

FOUR TYPES OF CHRISTIANS by Jack Lipski

We hear a lot these days about personality types. It seems just about everyone from corporations to churches is interested in these inventories. I'm not sure how valuable this information is...as Christians, we are challenged to "conform to the image of Christ." Maybe we need to take a look at "types" of Christians. Have you noticed the differences? I can find four distinct types. See if you can find your yourself.

TYPE O

This is the "oblivious Christian." These folks live in denial of whole realities of life. You would never find them volunteering at an A.I.D.S clinic or sharing the Gospel with a gay person. They believe some form of Heaven is possible in this life. Most of their life energy is spent in this pursuit. They have a "don't even-tell-me-about-it" attitude about many of the struggles of life.... certain topics are just "too upsetting" for them. When others are struggling with faith questions, these people have quick, religious platitudes for answers. Instead of feeling comforted and understood by these type O Christians, you feel violated and judged. They are arrogantly and simplistically naive. Events and choices are black or white. God is a narcotic that lets them sail through life, as long as they don't look too deeply into their own lives. I never see these Christians in counseling; the experience would be too unsettling for them.

TYPE A

This is the "annoyed Christian." Struggles and problems are looked upon as irritants, "pot-holes" on the road of life. They believe if they can just plan enough, be careful enough, learn enough, avoid enough, pray enough, ...they can lick whatever ails them. You will find them at all the "right" seminars and reading all the "right" self-help books. These people have little compassion for those who struggle. Frankly, they have little time for those who struggle. If they are parents, they just need to "get the kids fixed" so life can run smoothly. If they are leaders in the church, they just need to "get everyone else fixed" so the church can run smoothly. God is an assistant, an executive secretary, useful to rid their world of annoyances. Worship is an exercise; the Cross is something "nice." There is no real passion for God; there is mostly passion for what they think God can supply...a comfortable life. I see these Christians in counseling for one or two times; they want a quick fix, a short book to read, a list of what they need to do. Talk about struggles as opportunities and they get annoyed.

TYPE H

This is the "haunted Christian." These people know there is something terribly wrong with them and with life. They are ashamed to let others know how they struggle with doubt, sin, relationships and ambivalence. They believe there is some "secret" they have missed in their relationship with God...a secret that other Christians all have. They have tried all the seminars, books and advice, but with little results. Faith is a struggle; life is a struggle. God seems unknowable, uncooperative, and uninterested. Loving God deeply is really hard for them; worship feels fake and obligatory. They believe other Christians don't struggle, so they often pretend everything is fine. You won't find these Christians very active in the church; they feel too inadequate. But, these are Christians who are far closer to God than they know...but they stand on a precipice. I

see these Christians most often in counseling, they want to know that God really is there and that there is hope and understanding.

TYPE C

This is the "courageous Christian." These folks are rare. They have emerged from the struggles of life with deep joy and conviction; they live moment by moment in the shadow of the Cross. The horrors of life don't surprise them; they are seen as opportunities to grow closer to the Savior. These people long to give away the Gospel to a desperately needy world. Despite their own hurts, they are rich with compassion for others. When they say: "All things work together for the good", it emerges from a heart of endurance. You will find them as teachers for 30 years without becoming cynical; you will find them holding an A.I.D.S. patient while he dies. You feel loved, understood, and honored by such people. God's love allows them to endure anything. Worship explodes from such people. They long for the day of Christ's return. I see these Christians rarely. Probably because they are rare. They want to make the most of their struggles; they want someone at their side to challenge them as they pursue God.

At times, we all can find our "type" in each of these Christians, but we mostly embody one type. All of us have areas in our lives that we don't want to acknowledge. At times, we all doubt, we all struggle, we all are overwhelmed by life in this world. **What is different is how we handle such moments.** Most of us flee the opportunity that embracing such moments offers...a chance to know God in new and deeper ways. **What will it take to move us toward courage?**