to me that my parent's expectations caused me to pursue perfect performance to gain approval and caused me to carry a fear of failure into adulthood. Through these revelations from the Lord, I see how I am driven to try to control my own experiences to avoid failure and I place a lot of pressure on myself to perform in adulthood

because of a fear of failure rooted in my childhood. I also see how the fear of failure can be a stumbling block to me in my relationship with God who did not give me a spirit of fear. (Holy Bible, New International Version, 2019, 2 Timothy 1:7 NIV.) The fear of failure can also be an impediment to developing relationships with other people in ministry and this is an area of growth for me.

The spiritual gifts survey identified my three dominant gifts in the areas of teaching, mercy and administration, all with a score of sixteen. I was surprised that administration was one of my top three spiritual gifts as do not see myself operating in this gift. I am seeking God for understanding as to how this gift might apply to my life and spiritual reality. He has not answered this question yet.

Teaching is something that I have done as a lawyer for almost three decades. Every time I have presented a case before a judge or a jury, I have used these court proceedings to teach those to whom I present my case why I believe my legal position should prevail. I have also had to present hard truths to clients to help them see why resolution of a case was the most appropriate option. I have also taught bible study with my husband in our church Marriage Ministry. I enjoy sharing, facilitating and learning from other people in my capacity in the ministry in which my husband and I serve.

Extending mercy and empathy for others is something that I am very comfortable doing and is currently what I do in the Marriage Ministry in my church. Praying with and for people, sharing their grief and encouraging them in difficult times is a blessing. The g

On the spiritual gifts test analysis, my three dominant gifts were discernment, faith, and teaching. I was not surprised about the results as to the gifts of teaching and discernment. Faith

has been an area of challenge for me and I was surprised that this was a dominant gift. I believe God can do all things.

In the spiritual gifts test analysis, my first dominant spiritual gift was in the area of discernment in which I scored 44. My second dominant spiritual gift was in the area of faith and I scored 42. My third dominant spiritual gift was in poverty in which I obtained a score of 40. I was surprised about the spiritual gifting in poverty. I am still trying to understand what this gift means for and in my spiritual reality. In my quiet time with the Lord, He has not spoken to me about the gift of poverty or why my results in the spiritual gifts assessments was different with the exception of teaching. In the areas of teaching and discernment, I understand these and have operated in both.

The emotionally healthy assessment rated me as emotionally adolescent the area of Mark 1: Be Before You Do with a score of 15. In Mark 2: Follow the Crucified, Not the Americanized Jesus I received a score of 18 and the rating of emotionally adult. In Mark 3: Embrace God's Gift of Limits, I received the score of 20 and rating of emotionally adult. In Mark 4: Discover the Hidden Treasures Buried in Grief and Loss, I received the score of 18 and rated emotionally adult. In Mark 5: Make Love the Measure of Spiritual Maturity, I received a score of 17 and rated emotionally adult. In Mark 6: Break the Power of the Past, I received a score of 28 and a rating of emotionally adult. In Mark 7: Lead out of weakness and Vulnerability, I receive the score of 24 and a rating of emotionally adult. Based on the results of the assessment, I am more emotionally adult that not which is a good thing.

This assessment coupled with the reading of Emotionally Healthy Spiritually has helped me to identify that I need to spend less time doing for God instead of being with God. I need to be a Mary rather than a Martha. I do not spend enough time in God's presence for the real work

of letting go can occur so that healing in places that need it can occur. It is unclear whether the constant doing is avoidance behavior so that I do not have to confront the walls in my life. As Scazzero states in *Emotionally Healthy Spiritually*, we must go back into the past in order to identify and break free from the destructive sin patterns of our past to live the life that God intends. (Scazzero, P., 93.) I have over-performed to receive validation from my parents and then myself because of the fear of failure. I do for God to avoid facing the pruning process. I now see that this is subtle form of control which must die.

I am presently at a place where I don't have all the answers and God in His loving grace has not given them to me. Scazzero refers to this place as the wall or "the dark night of the soul." (Scazzero, P., 117-124.) I realize now that for me to have all of the answers now would be an act of my will and demonstrates a lack of faith in God. God owes me no explanation about what He is doing, why He is doing it or the timetable in which He chooses to do it. I simply need to trust him without fear. At present, I do not know how to reconcile the results of these assessments as a whole and I do not have the answers to put them into perspective to fully understand my spiritual reality. This makes me uneasy but I choose to trust God. The day will come with God reveals those answers.