

“I can’t think of a better person than Pablo Martinez to write a book on prayer and personality. Pablo understands and loves people – he also knows God and wants people to connect with Him. This book will help you understand yourself more and help you develop an intimate and powerful prayer life.”

– **Wendy Beech-Ward**, Director of Spring Harvest

“Christians whose praying is difficult will find this book encouraging and enlightening. Pablo Martinez emphasises the way that how we pray is very much influenced by our personality – and we are all different. There are ‘different prayers for different people’.

“As a struggling, failing but believing Christian and as a psychiatrist practising for many years I would highly commend this short but influential work.”

– **Professor Andrew Sims**, former President of the Royal College of Psychiatrists

“Knowing who we are greatly influences how we relate to God and to one another, and this book provides us with a fresh understanding of these dynamics, especially as they relate to prayer. This is not guilt-inducing but deeply liberating. Pablo Martinez demonstrates how prayer should be God-centred and God-honouring, but also health-giving and restorative. It is a wonderfully motivating book and I warmly commend it.”

– **Jonathan Lamb**, Director, Langham Preaching, and Chairman, Keswick Ministries

“Thoughtful, helpful and encouraging. It helps us understand both who we are talking with and why some patterns and models of prayer will come more naturally than others.”

– **Michael Ramsden**, European Director, RZIM Zacharias Trust

“Profoundly simple, this book helped me understand myself and others, but, more importantly, helped me to pray.”

– **Hugh Palmer**, Rector of All Souls, Langham Place, London

An earlier version of this material appeared under the title
Prayer Life.

PRAYING
WITH THE
GRAIN

**How your personality
affects the way you pray**

PABLO MARTÍNEZ

MONARCH
BOOKS

Oxford, UK & Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA

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First published in the UK in 2001 by Spring Harvest Publishing Division and Paternoster Lifestyle, under the title *Prayer Life*.

This edition published in 2012 by Monarch Books (a publishing imprint of Lion Hudson plc) and by Elevation (a publishing imprint of the Memralife Group):

Lion Hudson plc, Wilkinson House, Jordan Hill Road, Oxford OX2 8DR

Tel: +44 (0)1865 302750; Fax +44 (0)1865 302757;

email monarch@lionhudson.com; www.lionhudson.com

Memralife Group, 14 Horsted Square, Uckfield, East Sussex TN22 1QG

Tel: +44 (0)1825 746530; Fax +44 (0)1825 748899;

www.elevationmusic.com

ISBN 978 0 85721 152 1 (print)

ISBN 978 0 85721 257 3 (Kindle)

ISBN 978 0 85721 258 0 (epub)

ISBN 978 0 85721 259 7 (PDF)

Distributed by:

UK: Marston Book Services, PO Box 269, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 4YN

USA: Kregel Publications, PO Box 2607, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49501

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The text paper used in this book has been made from wood independently certified as having come from sustainable forests.

British Library Cataloguing Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Printed and bound in Great Britain by Clays Ltd, St Ives plc.

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Pablo Martínez

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He was one of the members of the founding council of the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity (1982) and has been a regular speaker at Word Alive and Spring Harvest.

He developed his pastoral gifts serving as an elder in his local church for almost twenty-five years. He is currently chairman of the European Christian Counsellors Network, a body connected to the European Leadership Forum, where Dr Martínez serves as a member of the steering committee. He is also a member of the Sociopolitical Commission of the European Evangelical Alliance.

He has authored two other books: *Tracing the Rainbow: Walking Through Loss and Bereavement* (Authentic Media, 2004), and *A Thorn in the Flesh: Finding strength and hope amid suffering* (Inter-Varsity Press, England, 2007).

Pablo is married to Marta, who is also a medical doctor. He enjoys bird-watching and reading.

Foreword

I have enjoyed the friendship of Pablo Martínez for more than twenty years and am grateful for the opportunity to commend this book to a wide readership.

It is not difficult to pinpoint its special value. Here is a psychiatrist who is committed to Christ, knows his Bible, rejoices in Christ's cross, has a lively sympathy for struggling Christians and has much wisdom born of rich pastoral experience. These ingredients together make a strong mixture!

Dr Martínez accepts the Jungian distinction between extroverts and introverts, and his classification of four main psychological types. He is surely right to insist that our temperament is a genetic endowment, and that the new birth does not change it, although grace helps us to live with it and the Holy Spirit changes us into the likeness of Christ. He urges us to discover who we are, and to accept and respect each other in the rich diversity of the human family. As we study his thorough portraiture of different psychological types, we soon recognize ourselves and our friends.

Next he comes to the practice of prayer and how our prayers are affected by our temperament and personality. There are different styles of prayer which suit different kinds of people; he is an enemy of all stereotypes. He also faces honestly some of the problems which Christians experience, and makes practical suggestions for solving them. He urges us to persevere, because of the therapeutic value of prayer.

But our author is also familiar with the contours of contemporary thought and knows about the current influences which are hostile to prayer. In his last two chapters he tackles these. He develops a robust defence both of the authenticity

of Christian prayer, against the slander that it is mere auto-suggestion, and of the uniqueness of Christian prayer, against the claim that it is no different from Eastern meditation.

Pablo Martínez has written a profound, practical and personal book in which the skill of the psychiatrist and the gentleness of the pastor are combined. His overall aim is to encourage “prayer without guilt”; he wants us to discover that prayer is “more a pleasure than a burden”. I warmly commend this English edition. I cannot imagine any reader failing to be helped by it, as I have been myself.

John Stott

London, September 2001

Introduction to the First Edition

As I decided to write about how our personalities and characters affect our prayer lives, three purposes were in my mind. First, to help the ordinary Christian who is struggling unnecessarily with their own prayer life and spirituality. Many Christians believe their struggles are sinful, not understanding that very often they are the result of their own emotional make-up. I would like my readers to think of prayer without guilt, because too often we associate the two. Prayer should not be just one more burden in life, but a pleasure to enjoy.

My second purpose was to help Christians develop their prayer lives to their full potential, while understanding how these are affected by their temperaments and personalities. How do they affect our praying – and what can we do about it? How can I use the benefits and counteract the drawbacks of my character in prayer? I would like to promote mutual acceptance in our relationships, between individual Christians and between churches, as a result of grasping the basic principle that variety is a treasure that enriches, not an obstacle that bothers.

Third, I wanted to make clear the great therapeutic value of prayer. Prayer is a powerful tool to bring emotional healing into our lives. It is in prayer that we encounter, face to face, the supreme Physician, our Lord Jesus Christ, who wants to give us “life to the full” (John 10:10).

The second part (Chapters 4 and 5) is on the apologetics of prayer. Its purpose is to equip the reader with reasons for defending the relevance and uniqueness of Christian prayer in a postmodern society. This book is addressed to the evangelical

community in general, rather than to the professional group of Christian psychologists and psychiatrists. For this reason, I have tried to avoid technical detail and to be very practical. The book has been forged mainly through direct contact with ordinary Christians, who answered questionnaires or accepted interviews, thus making an invaluable personal contribution.

Some words of gratitude are necessary here because this book is the result of many efforts. Ali Hull has been not only a very efficient editor, but a partner whose comments and suggestions have greatly enriched the book. Bob Horn was the person who first introduced me to Word Alive/Spring Harvest, and consequently opened the doors to the series of lectures which were the basis for the book. My wife, Marta, has given me essential help in the practicalities of using a computer! Finally, I want to thank my parents from whom I learned that prayer, the spinal cord of our Christian life, is a pleasure to enjoy, a source of peace and blessing, much more than a burden. If I manage to help my readers to learn this same principle, the book will have accomplished its purpose.

Introduction to the Revised Edition

I count it as a privilege to write some words of introduction to this totally revised and updated edition. It is now ten years since it was first published in English. During these years the book had a very warm welcome from readers. Not only were the numbers encouraging – it was reprinted several times and has been translated into thirteen languages – but I particularly appreciated the feedback from many brothers and sisters, who confirmed that the work met a need. Many have shared how they discovered through it that prayer can be more a pleasure than a burden. If it is true that books are to the author like children to parents, I can say that this “child” has been a constant source of joy to me!

As I was working on the revision and updating, I tried to keep in mind the many helpful comments I received from readers during these years. If the book is now enriched, as I hope it is, I owe a particular debt of gratitude to its readers.

I am grateful to Monarch Books at Lion Hudson, and to Tony Collins in particular, for their interest in publishing this revised version of the work. In a time when the pace of life continues to increase, and even books have a short lifespan, my desire and heartfelt prayer is that God may continue to use this book for the building up of his church in the English-speaking world.



Part 1

The
Psychology
of Prayer

CHAPTER 1

Different Prayers for Different People

Prayer in relation to temperament

Why do I find it difficult to pray?

Why do some Christians seem to have a natural ease when it comes to praying?

Why do I feel so hypocritical when I pray?

Why do I find it hard to feel the presence of God when I pray?

Is my problem a lack of faith?

These frequently heard questions reflect an important reality: our prayers are affected not only by spiritual conditions but by other things as well. Three factors have a powerful effect on our prayer lives. Two of them have a permanent, continuous influence: our *temperament* and our *personality*. They are closely linked to our character, to what we are like as people. The third factor, the *circumstances* of the moment, depends on temporary phenomena: the effects only last for a certain length of time.

In the chapters that follow, I want to analyse the way in which these factors affect our prayer life on two levels: in the

course of prayer, which we might call the flow or the dynamics of prayer, and in the content of prayer. In other words, our temperament, our personality and our circumstances at a given moment affect *how we pray* and *what we pray*.

This does not mean that our prayer life is completely at the mercy of emotional and circumstantial factors. This view, that of psychological determinism, is a serious mistake that has been made by several different schools of psychology. Both the orthodox psychoanalysis of Freud and Skinner's behaviourism maintain that the mind regulates our behaviour and our whole lives so strongly that it leaves very little scope for other influences. We do believe, as Christians, that prayer is performed under the influence of the Holy Spirit and he assumes a central role throughout the entire course of prayer.

In analysing the psychological factors of prayer, I do not want to minimize the role of the One who "intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express" (Romans 8:26b), and so reduce it to that of an extra. Nothing could be further from my intention. But it would also be a mistake to ignore the extraordinary influence that our psychological make-up has on our spiritual life in general and on our prayer life in particular.

Why do our temperament, our personality and our circumstances affect us so much? The answer is that a human being is a unity, which basically has three parts. There is the somatic part – our bodies; the mental part – our minds, the *psyche*; and our spirit, the *pneuma*. These three interact in such a way that when the body suffers, the mind is affected and so is the spirit. When Spurgeon, the famous preacher, was suffering from a painful attack of gout, he had severely disturbed moods. We might not imagine the prince of preachers being depressed, but such was the reality: a physical problem was affecting his mood and it may also have affected his preaching sometimes.

We all know examples of this interaction between our different parts. In the same way, if our minds are affected by childhood traumas and injuries, if we come from broken families, if we feel anxious or inferior or insecure – all these things will affect our spiritual life.

Therefore, according to biblical teaching, people are a unity of mind, body and spirit, and these three are inextricably linked together. We cannot isolate any of these parts, just as we cannot isolate this psycho-somatic-spiritual whole from the influence of our surroundings. No one is so spiritual as to be able to claim that “the psychological” does not affect them. That would be just as presumptuous and naïve as to claim that “I am pure spirit.” Some believers are so “spiritual” that they even attribute the emotional part of the person to the fall. In fact, when God created humankind he didn’t make people as mere spirits, without bodies or emotions. Our psychological dimension already existed before the presence of sin in the world. As Christians we believe that the opposite of what is spiritual is not what is human, but what is carnal, being flesh. What puts out the Spirit’s fire is not our human nature in itself, but our fleshly desires which are a result of sin.

The Lord Jesus Christ was the man *par excellence*, but he never claimed to be so spiritual that outward circumstances did not affect him, nor to possess a kind of spirituality that was not integrated with the rest of him. Consider one of his most impressive prayers: the prayer at Gethsemane (Matthew 26:36–46). Jesus prayed with tears in his eyes and anguish in his soul (Hebrews 5:7), but these emotions did not stop him seeking the face of his Father wholeheartedly. That evening he was under severe stress – lonely (the disciples had fallen asleep); tired; facing torture and death – but this never interrupted the precious fellowship, the constant spiritual flow, with the Father.

In fact, the words of Jesus in Gethsemane gave us a masterpiece in prayer. Jesus needed to cry: he was deeply anxious. That didn't make him a sinner – depression of itself is not a sin. His tears while praying did not make him less spiritual but made him more fully human. His need to pour out all the anguish in his heart showed he truly “has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet was without sin” (Hebrews 4:15). The words of Pilate some hours later – “*Ecce homo*” (“Behold the Man”) – were a memorable summary of our Lord's essence: fully God and fully Man. Yet this perfection did not remove the influence of certain emotions and feelings from his life.

Therefore, we may conclude that the believer is a unity of these three dimensions, and that none of the three is superior to the others, and that none can be isolated from the others. This is the concept of man that we find in the Scriptures; biblical anthropology is holistic and integrated, and, consequently, so is the Bible's concept of the Christian life, including prayer. No one can set aside their state of mind, their emotions or their circumstances before coming to God in prayer.

All these influences, however, are not negative in themselves, nor should we always see them as limitations. Undoubtedly at times they are a thorn in the flesh, preventing us from praying as we would like. But we should bear in mind from the outset that, far from being obstacles, it is our temperament, our personality and our circumstances that give our spiritual life its distinctive quality. I might sum up this idea with a paraphrase of the famous dictum of the Spanish philosopher Ortega y Gasset that “My prayer is me and my circumstances.” Psychological factors exercise a partial and limited – but all the same, powerful – influence on our prayer life. We must accept this reality as one of the spheres where the Trinity works, moulding and shaping us (Philippians 1:6).

Let us see how these influences actually operate. I shall begin with some considerations concerning temperament.

TEMPERAMENT

Temperament is the most constitutional – or genetic – part of our character. It is the aspect of our personality that is mainly determined by biological factors: we are born with certain tendencies. Freedman and Kaplan's glossary defines it as "the intrinsic, constitutional propensity to react in a given manner to different stimuli".¹ As a general rule, it is accepted that there is an undeniable genetic, hereditary component, that cannot be changed, in the formation of the temperament.

How does this show itself? For example, if your father tends to be anxious you are also likely to be anxious, because anxiety comes in part from temperament. If both your father and your mother are anxious, then you are almost bound to be an anxious person. The same is true of the other features of our temperament. It is very much determined by genetics: we can change it, but only to a certain extent. There are some elements we cannot change.

There are many and varied classifications of the temperament. Most of them are useful in that they highlight predetermined aspects of the person. The typology put forward by Hippocrates, for example, despite its antiquity, still enjoys widespread acceptance, especially in evangelical circles. The work done by the Norwegian theologian Ole Hallesby in his brief but very readable booklet (now out of print) *Your temperament and your faith in God*² is an admirable example. Tim La Haye follows the same pattern laid down by Hippocrates in his book *Spirit-controlled Temperaments*.³ The four-fold classification – melancholic, choleric, sanguine and phlegmatic – is now deeply rooted in popular psychology, and I

believe that such wide acceptance comes from its very practical applications.

For our present purposes, however, I have preferred a less well-known, but more modern, classification: that of the Swiss psychiatrist, Karl Gustav Jung.⁴ Jung is a somewhat controversial thinker, both in professional and in Christian circles (he was the first “heretic” to deviate from Freudian orthodoxy). The reasons for objecting, from a Christian viewpoint, to some aspects of his work will be put forward in Chapter 5. But Jung has left us many useful and enriching insights into the human mind. We cannot write off all his work simply because we do not share some of his views. His classification of people according to their psychological type is one of these insights and is worthy of our respect and appreciation. I have chosen his typology because it emphasizes flexibility and also a certain possibility of change. As I have said, some people are reluctant to use this kind of typology because it is rigid and labels people in closed boxes. This is not the case with Jung’s classification, which shows a wide range of functioning, according to our circumstances and situations. We should remember that every human being is unique and, therefore, in a strict sense classifications are always somewhat relative. Jung’s classification revolves around two fundamental axes:

- According to one’s general attitude: introversion or extroversion.
- According to one’s predominant psychological function: four psychological types.

Introversion and extroversion

Jung divides human beings into two main types: those whose general attitudes, interests and energy are directed outwards

are extrovert; those whose general attitudes are directed inwards are introvert. These two attitudes are not primarily the result of the social climate or education: they are rather spontaneous, automatic ways of reacting – temperamental features which are biologically conditioned.

Nevertheless, it must be stressed that it is not a question of a choice between one and the other: a person is not either introvert or extrovert. Temperament is rather a continuum along which everybody can situate themselves. One person might be 60 per cent extrovert and 40 per cent introvert; for someone else the proportion will be different. A certain degree of change from one attitude to another is possible and sometimes even desirable. The person who will suffer is one who is 80 per cent one and 20 per cent the other, or even 90 per cent one and 10 per cent the other. The closer we are to the balance of 50 per cent extrovert and 50 per cent introvert, the better.

In fact, every human being potentially possesses both possibilities. We all go through periods of our lives when we have a tendency towards introversion – adolescence, for example. Consequently, evidently there can be fluctuations in these basic attitudes. In spite of that, however, one of the two attitudes will always be predominant; one will react in a more spontaneous, automatic way than the other. For example, an introvert is a person who wishes they could speak more in the company of others, while an extrovert may regret how much they have spoken. An introvert's brain works much quicker than their tongue; an extrovert is the opposite.

In introversion, the person's vital energy is directed inwards. They will be shy, lacking in fluency and adaptability in their relationships. Introverts need a lot of privacy. They are comfortable alone: people – especially crowds – tire them. They prefer activities that involve few or no other people. This

doesn't mean that they don't like being with others. Introverts enjoy interacting with some people but it drains their emotional energy. For this reason they need to find quietness to "recharge their batteries". An introvert is likely to return home exhausted after a party! Meditation and introspection come naturally to them, and their inner life is their main source of delight. Far more interested in ideas than in things, they enjoy reading books and meditating on the word of God. Given their rich inner life, they inhabit their dreams, their speculations, their own private universe. To look deeply into the affairs of the soul will be far easier for an introvert than an extrovert. Consequently, they do not find it difficult to cultivate a fairly regular prayer life.

Introverts prefer praying in solitude; they may feel uncomfortable in prayer meetings where there is a more extrovert expression of emotions. Their prayer is born from their remarkable depth of feeling and thought, not so much from the immediate stimuli around them. If they have to pray out loud, and this can be torture to them, they become more nervous than the extrovert and pray shorter prayers, but the substance of their prayer shows how much an introvert may feel inside. Although they do not like showing their emotions, they do have fire in their hearts. In summary, their spirituality is a rich treasure for the church in a society that is increasingly attracted by superficiality and sensationalism. We need introverts in our churches because they enrich our spiritual lives – particularly our prayer lives.

In the case of extroversion, on the other hand, the person's psychological energy is directed outwards. The extrovert is a sociable person, adapting easily to their environment and relating effortlessly to the outside world. Their interests are not centred on their own private universe but around people

and things. They are, by nature, open to others, and one of their worst enemies is loneliness. Their need for sociability is striking: an extrovert becomes more and more alive as a party continues! They “recharge their batteries” from their interaction with others. Unlike the introvert, they experience quietness or solitude almost as a punishment. Having to stay at home alone for a long time is uncomfortable; they need to go out and it doesn’t matter where! They like outdoor activities, preferably with others, rather than indoor ones. They need as much contact with others as they can get.

Extroverts are people with attractive personalities at first sight, while the attractions of an introvert become apparent as one gets to know them. And extroverts and introverts are naturally attracted to each other. You will find more couples who complement each other than those that bring similar temperaments together, because those of similar temperaments don’t attract each other in the same way.

The extrovert’s natural tendency is towards action rather than meditation: they will be the ones doing things in the church, because they need to be active all the time. Consequently, they find it difficult to maintain a regular prayer life. The more extrovert a person is, the more difficult they find it to pray and to concentrate while praying – too much to do! Introverts, on the other hand, are much more methodical and will set time apart. Extroverts find difficulty in cultivating their inner life, which suffers in consequence. Their thoughts and feelings flow spontaneously outwards, so beginning to pray is rather like having to make an enormous leap, and therefore they usually choose praying with others rather than privately. Prayer meetings give them the opportunity to relate with others, which is precisely the source of energy they need to start praying. Once they are in the atmosphere of a group, they

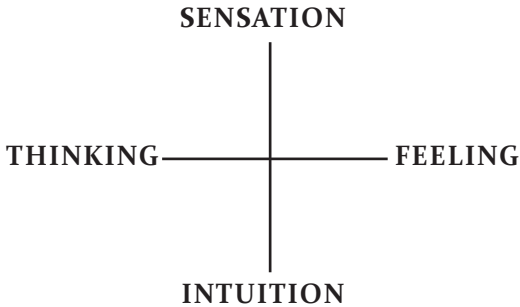
enjoy participation; this community flavour is just the kind of stimulus they need to warm them up spiritually. When they pray in solitude, they do so briefly and will not come out very inspired or spiritually high. They're not energized by quiet reflection but by what's going on around them. For them, prayer is linked with service and action. The focus of their requests is the needs of the world rather than the inner world, unlike the introvert.

So if you identify with both – congratulations! The more balance there is in temperamental matters, the better. Now let us move on to Jung's second criterion.

The psychological functions

In order to adapt to the outside world and to themselves, every individual is endowed with four main functions: thought, feeling, sensation and intuition. These functions, just like the two attitudes outlined above, are inborn. Every human being possesses all four of them, but in differing degrees of development. As a rule, one of them will be more highly developed than the other three: this is known as the principal function and is the one that reacts most spontaneously. Another acts in second place as an auxiliary function. The third and fourth are more or less unconscious and rudimentary.

As with introversion/extroversion, the four psychological functions are grouped on axes. There are two axes: the thinking/feeling axis and the sensation/intuitive axis. The principal and auxiliary functions cannot belong to the same axis – so it is not possible to have thinking as your principal function and feeling as your auxiliary, and so on. Again, the optimum state is to be balanced on these axes – to be as close as possible to the middle point on each one.



People are, therefore, one of eight types – with the predominant function first and the auxiliary second. The eight groupings are:

- Thinking/intuitive
- Thinking/sensation
- Feeling/intuitive
- Feeling/sensation
- Sensation/thinking
- Sensation/feeling
- Intuitive/thinking
- Intuitive/feeling

These eight groupings are then doubled by the addition of the extroversion/introversion axis to each one. As a matter of fact, this classification is also used in other areas, such as marriage counselling and professional-vocational orientation.

Particular professions that might be suited to some of these types include:

- Sensation/thinking – introvert: art collector, good supervisor, co-ordinator.

Different Prayers for Different People

- Feeling/sensation – extrovert: public relations, excellent party host, professions requiring service to others.
- Thinking/sensation – extrovert: lawyer, professions requiring a good sense of responsibility.
- Sensation/thinking – extrovert: businessman, good leader.
- Feeling/intuitive – introvert: musician, medical doctor, psychologist, psychiatrist.
- Intuitive/feeling – extrovert: excellent communicator, commercial and mass media professions.
- Thinking/intuitive – introvert: researcher, scientist, engineer.

According to Jung, many disorders of the psyche result from an imbalance among these four functions. If one of them is excessively developed, at the expense of the other three, a person will experience emotional upheaval. Consequently, the ideal state would be that of perfect balance among all four; but it is hard to find a person with the four functions – thought, sensation, intuition and feeling – all in an equal state of development.

Nevertheless, it is useful to know that we can stimulate the development of the less-developed functions; their state is not static and irreversible, a legacy that we have received and must fatalistically come to terms with. One of the keys to the maturing of the individual, according to Jung, is the stimulation of the less developed functions. He calls this process individuation.

Let us take the example of a person who is very much a thinking type, and who hasn't developed their capacity to express emotions at all. This is quite common in families where cold and distant parents did not encourage but rather repressed

everything to do with feelings. A thinking-type person is not condemned to be this way all their life: they can stimulate the growth of the less-developed function – feeling – by a process which requires practice and effort. In this process the main function should be maintained and respected as such. Our emotional life will actually be more harmonious and happy when we lean on our main function. It is the most natural, the one that helps us adapt to the world in a spontaneous way. Not leaning on our main function can lead to emotional problems. We cannot pretend to be what we are not endowed to be.

Having this in mind, how can we improve those functions which are rudimentary? These are some basic suggestions for change:

- Identify and be aware of your least-developed function.
- Notice its main features, how it reacts in daily life.
- Think of someone for whom it is the main function and take him or her as a reference. Imagine their reactions and attitudes.
- Start training this function in the same way you would learn a foreign language – by practising it a lot. The more you repeat certain reactions, the easier and more natural they will become.
- Personal relationships are a great help in this process of change. The more intimate a relationship, the greater are the possibilities of influence and therefore of change.

It is remarkable to discover how Jesus put some of these principles into practice as he instructed the apostles. It was through direct contact with him – they were together for three years – that a progressive forging of their character into Christ’s likeness was possible: “he appointed twelve... that they might

be with him” (Mark 3:14). They learned from a living model: “learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart” (Matthew 11:29). We know that this learning process was not intended to be primarily temperamental, but a moral one. Nevertheless, as we follow the lives of the apostles in the gospels and the book of Acts we come to discover how much their time with Jesus and the power of Holy Spirit moulded their reactions and strengthened their weak points. Their temperaments were not utterly changed, but they were indeed refined.

After this general introduction, we are ready to consider how these types influence our prayer lives. We will look more closely at the four functions that determine psychological types. Remember that when I talk about a particular psychological function, I am referring to a person’s principal function, the way they most naturally react. This does not mean they do not possess the other functions, but these are less developed.

The thinking type

In thinking types, logic prevails over feeling, the objective over the subjective. Reason is their guide in every situation. The first question to occur to them about any given circumstance is: “What does this mean?” They do have feelings, but these are not their first tools for approaching reality. This can be a problem in many of their relationships, especially marriage. Remember, opposites attract, and feeling types are attracted by thinking types, and vice versa. While thinking types may not be intellectuals in the usual sense, they enjoy thinking. They proceed by logical deduction and they feel at home with whatever requires reflection. They search for truth and meaning. For them, principles are more important than emotions, therefore things are not pleasant or unpleasant, attractive or

ugly, but true or false, logical or illogical. They love books and take enormous pleasure in the world of ideas. They are always classifying and analysing: they often have collections, such as stamps or butterflies, and are very methodical. We could say that their head is the most developed part of them, much more so than their heart.

In extreme cases, they may be insensitive people. They are sometimes oblivious to the emotional needs and moods of others; gauche when it comes to discerning the subtle variations of the heart. An extreme illustration of this is the man of letters and ideas living in his ivory tower. Given this deficit in the emotional sphere, another of the dangers faced by this type is intolerance: they can be too rigid, incapable of accepting the idiosyncrasies or opinions of others. They should be on their guard against this tendency to dogmatism, together with their excessively rationalistic mentality. They must ensure that their head does not grow out of proportion with their heart, remembering the perfect balance between truth and life that was characteristic of Jesus. They should cultivate their feelings and accept those of other people. The fact of thinking more than other people does not confer a greater degree of spirituality on anyone.

Prayer is, for them, a mental activity, performed more with the head than with the heart. They come to God with a rational mentality, and what matters for them when they pray is not so much the possibility of feeling God but the rush of new spiritual ideas that flow into their minds. They probably even use a notebook and jot down these ideas as they occur. Some of them might have a devotional diary which proves to be of great benefit to them. Other psychological types – the feeling type, for example – would be scandalized by this approach! How can something so full of emotion as prayer be

done with pencil and paper?

As a rule, thinking types will find it more difficult than others to get down to praying, because prayer implies relationship; it is an expression of feelings, and this is not easy for them. They find relationships demanding; more so if they are introverts. "I would find it much easier to write God a letter," expresses this difficulty. They enjoy the theological perspectives of prayer but not the expression of emotion while praying. Since prayer does not come naturally to them, the thinking type needs to make a particular effort to start it. More than any of the others, they will need to find adequate stimuli to help them begin to pray. In this respect, community prayer might be a great encouragement to them. The prayer life of the local church is an indispensable stimulus for every believer, but it is much more so for these people.

The thinking types are usually disciplined and methodical. They like order, and make excellent prayer partners. They often use prayer lists. But they are not so good at adoration and worship. Before praying, they prefer to have an objective basis, and often find their inspiration in a passage of Scripture. They find it difficult, however, to maintain the devotional quality of their meditation. Given their natural tendency to intellectualize everything, they find themselves – without realizing it – preparing sermons or analysing the exegesis of the text, though in the first place they came to it in a spirit of devotion. In any case, the reading of Scripture will give them a more solid foundation on which to base their reflections about God. Their meditation will be more a search for new ideas, for the light that flows from logic, from coherence of argument.

Spiritual self-analysis will be an essential feature of this person's relationship with God. The positive upshot of this is their remarkable capacity for self-criticism and confession. On

the other hand, there is a danger that too much introspection might turn them into “spiritual hypochondriacs”, with a disproportionate concern for their spiritual health. In their prayers, the main concern of these believers will be for justice and truth: they find themselves especially attracted to the Beatitudes. Their logical structure, their interconnectedness, like the links of a chain, and their emphasis on truth, all strike a chord with the thinking type’s temperament. This characteristic makes them excellent intercessors on behalf of people or situations in the world.

The attitude of the thinking type could be summed up in the following terms: “Meditating on God’s word is no problem for me. I enjoy that immensely. But I find it difficult to feel God’s presence when I pray. Curiously enough, if I manage to ‘connect’ with the Lord, then my prayer is intense.”

In general, their spiritual life is marked by stability, without many ups or downs. They may be dry sometimes, but even in periods of spiritual dryness, they are able to trust God and find streams of water in the desert. This firmness in their faith makes them a bulwark in the church, as they can lead and encourage others in times of difficulty. Martin Luther, the great reformer, and especially the apostle Paul, are both good examples of this type of Christian. Paul also reminds us of the very desirable possibility of having these temperament traits in balance. His feeling function was also highly developed: 1 Thessalonians 2, a tender and encouraging chapter, is a striking example of how you can be a good thinker and a caring pastor at the same time.