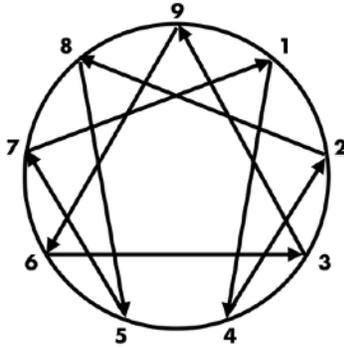


FREE • TO • BE • ME

Using the Enneagram for Personal



Wilderness, Animals, and Angels

Jesus' initial maturation can be symbolic of how the Enneagram functions in aiding our growth in Christ. It is fundamentally a **spiritual** journey. The path that leads to our growth is not always one that feels like our choosing, but instead it is one into which God both sends and invites us.

It is a journey that **takes time**. It is not a light switch, and it involves the real possibility of choosing God or following our temptations. Whether literal or figuratively, internally or externally, maturity requires us to face our **wild animals**. We all have inclinations toward things that lead us to believe we could experience **independence from God**. However, the

At once the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness, and he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.

Mark 1:12-13

experience of being left to our own devices and carnal natures will ultimately drive us back to our need for God. It is by dealing with the "wild animals" that we learn to put ourselves into places where God's presence is welcome and his "**angels**" might attend us.

Guides With Clear Sight

By default, our tendency is to find an approach to our faith that is "good enough." If I've done enough to be able to call myself "Christian" and am not on *bad* terms with the church, isn't that passable? Jesus has firm warnings for those who are religious examples to others, but who don't allow the word of God to transform them at a deeper level. **Blind guides** are people who have lots of opinions, but who aren't allowing the space for genuine, informed, redeemed introspection.

You blind guides! You strain out a gnat, but swallow a camel.

Matthew 23:24

A person may think their own ways are right, but the Lord weighs the heart.

Proverbs 21:2

Haughty eyes and a proud heart—the unplowed field of the wicked—produce sin.

Proverbs 21:4

The wicked put up a bold front, but the upright give thought to their ways.

Proverbs 21:29

Proverbs warns that if we allow our hearts to stay shallow and infertile, like an unplowed field, the produce from such a field will be rebellion. If we are content to put up a facade, we deny God the space to bring about genuine transformation. Listen to the ominous words of Thomas Merton in *The Living Bread*:

The great tragedy of our age is the fact, if one may dare to say it, that there are so many godless Christians—Christians, that is, whose religion is a matter of pure conformism and expediency. Their “faith” is little more than a permanent evasion of reality—a compromise with life. In order to avoid admitting the uncomfortable truth that they no longer have any real need for God or any vital faith in Him, they conform to the outward conduct of others like themselves. All these “believers” cling together, offering one another an apparent justification for lives that are essentially the same as the lives of their materialistic neighbours whose horizons are purely those of the world and its transient values.

For Discussion From Richard Rohr’s book The Enneagram: A Christian Perspective:

Richard Rohr says:

Cosmetic piety takes away our anxiety about God and about ourselves, but it does not address the real and subtle ways that we ‘lose our soul.’

What are your thoughts about this claim?

Rohr believes that we must make a heavy use of both **prayer and suffering** in order to experience growth in our faith and knowledge of the workings of God. He says:

You have nothing to say. It is not that we have a message and then suffer for it. It is much more the opposite: We suffer, come through it transformed, and then we have a message! This is the clear Jesus pattern and why he trained his disciples in the necessary path of suffering. There is something, it seems, that we can know in no other way.

What do you affirm about this? Would you push back on any parts of it?

Another quote from Rohr:

The Enneagram, like the Spirit of truth itself, will always set you free, but first it will make you miserable! So don’t bail out on the miserable stage, as many fearful church people do. Wait for the truth and the freedom stage.

Has the Enneagram helped you to become uncomfortable in any healthy ways? What has this discomfort prompted you to do?

What has our study helped you to see more clearly?

How has our study helped you to be a more reliable guide to others who seek Christ?