

Chronicles of Diversity

Your leadership weekly



Color your wilderness

The Order of Wilderness Stuff Trekkers International, Tracking your Stuff Trekking

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The MAC Sherlock dictionary defines psychology as the science of the human soul. Since theologians, scholars, scientists, poets, and others of literary genius can not agree on a consensus definition of the soul of man, I suppose this is an appropriate definition for our post modern world. Therefore, psychology is the science of your relative soulfulness.

Having the bulk of my education in the natural and physical sciences, and having only taken enough psychology to satisfy all college, and the curriculum to get a degree in education, I would classify the above definition into the fields of philosophy and religion, but then that wouldn't make psychology a science at all. And if that were true, how could anyone justify paying good money to have some one tell you, "If it feels good, do it. You are the master of your own soul."

Having come the half circle from science to self indulgence, we find ourselves adrift in the ocean of human intellect with no land in sight. "Water, water everywhere, and not a drop to drink."

Within the Rime of the Ancient Mariner, these words perhaps find an insight into the soul of human psychology that all our science cannot master. But a half full or half empty glass, does have some merit in a desert with no water at all. Put more scientifically, outside the 95% statistical confidence intervals that constitute normal behavior, perhaps worldly insight, into worldly problems, may provide some worldly solutions.

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Therefore, we have now completed our introduction into the folly of trying to understand normal human behavior. But where is the wonder spring? Its source lies in the deep mysteries of the eternity of God before time began.

We live in a universe of good stuff. It is defined that way. Read Genesis 1. With the subsequent arrival of sin, in Genesis Chapter 2, stuff didn't cease from being good, man ceased from being good. That is the context of the world in which we live. A fuller, or New Testament rendition of this is found in Romans 8:28: *And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.*

For our purpose, things and stuff are the same. We further understand that "*For many are called, but few are chosen.*" (Matthew 22:14, 20:16) It therefore follows, that stuff and things in some way relate to the calling of God in the lives of the many. In fact, it could be that how we relate to things and stuff is what separates the called from the chosen.

Even stated in this through the back door description, it sure makes the complex science of the soul look rather simple. How you relate to stuff, determines how you will relate to God.

Now I could, if so motivated, develop a ten question, or a ten thousand question test, to determine how you will relate the various stuff and things in your life. I could then compare your results with the results of others, and find pretty much that you are a normal, but unique individual personality. By normal I mean that your answers will be similar to most other people, in every area. The validity of the test is pretty much determined by how I write the questions, the type of statistics I use to produce and score the test, and the size of the computer I use to crunch the numbers.

Now if you send me \$10, or \$10,000 (Hey it's my test!) I will prove to you beyond a reasonable doubt, (In all science there must be room for doubt.) that you are a functioning and literate human being. I also have an illiterate test but that is less reliable, and of course more money. After I have shown you are human, I may be able to determine how you will react in certain situations. But if I tell you that, then being human, you might just change your reactions, to show me just how uniquely human you are, but with the \$10,000 test I already know that. Praise the Lord, for our perception of free will.

Now the point of this light hearted testing is that the unique you, is quite predictable in how you relate to the things and stuff in your life. It may take my \$10,000 test, for me to know. But the God who created you and knows the number of hairs on your head has no problem dealing with the real, and unique you. The interesting thing, that you may never have really thought about, is that you know how you will react also. So your freedom is only your free agency acting in collusion with your desires.

Now for a couple of non scientific examples. I used to work in the hardwood flooring business with Gary. Gary died a few years ago with some complications related to alcoholism. I used to drop Gary off many Fridays after work at a 7-11 close to the motel in which he lived. "Just drop me off here Jer, I need to get some cigarettes." Well, Gary may have bought a pack of cigarettes, but he would also buy some beer. I also knew if Gary got paid over \$500 that week, the chance for him being at work Monday was almost zero. If he received \$400-\$500 he would be at work but somewhat to moderately hung over. If he received less than \$400 he would be at work, and a real delight to work with, for the whole week. Gary was unable, or unwilling to come to grips with the real and fatal stuff problems that alcohol caused in his life.

Sunday night about half way through the service, I just thought of one of the most predictable situations in my life. Actually, it was funny to me, in that God was showing His sense of humor at my predicability. I was sitting near the rear, with no one I knew anywhere close. The reason is that I really didn't want to talk to anyone, I was mad at God. I have this new heart and aorta, I feel better than I ever have in my life, and I don't know where the game is, little lone when You will let me off the bench. After the service, I left quickly, I really didn't want to talk to anyone.

What makes this at all amusing is that, one week earlier being my personable self, I was sitting close to where I normally sit. Looking around to see who I might converse, I spied Kayla Burt. sitting alone, near the back, on the other side of the sanctuary. That is an unusual place for Kayla. I made a mental note to go and see how she was doing after the service.

Kayla and I share the discovery of severe congenital heart defects only twenty days apart. But more importantly we both are the two most totally athletically competitive people I have ever known. Aspects of that competitive, but non aggressiveness is beyond this article.

If you recall Kayla's heart stopped and she almost died on New Years Eve last year. During the remainder of last years Husky women's basketball season, she was recovering from her ordeal. There was all sorts of attention for her and her life saving friends. This year she is a student coach, still on scholarship, having to watch all the games, but only being able to contribute in a very indirect manner, always on the bench never being able to play the game again as she once did. Fame is fleeting and so is the need to get back in the game, whatever game God may have. I never got to talk to Kayla last week, she left before the end of the service.

Now I don't want to speculate on why Kayla was alone or left early the week before, but our personality similarities allows me to make a point. In my case my behavior is quite predicable and it relates to my competitive nature. For some gift or flaw in my personality, I need to feel that everything relates to practice for the big game. If I can't see that game schedule I get frustrated very easily. I have learned that God's game schedule is different than my own, this I have learned, but I still find it almost impossible to accept these long practice periods. When I feel ready it must be game time. When I don't understand, I do not like a lot of people around.

Since I have been doing this stuff trekking series, I also have seen, that the stuff I look at, the stuff I buy, and the stuff I think about comes about by environmental circumstances. I was born with a competitive nature, but it also was developed by my upbringing, being left handed in a right hand world, and a whole lot of other stuff on the \$10,000 test. All God has to do is control my time and all my choices seem to flow with what I do with these opportunities. My lack of not developing a personality test also guarantees that you are not all that different either.

This is the season of timing. There is not enough time to get all the stuff done for the holidays. Definitely not enough time to meet with all the people who would be blessed by your love and unique personality. So here is the test. Analyze the stuff you do during this trying time, as you are doing it, in light of God's calling and choosing.

Take this adventure into faith and see if what you do in this situation is for present good, or future good. We block all attempts to see our decisions as leading to future sorrows. Now even the harmful, like drunk Gary's cigarettes and beer, were perceived choices of present pleasure, leading to future pain, trouble, and agony. Even some of our not harmful choices could be some day the source of trial.

This is the challenging part. Look to see if you can get a glimpse of Romans 8:28 in each choice. "If this turns out bad tomorrow, how can it be good next week, or next year, or for eternity." Once you stretch your vision to that level, let that grace of God, allow you to rest in the present of this stressful season, by tracking your stuff trekking and finding your own predictable choices as a source of joy in a season of love. Love being the only thing that stuff can only substitute, but can not replace.