

FREE • TO • BE • ME

Using the Enneagram for Personal Growth

Facets of the Divine

In the creation story in Genesis 1, the only thing God creates which he refers to as “not good” the man with no companion. One person, all alone, cannot be complete. Man and Woman are presented as equals, sharing co-dominion as stewards of God’s delightful world. The idea here is that God creates *mankind* in his own image. We bear marks of the divine individually, but

SO GOD CREATED
MANKIND IN HIS OWN
IMAGE, IN THE IMAGE OF
GOD HE CREATED THEM;
MALE AND FEMALE HE
CREATED THEM.

GENESIS 1:27

when each of us is letting
God’s loving character shine
through us, we reflect God
even better *together*.

In Genesis, the diversity of humans is represented mostly by gender. But by the time of Paul’s writing, Paul’s thinking is more expansive, encompassing all the variety of abilities and gifts we possess, and how when we share those in love we **collectively**

become the body of Christ. This idea shows up in both Romans 12 and I Corinthians 12. We are many parts, but one body.

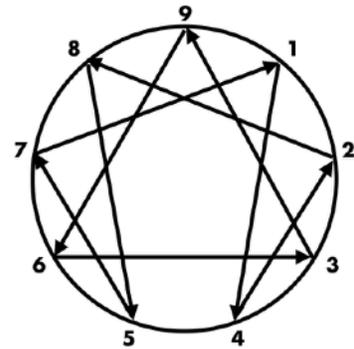
Perhaps the Enneagram provides us with another way to think about this same concept. If the body of Christ were a gem, when we embody the love of Christ through the various gifts we possess, **we can each be one shining facet of this divine gem.** We need each other. We are better because we have each other. Consider the old John Donne poem, *No Man Is An Island* (1624):

*No man is an island entire of itself; every man
is a piece of the continent, a part of the main;
if a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe
is the less, as well as if a promontory¹ were, as
well as any manner of thy friends or of thine
own were; any man's death diminishes me,
because I am involved in mankind.*

*And therefore never send to know for whom
the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.*

Part of what this poem reminds us of is that our communal connections bind us both for the better and for the worse. When each of us does our part to shine Christ’s love, we are collectively more than we could ever be individually. But when one part of us is hurting, detached, or dysfunctional, it is a loss to us all. We should be driven to help each other grow and be nourished in God, because when you are stronger, it helps me to be stronger.

Cron and Stabile have provided a helpful summary of the ways in which the different numbers on the Enneagram help to reflect God’s divine nature:



¹ A promontory is a point of high land that juts out into a large body of water; a headland.

Type	How They Can Reflect God's Image	Scripture
ONES	Show God's perfection and his desire to restore the world to goodness.	Romans 8:22-30
TWOS	Show God's unstoppable, selfless giving.	2 Corinthians 8:9
THREES	Show God's glory.	2 Corinthians 4:6
FOURS	Show God's creativity and deep emotions for humanity.	Psalm 50:11
FIVES	Show God's omniscience.	Hebrews 4:13
SIXES	Show God's steadfast love and loyalty.	Psalm 136
SEVENS	Show God's childlike joy and delight in his created world.	Luke 18:17
EIGHTS	Show God's power and intensity.	2 Samuel 22:33
NINES	Show God's love of peace and desire for unity with us.	1 Peter 3:11

Polishing In Order To Reflect

Cron and Stabile suggest the **SNAP** method for helping us be continually polished in our character to help God's image to be seen more clearly in us.

STOP

Despite what we would claim about our busyness, each of us really *does* make time for what matters to us. While an uninterrupted hour or two might be a rarity for us, each of us has the ability to create smaller windows of time where we can be with God regularly. The first SNAP principle is to STOP.

One way to do this is to set a notification on your phone to go off once every four hours. When this happens, pull away from whatever you're doing. Take 4-5 deep breaths and try to relax whatever parts of your body are holding onto tension. Different numbers will have different levels of ease with slowing down and breathing, but nonetheless, it is important that we stop sometimes to allow God to work.

BE STILL AND KNOW
 THAT I AM GOD; I WILL
 BE EXALTED AMONG THE
 NATIONS, I WILL BE
 EXALTED IN THE EARTH.
 PSALM 46:10

NOTICE

The second part of SNAPing is noticing what is going on around us. According to the Psalmist, we need not only to *be still*, but also to *know*. Become aware. As you were being swept down the stream of what surrounds you, what were you missing? What's going on? Is this place calm or chaotic? How are you connected to what's going on? Am I in a good place or am I getting caught up in a default, reactive behavior of my number?

In this phase, we are not evaluating, labeling, analyzing, or critiquing. We are trying simply to *notice*, nothing else.

ASK

Now that you are hopefully awake and present, you can ask yourself a few questions to help you get on track:

1. What am I believing right now?
2. How does it make me feel?
3. Is it true?
4. Who would I be if I let go of that belief?

Stabile uses the example of a One (Perfectionist) arriving late for after-school pick up. Because you're a mess inside, you decide to try to slow down and evaluate what is happening. When you get to the ask step, you'd say to yourself,

- *What am I believing right now?*

Your answer might be, "That I'm the worst, most irresponsible parent in the world." (Hopefully not that extreme.)

- *How does that make me feel? "*

It brings up all the old feelings of self-loathing and shame I feel when I make mistakes."

- *Is it true?*

You might want to scream, "YES!" but think, *Is it REALLY true?* Just because you *feel* like it's true in the moment doesn't make it actually true. (There are plenty of worse parents out there, let's be real.)

- *Who would I be if I let go of this belief?*

Hopefully you could grow to say, "I would be a happier, more relaxed person. I might even love myself almost as much as the kid I'm running late to pick up right now."

PIVOT

In the process of SNAP, you have exercised greater awareness of your environment and also of yourself. With this thought, you are free to make healthier choices in line with your true self, rather than with your default, reactive self.

When we *pivot*, we can consciously choose to throw aside the usual script you would follow. The One parent in the example above might choose to practice self-forgiveness for running behind schedule, to greet their child warmly as the child gets in the car, and perhaps to even take them both to grab some ice cream on the way home.

The overall benefits of SNAP are in forming better habits of self-awareness and intentionality.

What helps you to keep yourself moving in courses of action that lead to growth and health, rather than to reactivity or spiraling?

What if you tried to treat yourself as someone you are responsible for caring for and treating with kindness? What would be different about your life and schedule?

What are some times in your life you are especially prone to react negatively? Many suggest using the HALT principle: be super careful when you are *Hungry, Anxious, Late, or Tired*.