

Learn to appreciate personality differences to become a better parent, spouse, boss and team player!



When Personalities Clash

Understanding Who God Made You to Be



LEAD LIKE JESUS

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When Personalities Clash: Understanding Who God Created You to Be

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CONTENTS

Introduction	Jesus Knows How He Uniquely Created You... 4
Chapter 1	What's Your Motivation?..... 7
Chapter 2	Different Doesn't Mean Wrong 11
Chapter 3	How Different Behavioral Styles Can Get Along—and Thrive Together..... 17

*"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you,
so you must love one another." John 13:34*

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Introduction

Jesus Knows How He Uniquely Created You

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To the Samaritan woman at the well, Jesus offered living water (John 4:10). But He told Nicodemus he must be born again (John 3:3).

Another time, He instructed a rich young ruler to sell his possessions and give to the poor (Matthew 19:21). And when He spied Zacchaeus up in a tree, He simply invited Himself over for lunch (Luke 19:5).

On each occasion, Jesus pointed the way to freedom. But have you ever noticed how the Lord approached every person He met in a way that seemed specially tailored to the individual? That's because Jesus recognized that every person exhibits unique personality traits and behaviors. The greatest leader who ever lived understood that while we're all "fearfully and wonderfully made," we're also wired differently.

Imagine how much your personal and professional relationships would benefit if you, too, could learn to see the unique personality traits and behaviors of others? How would this understanding impact your ability to lead?

Now, imagine if you were truly aware of your own special blend of behavioral tendencies? How might that knowledge forever change the way you approach problems, schedule your day, and handle conflicts?

Self-awareness is the key to relational success, yet it's seldom talked about. But if we want to reach our true, God-given potential, we must have a clear

understanding of the unique personality He's given us—and that includes knowing our own strengths and weaknesses. Self-awareness, or the lack of it, impacts our marriages, the way we parent, our employee-employer relationships, and how we perceive and understand others.

A study conducted by Green Peak Partners found that a high self-awareness score was the strongest predictor of a leader's future success. And according to Victor Lipman, the qualities we commonly associate with management and leadership—being authoritative, decisive, forceful, perhaps somewhat controlling at times—if not moderated with a high degree of self-awareness—are the same qualities most likely to alienate the very people we hope to influence.



The Biblical DISC® Assessment (BDA) helps you discover your unique behavioral style and how God can use it to assist you in leading more effectively!

The BDA is based on the popular and practical DISC model of human behavior. DISC is the most widely used behavioral model in the world. It has helped millions of people improve their communication, productivity, team-building, and leadership skills, as well as their relationships at work and at home.

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Knowing the language of DISC can help you:

- Better understand yourself: your strengths, weaknesses, innate conflict responses, motivations, triggers for stress, problem-solving techniques, etc.
- Adapt your behavior to meet the needs of others
- Cultivate more collaborative work relationships
- Enhance your communication skills
- Reduce the stress in your life while increasing your productivity
- Strengthen your marriage and other family relationships
- Develop effective leaders all around you
- Create functional and high-performing teams
- Build a culture of trust and respect within your organization
- Learn from the strengths and weaknesses of biblical people with traits similar to yours, including Jesus, who modeled every personality profile to perfection.



In this book, you'll walk through the process of building self-awareness, and you'll discover how Biblical DISC® can help you build stronger relationships and get better results. We'll look at topics like:

- What motivates different personality types, (what we'll call behavioral styles)
- Why *different* doesn't mean *wrong*
- How different behavioral styles can get along—and even thrive together
- And more!

Now, are you ready to begin this journey of self-discovery and reach your true leadership potential?

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Chapter 1

What's Your Motivation?

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Oh, no, they're not!" she said emphatically. Her response caught me by surprise. I was leading a seminar in Peoria, Illinois, and had only just made the statement, "All people are motivated." That's when this woman in the second row, who hadn't so much as cleared her throat till that moment, stood and spoke up: "Oh no they're not! I have a son who isn't motivated—not in the slightest. He is twenty-six years old, still in college, and living with us at home. He doesn't have a job, isn't doing much to get one, and sleeps in until ten o'clock every morning. I don't think he's motivated!" I smiled at the woman. "Ma'am," I said. "I don't mean to offend you. However, I think your son *is* motivated. He's motivated to stay in college, not get a job, live off mom and dad, and sleep until ten every morning. I think he's extremely motivated!"

—Rich Meiss, *Director of Leadership Development, Lead Like Jesus*

What is Motivation?

Motivation can be described as "the reason why people do what they do; that which compels people to action." It is often broken down into two types: external ("extrinsic") and internal ("intrinsic") motivation.

A person's external motivation is brought on by someone or something outside of that person. Think of the carrot-and-the-stick metaphor. External motivation depends on rewards and punishments.

For example, when God made a covenant with His people in the Old Testament, He laid out a long list of blessings (rewards) for obedience and curses (punishments) for disobedience (see Deuteronomy 28). He was appealing to His people's natural external motivations.

Internal motivation is different, though. This motivation is within a person, compelling him or her to action. As a result, rewards and punishments are ineffective in cultivating this sort of motivation. All we can do is create a climate or culture where people are free to follow their own internal motivations toward a shared goal.

In the Bible, God tapped into this type of motivation, too. When He put Barnabas and Paul together as missionary partners, He did so knowing that Barnabas's internal desire was to encourage and to serve (he had earned the nickname "son of encouragement"; Acts 4:36), and that this motivation would be the perfect complement to Paul's zeal to reach the lost. God didn't need to hold out the promise of reward or the threat of punishment to get Barnabas on board; he was already wired for the job.

Both types of motivation have their place, but wouldn't you prefer to be motivated by something inside of you, something that's an intrinsic part of who God made you to be?

People are already motivated. It's our job to *discover* what motivates them. When we do, we'll have the

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key to more effective leadership and better relationships. More importantly, if we can learn more about our own internal motivations, we can begin to unlock our God-given potential.

The DISC Behaviors: How We Do What We Do

The DISC Model of Human Behavior is a helpful way of understanding our varied internal motivations. Of course, people are too complicated to fit neatly into just one category. We are each unique and, therefore, reflect a combination of the four behavioral styles outlined by the DISC Model.

D – The Dominant or Directing style individual has a need for control and challenging activities. Their style is determined, straightforward, and motivated by opportunities for competition. This person is usually direct and assertive. We will use the term **Directer** to describe this person.

I – The Influencing or Interacting style person needs to interact or persuade others to their point of view. This person tends to be informal, talkative, and enthusiastic. They focus their energy on being involved with others. For this reason, we will call the person with this style an **Interacter**.

S – The Steadiness or Supportive style individual has a high need for security and stability. They are typically predictable, accountable, and low-key. Known as a **Supporter**, this type of individual prefers to listen and do things for others rather than talk and come up with new ideas.

C – The Conscientious or Calculating style person has a high need for accuracy and caution. These people tend to be diplomatic, precise and systematic. Because of their need to think things through and do them correctly, we call this style of person a **Calculater**.

While each of us is a combination of all four of these styles, we all have a preferred style by which we attempt to meet our various needs. It is this *preferred* style that shows up most often in our relationships and our daily interactions.

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Many have asked, *So what personality type does Jesus have?* In Philippians 2:6-11, we read that Jesus, “being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!”

The Scriptures are clear that Jesus is fully man and therefore embodies human personality traits. Yet, because Jesus is also fully God, He is the only one who perfectly embodies all behavioral styles. On earth, He used each of the four DISC styles perfectly, depending on the situation and the needs of those around Him. When circumstances called for it, He exercised complete authority over events and individuals, but He was also able and ready to fully submit Himself to His Father’s authority. When those around Him needed compassion, He provided it. When they required loving patience, He was ready to extend it. And when His closest companions needed a stern word or rebuke, He did not shy away.

Though Jesus alone wielded each of the DISC styles perfectly, we have all been endowed with some natural measure of the four personality types. That’s why the DISC assessment should never be used to

label others or excuse inappropriate behavior. It means we can lean into our strengths when appropriate for a situation, but we can also pray and ask for God’s help in using those parts of our personality that come less naturally. In other words, there will be times when a Dominant (D) style should yield to another leader and take on a posture of Steadiness (S) for the good of the team. Or a person with a highly Conscientious (C) bent will need to take on an Influencing (I) role. Remember: the DISC assessment is meant to simplify what can be observed in human behavior—and human behavior is anything but simple. It is *descriptive*, not *prescriptive*. Knowing how God has wired us allows us to make informed decisions about our behavior.

That’s a good thing. As we’ll see in the next chapter, there are no good or bad DISC profiles. We are different—every one of us—and while our differences can become a point of conflict, understanding can turn them into a source of tremendous strength.

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Chapter 2

Different Doesn't Mean Wrong

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When Jesus selected twelve disciples to join Him in His ministry, He didn't choose people who favored just one personality type. His band of brothers was an eclectic group. There was Peter, who could be both high energy and brash (likely a combination of I and D). But there was also John, whom Jesus thought so dependable and warm that He trusted him to care for His mother (indicating a high C and S). Jesus knew that a great team depends not on a uniformity of perspectives and desires, but on directing a variety of strengths toward a big and common goal. He wanted disciples with all kinds of behavioral styles because He knew that the challenges they would face with Him in ministry and after He returned to the Father would be too big for just one style of leadership. As we explore the DISC behavioral styles a bit more deeply, it's important to remember that *different* doesn't mean *wrong*.

Each of us acts the way we do for a variety of reasons. This is perfectly normal. However, even slight differences can become barriers between us. The real source of our conflict is not in our differences, though. Instead, conflict happens when we have accepted, sometimes unknowingly, that because our way of doing things seems right to us, it is the only way things can and should be done.

This is a symptom of a belief system based on winning and losing. The first step in resolving a conflict is to move out of *win-lose* and into *win-win*. One of the best ways to do that is to realize that when it

comes to behavioral style, *different* simply means *different*, not *wrong*.

The Shape of Our Behavior

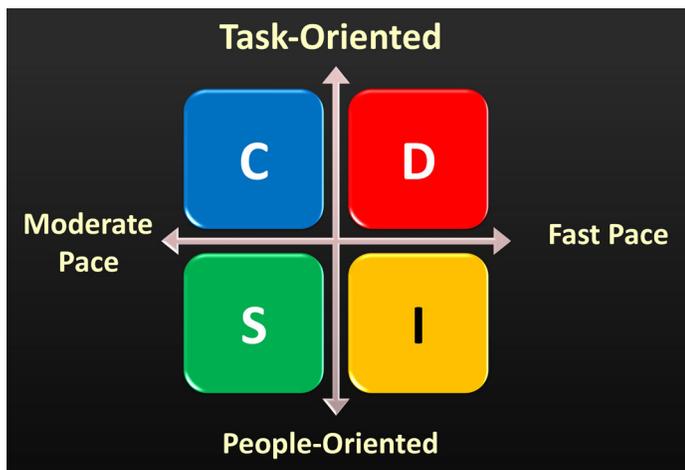
So, what shapes our behavior? *Why am I the way I am? And why is that other person so very different?* These questions have fascinated people throughout history. Early observers compared human behavior to the four elements of nature: earth, fire, water and air. Earth was firm and dominating, fire was bright and animated, water was calm and peaceful, and air was clear and detached.

Contemporary researchers have discovered that each person has a pattern of behavior that was formed early in life. Some would even say children come into the world with their behavioral style already intact. No one can say for sure exactly what percentage of this pattern is hereditary and what percentage is environmental. But parents of more than one child often marvel that two kids from the same set of parents growing up in the same environment can be so very different.

To better understand the DISC model, let's take a look at two continuums of behavior, which we will label pace and priority. First, let's consider pace. On the right side of the horizontal axis are those people who tend to have a faster pace about them. They are often competitive and direct. They express their ideas and beliefs openly and forcefully. They like to tell others what to do. On the left side of the

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horizontal axis are those people who tend to have a more moderate pace about them. They tend to be more cooperative and to ask lots of questions. They are indirect in their style.



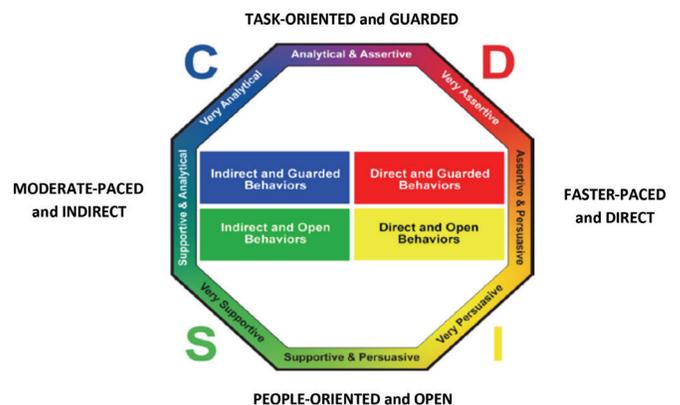
There is no right or wrong, good or bad place to be on this scale. Each place is just different. The position each person occupies on the scale depends largely on the traits he or she was born with. This has nothing to do with values, intelligence, abilities, or even good mental health. It is all about our natural behavioral tendencies.

The next continuum looks at priority. On the top of the continuum are those whose main priority is tasks. They tend to be more guarded in their approach to people and things, and are more controlled in their expression. On the bottom are those whose main priority is people. They tend to be more open in their approach and more self-expressive. They will often share their emotions freely with those around them, while those at the top of

the continuum are not comfortable revealing their deeper feelings.

As in the previous example, there is no single best place to be. This has nothing to do with a person's emotional maturity, abilities, or commitments. It has to do with a person's comfort in expressing their emotions and their priorities around tasks or people. Remember, different does not equal wrong; different just equals different.

By putting these two continuums together, a four-quadrant system is formed, which we can use to characterize behavior. We will call the upper right quadrant the Dominant D behavior, or Directing.



The lower right quadrant is the Influencing I behavior, or Interacting. The lower left quadrant is the Steady S behavior, or Supporting, and the upper left quadrant is the Conscientious C behavior, Calculating. Remember: Each person is made up of some combination of all four of these behaviors. Most people, however, tend to have a more prominent style and then maybe a secondary and tertiary style.

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Though we looked briefly at the four DISC behavioral types in the last chapter, it's important to recognize that each style has positive attributes and negative tendencies. By learning the potentials and the pitfalls, we can better understand ourselves and others, and make the most of our interactions.

Understanding Directors

The Dominant style (Director) is decisive, results-oriented, competitive, independent, and strong-willed. These strengths, if left unchecked, can become domineering, harsh, tough, impatient, and pushy. The Director is motivated by challenges and prefers a fast-paced environment. He or she fears being taken advantage of. To increase their effectiveness, Directors should work to develop greater patience, learn to slow down, and interact more.

So who in the Bible displayed the directing behavioral style? Solomon, Joshua and Sarah are great examples of high D personalities. Jesus' high D personality is clearly on display in Luke 8:26-35, where He exercises full control over a group of demons who are holding a poor man in unspeakable bondage.

Understanding Interactors

The Influencing style (Interactor) is enthusiastic, persuasive, people-oriented, stimulating, and talkative. These strengths, when overused, can make an Interactor appear undisciplined, excitable, disorganized, manipulative, and reactive. The Interactor is motivated by contact with other people and an

open, accepting environment. They fear a loss of influence. To increase their effectiveness, Interactors should work to develop greater objectivity, be more organized, and learn to be brief and low-key in their everyday interactions.

Biblical examples of high-I personalities include Peter, Aaron and Rebekah. In Matthew 14, Jesus' high-I personality is on display as He has compassion on the large crowds following Him. Though there is no earthly way to feed so many people, He persuades His disciples to begin passing out the few fish and loaves available. Thousands were fed that day.

Understanding Supporters

The Steadiness style (Supporter) is dependable, agreeable, amiable, and calm. These strengths, if misapplied or overused, can come across as unsure, insecure, wishy-washy, and conforming. The Supporter is motivated by stability and prefers an organized, secure environment. To increase their effectiveness, Supporters should work on becoming more decisive, say "no" more easily, and develop greater comfort with change.

High-S personalities in the Bible include Abraham, Nehemiah and Hannah. In John 21, Jesus demonstrates high-S personality traits as He helps the disciples catch a boatload of fish after they have nothing to show for a full night's work. Jesus not only helps them catch the fish, but then He prepares breakfast for His tired and hungry friends.

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Understanding Calculaters

The Conscientious style (Calcalater) is accurate, persistent, cautious, and perfectionistic. These strengths, when overused, can appear critical, picky, judgmental, and apprehensive with decisions. The Calcalater is motivated by systems and accuracy, and prefers an environment that maintains the highest of standards. Their fear is criticism of their work. Calcalaters can increase their effectiveness by being more open and tolerant of themselves and others, and by developing an acceptance of realistic limitations.

Luke, Moses and Mary are great examples of high-C individuals in the Bible. In Luke 4, where Satan tempts Jesus in the desert, we see Jesus' high-C personality take over. His detailed knowledge of the Scriptures and His use of that knowledge to respond enable Him to stand firm.

DISC in Our World Today

Now, let's look at a few real-world scenarios to see how someone with each of the four preferred DISC behavioral styles might respond.

In a traffic jam . . .

- A **Director** would be honking the horn and weaving in and out of traffic, trying to get to their destination.

- An **Interacter** would be on their cell phone, checking out what is going on, or would have their windows rolled down, getting to know their neighbors.
- A **Supporter**, being more practical in nature, would probably have a book or their ipad with them to catch up on some reading.
- A **Calcalater** would have a map or their GPS app out, trying to figure out another route to take tomorrow to avoid the same fix.

In a grocery store . . .

- A **Director** would be rushing through the aisles, grabbing whatever looks good and quickly moving to the checkout lane.
- An **Interacter** would be saying hello to everyone they meet. They might even make a friend or close a sale at the checkout counter.
- A **Supporter** would have a list of only the items they need, and would be traveling from aisle to aisle methodically to get all their groceries.
- A **Calcalater** might have their phone out to check prices and ingredients for each product.

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If someone has moved the office furniture over the weekend . . .

- A **Director** might say, “Great! This should have been done weeks ago!”
- An **Interacter** might not say anything. They’re likely so busy interacting with people that they didn’t even notice that the furniture was moved.
- A **Supporter** might say, “Gee, I was just getting used to it the way it was!”
- A **Calculator** will not say anything at first, but later might ask, “Why did they move our furniture, and who authorized the move?”

When putting together a new bicycle . . .

- A **Director** would just start putting the bike together, even though they might end up with a few extra parts.
- An **Interacter** would have some friends over for a party and find some Supporters and Calculators to assemble the bike for them.
- A **Supporter** would begin with the first instruction, follow it to completion, and then go on with each successive instruction.
- A **Calculator** would first carefully check that all the parts are there, read through the instructions in their entirety, and then put the bike together accordingly.

Remember: There are no good or bad styles. Each one is simply unique! Think of your preferred style as your voice. It’s unique to you, it’s how you interact with others, and it’s a wonderful gift. But now imagine that you have a volume knob on your chest to control your voice. Without realizing it, the volume can get cranked up so that your voice—your preferred style—is now blaring. No one else can be heard, plus you’re no longer communicating effectively – you are disturbing the peace. The problem isn’t your voice; it’s the volume. We all need to learn to adjust the volume on our strengths from time to time.

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Chapter 3

How Different Behavioral Styles Can Get Along—and Thrive Together

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I wish I would have learned this information earlier in my life. It would have saved me from a lot of mistakes, a fair bit of heartache, and plenty of time misspent. Thankfully, I did learn it at age twenty-eight. As a result, I've been able to make better personal decisions and interact more successfully with others.

I am a Supporter/Interacter. I like being involved with people, but I do it at my own pace and in an organized fashion. My biggest challenges come from those people in the opposite quadrant from me—the Directors. Because they want results and tend to act decisively, while I want security and act systematically, I have had to learn some coping strategies. But these techniques have helped me to get my own needs met while still being able to flex to meet the needs of others. Because my tendency is to meet the needs of others first, I learned I need to ask for what I want. An affirmation that has been especially useful for me is: "I will tell you what I want, then ask you what you want, and be willing to negotiate."

I have also tried to minimize the limitations that come with being a Supporter/Interacter. I can be indecisive and am often not good at expressing my feelings. But I know this about myself, so now, when small, seemingly insignificant decisions need

to be made, I force myself to respond quickly. For the larger decisions, especially if they involve other people, I give myself time by expressing a need to "think it over" before responding.

In my training seminars, I often tell participants to maximize their new self-understanding by following these guidelines:

- Honor and celebrate your strengths! Put yourself in situations where you can use your strengths often—both at work and in social settings.
- Minimize your limitations. Continue to look for ways to develop yourself in your weakest areas. And recognize that God often used people's weaknesses to accomplish His purposes, so submit your weaknesses to Him.
- Surround yourself with others whose strengths complement yours. Create a team of people who can each utilize their natural strengths to get the job done. Of course, the most effective teams will have the strengths of each style present: Directors, Interacters, Supporters, and Calculators.

—*Rich Meiss, Director of Leadership Development,
Lead Like Jesus*

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Tips for Dealing with Each DISC Style

As you can probably imagine, many conflicts and misunderstandings are the result of people simply operating out of their preferred behavioral style. But the more we know about ourselves and others, the better we can navigate our interactions to find positive outcomes. In fact, the bigger the family or the bigger the organization, the more everyone will benefit from knowing and understanding the language of DISC.

When dealing with a Director: Provide possibilities for them to achieve results, solve problems, or be in charge. Stress the logic of ideas or strategies. Whenever possible, get them into a discussion about their goals and the end results. Remember that Directors can be demanding and competitive; they will tend to tell you what is happening and want to be in control. Help them meet these needs.

When dealing with an Interacter: Allow them to express their hunches or ideas. Provide ideas for transferring talk to action. Allow time for fun activities and creative ideas. Provide incentives for them, and avoid confrontation if at all possible. Remember that Interacters can be excitable and stimulating. They will want to be the center of attention and have the opportunity to interact with people.

When dealing with a Supporter: Show them sincere interest and recognition. Be patient in drawing out their goals and needs. Present new ideas in a

non-threatening manner, giving Supporters time to adjust to change. Remember that Supporters tend to be soft-spoken and team oriented, and usually want to include everyone. They do not need to be the center of attention.

When dealing with a Calculator: Be prepared to answer their questions in a patient and persistent manner. If you disagree about something, make sure to disagree with the facts, not the person. Give them permission to make changes based on their high standards. Remember that Calculators can be cautious and sensitive. They tend to ask probing questions and like to plan ahead.

Developing Trust, Regardless of Style

Over the years, studies at the University of Minnesota have concluded that trust is built on these four foundations:

Straightforwardness: Confronting people and issues

Openness: Giving and receiving feedback willingly

Acceptance: Being non-judgmental of others

Reliability: Doing what you say you will do

When these four characteristics are present, a climate of trust is usually apparent. The interesting fact is that each of the DISC styles tends to have strengths and limitations in these four trust factors, as follows:

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Style	Strength	Limitation
Director	Straightforwardness	Acceptance
Influencer	Openness	Reliability
Supporter	Acceptance	Straightforwardness
Calculater	Reliability	Openness

As we recognize our strengths and limitations, and those of other team members, we can begin to lean on one another for the good of all.

The Growth Potential of Biblical DISC®

In the twelfth chapter of 1 Corinthians, the apostle Paul wrote:

Now if the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body (vv. 15–20).

One of the issues dividing the Corinthian church was the use of their spiritual gifts, but the principle

Paul lays out can be applied to all gifts—natural or spiritual—including the way God has wired our individual style preferences. In your home or business, your DISC style is a gift to those around you, just as the behavioral styles of those with whom you live and work are a gift to you. No one style preference is better than another, but each was given for the common good.

Now, at first this might not seem obvious. It's basic human nature to look at the world through the lenses we wear every day. Our own style preference has a way of shading our outlook so that we inherently believe that our way of handling a situation, whether it be as a Director, an Interacter, a Supporter, or a Calculater, is the best way possible. But with our differences, God has given us a path to growth and maturity. As we spend time with all different types of people and see their strengths in action, we will grow from judging to valuing others.

Think of this growth like a ladder. We all start out on the bottom rung—**judging**. That's when we see the different ways others respond to circumstances and look down upon them for not doing things the way we would. As we have already seen, this is somewhat natural. It's hard for us humans to see the world the way someone else might. But there's hope.



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The next rung on the ladder is **understanding**. This happens when we begin to get our minds around the idea that we're not all the same. If, for example, you're a Director and you see a Calculator in action, you become curious, asking yourself, "Why did they just tackle the problem that way? They were really concerned with getting a handle on all the data." The Biblical DISC (and this book) can help us take the first step up to the understanding rung because we now have a language to talk about the differences we see.

Respecting is the third rung. Think of respecting as a deeper, more intentional way of understanding. Once we realize that everyone has their own way of operating, we learn to respect our differences. This affects how we work alongside others, how we communicate, and how we handle conflicts and misunderstandings.

Next is **appreciating**. On this rung, we become truly thankful for other people and what their personality style brings to the team. We take notice of a job well done and call attention to it. But because we are armed with the knowledge of the DISC model, we also show our appreciation in ways that will be meaningful to each person's preferred style. For example, you might give the D on the team a pat on the back and present her with another challenge, while you make sure the S is given credit along with the rest of the team (so he knows no one got left out).

The final rung on our ladder is **valuing**. This is where we really step into Jesus' footsteps. He valued everybody—from tax collectors to Pharisees to lepers. And that's where we need to be if we're going to lead like Jesus. The way we get there is to leave judging behind, and step into a place of understanding, followed by respecting, then appreciating.

Where are you on this ladder? Once you take the Biblical DISC® Assessment, set aside some time to reflect on your own journey from judging to valuing. No matter where you find yourself, the good news is that progress can be made. And God wants to help us make it.

We hope you have enjoyed learning about the DISC model of human behavior. If you'd like to dive deeper into the Biblical aspects of DISC, study Jesus and His perfect display of all four behavioral styles, or become a certified practitioner of Biblical DISC, [you can visit our website to learn more.](#)

Once there, you'll find a sample report, be able to take the assessment in order to learn more about the way God naturally wired you, and even join one of our upcoming training or certification programs.

To learn more go to:
LeadLikeJesus.com/DISC