

“Inside Out: Knowing Ourselves- Type 2 The Helper”  
Ruth 1:16-18, 3:1-5

We continue this week our focus on understanding ourselves through the tool of the Enneagram, which is a personality type indicator with nine types of personalities, each of which shows us how we try to find love and cope with life’s challenges. While personalities are helpful tools, the struggle comes when we identify so closely with them that they end up overriding our true essence, which is our soul. Today we focus on the personality type 2 or as it is often referred to “The Helper.” Twos on the Enneagram are people who try to find love by being needed. They are the helpers who love to serve and nurture others. They are supportive, kind, upbeat, and tenderhearted. Twos are so in tune with the needs of others, that they may even seem like they are psychic.

At their best, they can be tremendous helpers and friends. At their worst, they can be overbearing, manipulative, and demanding. Their fear is that they may be unwanted or not needed. They need to hear that they are appreciated. Their biggest barrier is pride. They often have a hard time sharing their needs and allowing others to serve or help them.

We will look at two examples of Twos. One is from the movie “Inside Out” where one character symbolizes the helper. This movie is about Riley, an 11-year-old girl who had to move with her family from the Midwest to San Francisco. We get an inside look into her emotions with characters for joy, sadness, anger, disgust, and fear. One character that could be a great symbol for an Enneagram 2 is Bing Bong, who was Riley’s imaginary friend when she was little and who existed just to help her. As she grew older, Bing Bong was left in her memories. In this scene, we will watch Bing Bong sacrifice himself in order to help Joy get back to Riley. Joy and Bing Bong try to use Bing Bong’s rocket ship to launch themselves out of the Memory dump and fail repeatedly. On their last attempt, Bing Bong bails at the last minute, lightening the load enough that Joy can sail to safety, and sacrificing his chance to make it out of the Memory Dump.

<https://youtu.be/RPQRHemfk9E>

The second character that helps us understand Enneagram Twos is Ruth. She was a Moabite woman who married a Jewish man. Her husband had moved with his family into Moab because of a famine in his homeland. All went well until death visited the family. First, Ruth’s father-in-law died and then her husband and his brother also died. Three women were left helpless without men in a very patriarchal time and culture. Naomi, the mother-in-law, decides to go back to Bethlehem to find some help there. She releases her daughters-in-law of the obligation of having to go back with her. One of them agrees, but Ruth, being a Type 2, decides to not leave her mother-in-law. Ruth, being a helper, transcends all expectations about age, culture, and religion to help her friend in need. (Read Ruth 1:16-18) I love that even though Naomi did not expect Ruth to stay with her, Ruth insisted on staying and her words have inspired so many people throughout the ages as they commit to one another in marriage. These words are often used in marriage ceremonies as a covenant commitment for people to stay together

against all odds. The two women don't end up having it easy when they return to Bethlehem. They had to devise a plan to be redeemed by their next of kin. Naomi comes up with the plan and Ruth does exactly what Naomi tells her. What is great here is that Ruth uses her charm and wit to call Boaz to do his duty as their kin. In the process of helping her mother-in-law, Ruth also learns to assert her own needs. And the amazing thing that happens is that the plan works, and Boaz ends up marrying Ruth and they have a son together which in those days was an incredible gift to both women as a new beginning.

In the Christian faith, we are all called to follow the example of people like Ruth, Enneagram 2s. We look at people like Mother Theresa with admiration as an example of true selfless service. We look at the path of Jesus of letting go of his power and his own needs and seek to follow in his footsteps. But where we get trapped, especially as Twos, is in our motivations and expectations. For Twos, and those of us who try to behave in that fashion, we fall into the traps of burnout, resentment, and the need to be esteemed or needed. Here are a few things that could help us which we could learn:

1. **Covenant Partnerships:** When we partner with others and with God, we enter into those relationships willingly and without coercion. We are an important part of the covenant and so our needs are important in the relationship. The two women in our story shared life with each other. It was all of life with its ups and downs. Ruth shared her suffering with God and with her mother-in-law. Naomi supported Ruth in her search for a new husband and gave her guidance on how to do it. Asking for help is an important part of a mutual relationship. Pride and shame often get in the way of Twos' ability to ask for help. They believe that other people are needier than they are and that they alone know what others need. But when Twos are transformed, they allow themselves to be loved by God without having to help someone and without any other conditions.
2. **Our Motivation:** When we are motivated to help others, we must keep in mind that only when we don't expect a pay back in any way, are we acting on a soul level. Ruth did not help her mother-in-law so that she could earn a special favor or recognition. She did what she did because of her commitment to Naomi.
3. **Boundaries and Self Care:** As a Two, Ruth pushed her way into Naomi's journey back to her home country. Even though Naomi told her that she was going to do this on her own, Ruth did not leave her. While this was a good example of things working out, it is one of the temptations for Twos to become overbearing and intrusive. It is important to remember that healthy boundaries are essential for us to help others without making people dependent on us. Also, healthy boundaries mean that we allow enough time in our lives to take care of our own needs. Twos are often tempted to take care of others all the time so there is no time to deal with their own emotional or spiritual needs. Even in prayer, they seek to pray with and for others more than they do on their own.

In their book *The Wisdom of the Enneagram*, Don Riso and Russ Hudson write, "Twos grow tremendously when they recognize that love is not a commodity that can be won, demanded, earned, or bestowed by someone else - or that can be given to someone else, because it is, in its highest and truest form, not a function of the ego. Love is not a

poker chip or a bag of 'goodies' that can be given or withheld...We cannot will ourselves to love ourselves or to love others. All we can do, paradoxically, is to *recognize the presence of love in ourselves and others*. On a very deep level, Twos remember the Essential quality of *unconditional love* and the omnipresence of love. When they remember their Essential nature and the Divine state that it mirrors, healthy Twos are aware of the presence of love all around them, so there is quite literally nothing that they need to get from anyone - and nothing they can give. Twos help all of us to see that love does not belong to anyone, and certainly does not belong to the personality. We could say that our job in life is not to 'do good' or to 'give' love to anyone, but to be open to the action of love...This love is balanced, pure, and nourishing – it allows the soul to relax on a profound level. The recognition of the true nature of love brings with it a tremendous sense of *freedom*. When love is no longer a commodity and is understood as a part of our true nature, as something we cannot lose, we experience an incredible lightness. Our desperate search for attention ends when we recognize that we not only have love and value, at the level of our souls, *we are love and value.*"

Richard Rohr tells the story of Florence Nightingale who was an Italian-born English nurse and deacon in the 1800s as a prototype of the mature Two. "As a seventeen-year-old she felt a call to serve the sick and helpless. 'On February 7, 1837,' she wrote, 'God spoke to me and called me to his service.' Florence Nightingale was never trained as a nurse. She traveled a great deal and visited hospitals wherever she went. Profoundly religious, she gave her life to the service of the sick and wounded. Nightingale became famous for exemplary organization of the British nursing staff during the Crimean War from 1853 to 1856. Thanks to her great discipline, ambition, and commitment to the limits of her physical strength, she managed to drastically lower the death rate in the provisional hospitals. In contrast to immature Twos who are always eyeing public applause, Nightingale avoided receptions and functions in her honor and worked silently away. With tremendous energy she promoted the training of nurses, published books, and advised ministers and politicians who came to her house." Like Ruth in the Bible, Nightingale used her gift of being a helper to serve the world while allowing her soul and not her ego to lead the way.

Today we will end with a prayer mediation on the value of rest and taking care of ourselves. This is especially important for Twos. This is a guided imagery mediation from Joyce Rupp on the importance of self-compassion:

Take a few deep breaths and let go of any distractions or tension that you may be holding. Listen to this scripture from Mark 5:25: "A great crowd followed [Jesus] and pressed in on him.' Now imagine that you are there with Jesus. Visualize him standing up for hours to teach the crowds. Imagine how tiring this must have been for him. Imagine the people pushing closer. What is it like to be hemmed in with so little room to move? Notice how Jesus takes care of his need for safety and space as he gets into a boat and sits down a little way out from the shore. Now, picture a scene in your life when you long to be free from what presses your life too tightly. Invite the Holy One to join you in a boat where you rest and relax. Be filled with ease. Welcome restoration of

your body, mind, and spirit from this loving presence as you float gently upon still waters. Amen.