

**WALLFLOWERS IN THE
KINGDOM**

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The Colors Will Change

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**WALLFLOWERS IN THE
KINGDOM:
A Vindication of Introverts
in the Body of Christ**

Louis N. Jones



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Although this book chronicles true events and actual persons, the names of the people have been changed to preserve their privacy.

It is obvious that God loves variety—just look around! He created each of us with a unique combination of personality traits. God made introverts and extroverts. He made people who love routine and those who love variety. He made some people “thinkers” and others “feelers.” Some people work best when given an individual assignment while others work better with a team. The Bible says, “God works through different people in different ways, but it is the same God who achieves his purpose through them all” (I Corinthians 12:6, New Testament in Modern English by J. B. Phillips, New York: Macmillan, 1958.).

From *The Purpose Driven Life*, Rick Warren, 2002

* * *

“My attitude to these matters is that, as long as a patient is really a member of a church, he ought to be serious. He ought to be really and sincerely a member of that church, and he should not go to a doctor to get his conflicts settled when he believes that he should do it with God. For instance, when a member of the Oxford Group comes to me in order to get treatment, I say, ‘You are in the Oxford Group; so long as you are there, you settle your affair with the Oxford Group.’ I can’t do it better than Jesus.”

Carl Jung, *The Symbolic Life*, p. 272.

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Preface

One of the constant mantras in any writer's life is to "write what you know." This book is a thorough biblical examination of introversion – something I have experienced for most of my life that I have fruitlessly tried to morph into something more socially acceptable. This book is an expression of my calling and an effort to make peace with how God created me. It is my hope and prayer that if you have obtained this book and you are an introvert, that you will read it prayerfully and realize that God has created you to be special, and that introverts no longer have to take a backseat to extroverts.

I have borrowed the term *introvert* from the psychological field. However, this book does not focus primarily on a psychological and scientific

ic discussion of introversion. Many books on the market provide such information. The information in this book flows from my experiences as an introvert, and from careful study of the word of God. *Introversion* is the most appropriate term to describe a personality type that was created by God and was in existence long before Carl Jung or anyone else decided to study it. Therefore, my intent here is not to provide a psychological treatise embellished with theology. It is to provide a theological examination of introversion supported by psychology.

I also realize that in writing this, my experiences as an introvert may not be typical of other introverts, and may vary depending upon the degrees of introversion that are in each person. The information in this book should be used as a guide for self-reflection and should be accompanied by prayer and counseling. It should not be used as a means to make any psychological or spiritual diagnoses. Also, if you are involved in an extroverted church, career, or family, the information in this book should not be interpreted as an endorsement to separate from these endeavors. Again, much prayer and counseling with a qualified pastoral counselor is required before making any determinations. It is essential that, even if you find information in this book that resonates with your situation, you follow the leading of the Holy Spirit regarding his call and direction for your life.

I say here (and I will mention it a few other times in this book) that this vindication of introverts is not intended to make villains of extroverts. It is my position that *both* introverts and extroverts have value in the kingdom of God, and that there is nothing wrong with either one. The audience for this book is not just introverts in the process of self-discovery. This book is also for extroverts who want to understand introverts better. It is for those who minister to introverts, and for those who are in relationships with introverts. My hope and prayer is that a better understanding of this personality type will lead to more fruitful relationships in the body of Christ, and will further enhance the kingdom's ability to minister to the saints and win souls to the kingdom.

Finally, I am aware that other books about introversion are out there, some with more authoritative voices than mine. I know of at least one other book that deals with introversion in the body of Christ. I have not read these books, so if there is any similarity to them, it is only because of my understanding of the subject matter. I do not take away from any of these works. This book is my voice and an integral part of my journey to understand how God has made me. I want to live the rest of my life with that understanding.



Defining Introversion

The word *introvert* is not a biblical term. However, its lack of presence in the Bible does not invalidate its use any more than the lack of the word “lettuce” means we cannot eat it. Its source is controversial for some Christians, especially those who believe that psychology is antithetical to biblical Christianity. I do not share that view entirely. Psychology is the study of the *psyche*, or the soul, and some benefit has been derived from its science. However, I do not believe that psychology presents a full view of the human personality, and that is where the Bible comes in. The Bible is more than just a book of fancy writing. It is God’s written instructions to humankind, inspired by the Holy Spirit. No study of the soul and the mind

can be complete without tapping into the Spirit of God.

The Swiss psychologist Carl Jung first popularized the term *introversion*. Jung did not discover introversion. He merely placed a label on a type of behavior that he had observed through years of study.

In the 1980s, I worked and fellowshiped with members of the Church of the Nazarene. I heard Jung's name mentioned frequently among them in casual conversations, because his teachings were quite influential in those circles. Today, Jung's psychology-based teachings and theories, particularly the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator®, remain influential, even among some Christians.

However, many Christians are quick to label Jung a pagan, an idolater, and an occultist. And much is written about Jung to support those opinions. Therefore, many people in the Christian community, especially those within charismatic circles, reject Jung's theories and, in some cases, the whole notion of psychology. They believe that God and the Holy Spirit make any such theories irrelevant. This is why the use of the word *introversion* within Christian circles remains controversial. In some cases, the term is rejected outright.

I want to make it clear that I am neither a student nor a faithful adherent of Jung's theories. I have completed very little study of him, other than to learn about his coining of the word intro-

version. He is mentioned here only as a historical reference to introversion, and as a person who studied and placed a name on a human quality that I believe is God-given. But the question is, if something is discovered by a person with questionable moral character, does that nullify or disqualify the discovery?

Not necessarily. For if the answer to that question is yes, moral-minded Christians would have to reject or repudiate most discoveries known to man, including a sizable amount of the foods we eat.

In his studies, Jung found something inherent in the souls of many men and women that was not secret, but was in place far before Jung and that transcends any natural understanding. My premise in this book is that God created introverts that way, and it is only through the word of God that “quiet people” can truly be understood.

Since the word introversion is not in the Bible, we lack a definition from that source. So, please humor the following definition of introversion from Wikipedia¹:

Introversion is “the state of or tendency toward being wholly or predominantly concerned with and interested in one’s own mental life.” Introverts are people whose energy tends to expand through reflection and dwindle during interaction. Introverts tend to be more reserved and less

1 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Extraversion_and_introversion

outspoken in large groups. They often take pleasure in solitary activities such as reading, writing, music, drawing, tinkering, playing video games, watching movies and plays, and using computers, along with some more reserved outdoor activities, such as fishing. In fact, social networking sites have been a thriving home for introverts in the twenty-first century, where introverts are free from the formalities of social conduct and may become more comfortable about personal feelings they would not otherwise disclose. The archetypal artist, writer, sculptor, engineer, composer and inventor are all highly introverted. An introvert is likely to enjoy time spent alone and find less reward in time spent with large groups of people, though he or she may enjoy interactions with close friends. Trust is usually an issue of significance: a virtue of utmost importance to an introvert choosing a worthy companion. They prefer to concentrate on a single activity at a time and like to observe situations before they participate, especially observed in developing children and adolescents. Introverts are easily overwhelmed by too much stimulation from social gatherings and engagement. They are more analytical before speaking.

Introversion is often determined through several psychological instruments. The most popular and widely accepted of these instruments is the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator®[®], which classifies

people into sixteen different personality types. I took an adapted version of this test a few years ago as part of a course on learning how to manage people with varying personality types. The test revealed that I was an INFJ (Introverted, Intuitive, Feeling, Judging). The definition of INFJ follows:

INFJs are future oriented, and direct their insight and inspiration toward the understanding of themselves and thereby human nature. Their works mirror their integrity, and it needs to reflect their inner ideals. Solitude and an opportunity to concentrate thoroughly on what counts most are important to them. INFJs prefer to quietly exert their influence. They have deeply felt compassion, and they desire harmony with others. INFJs understand the complexities existing within people and among them. They do not call a great deal of attention to themselves, preferring that their contributions speak for them. They are at their best concentrating on their ideas, ideals, and inspirations.²

While there is debate among Christians as to the morality and validity of these tests (the opinions range from recommending them as essential to dismissing them as tools of the occult), I cannot deny that the result of the test was quite an accurate description of my personality.³ The results of

2 Jen M. Kummerow, Nancy J. Barger, and Linda K. Kirby. *Work Types* (Warner Books, Inc., 1997), 20.

3 Because the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator® and other similar tests

the test also indicated that two of my suitable career types were literature or writing, and social service, particularly religious education. I happen to be a minister and a writer. Coincidence? Likely not.

present a snapshot “point-in-time” picture of one’s personality, and because the activity of the Holy Spirit can and often does change personality, or brings out a more dormant aspect of personality depending on the situation, I cannot recommend the use of these tests to inform decisions in a kingdom ministry capacity. They are mentioned here only to define a particular personality type, but should not be understood as an endorsement of their methodologies.