

“Inside Out: knowing Ourselves -Type 5 The Investigator”  
John 3:1-16

Today as we dig into Enneagram personality type 5, The Investigator, I can’t help but think of Sherlock Holmes and his amazing abilities for solving murders based on the power of observation. This fictional character created by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle in the 19<sup>th</sup> century has become so famous with many movies and TV series based on it. Here is a clip from a more recent presentation of Sherlock Holmes. This is a conversation between Dr. Watson and Holmes about why the police turn to Holmes for solving murder cases:

<https://youtu.be/v0rC-twlrfg>

Sherlock Holmes represents type 5 of the Enneagram really well. He is an intellectual who is focused on knowledge and information. He spends most of his waking hours in his head space. The belief behind this type of personality is that one could think through anything in life. Rational thinking, knowledge, and understanding could solve all the problems one would have in life. Just like the Philosopher Rene Descartes quipped: “I think, therefore I am.”

So Fives on the Enneagram are:

Enneagram Type 5	
AT THEIR BEST	AT THEIR WORST
Analytical	Intellectually Arrogant
Persevering	Stingy
Sensitive	Stubborn
Wise	Distant
Objective	Critical of Others
Perceptive	Unassertive
Curious	Cynical
Observant	Isolated
Insightful	Relationally Distant

Fives’ basic fear is that of being helpless, useless, incapable, and overwhelmed. Their basic desire is to be capable.

## Enneagram Type 5

We use our personality to protect ourselves from our Core Fear and to also obtain our Core Desire.

### ⊗ Core Fear:

Fear of obligation, annihilation, intrusion, emptiness, surplus, being ignorant, overwhelmed, dependent, or invaded.

### ⊕ Core Desire:

To be capable and competent.

Their defense mechanism against life's threats and challenges is to master something and to be really knowledgeable and capable. The problem comes when Fives focus so much on head knowledge that they separate themselves from others emotionally and even physically. If that head knowledge takes over, Fives could become very hesitant to act. They feel that they need more information before they could really act. Intellectual avarice is the sin for Fives because they could never get enough knowledge.

Our biblical character for this week shows the transformation that could happen for Fives when they integrate other parts of themselves and dig deeper into their essence/souls. Nicodemus was a Pharisee and a member of the Sanhedrin. He was a highly educated man who dedicated his life's work to study and knowledge. Yet, in this Gospel of John, Nicodemus is presented as coming to Jesus at night because he represented the group which did not understand Jesus; the religious leaders of Israel who felt threatened by his message of reform, justice and love. Nicodemus was part of "the world" which the Gospel of John had previously described as "darkness." He was a part of the dominating hierarchy of Israel that had made itself powerful at the expense of the peasants. Nicodemus had witnessed Jesus' prophetic act of the cleansing of the temple and wanted to learn more about him. He went to talk to him at night. Night/darkness in the Gospel of John is an important theme because Jesus is seen as the light that is opposed to the darkness of the world and its systems of domination (screen), "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it." John 1:5 Surely Nicodemus was "in the dark" when it came to understanding Jesus. This incredibly educated man lacked knowledge and understanding because he only listened to his mind. He came looking for illumination about what Jesus was teaching, but what Jesus shared seemed to only add to the confusion. Let's see how Jesus responds (Read John 3:1-10)

Jesus did not give Nicodemus a straightforward explanation of the faith. Instead he gave him a mystery and invited him to enter into it more fully. A mystery was exactly what Nicodemus needed because as a five he needed to be reminded that faith, life, and God were beyond our mind's abilities to comprehend. They have to be approached with our whole beings. So Jesus invited Nicodemus to be birthed in and through this mystery. He did not tell him what the Holy Spirit was all about or how it worked. Instead he called him to an experience of the Spirit. Jesus knew that what Nicodemus needed was not another piece of information about the faith. He already knew all the scriptures. What was missing for him is a deep personal experience of God. He needed a new set of eyes. Nicodemus was already schooled in the ways of religion, violence, and oppression in the world. What was going to set him free was not more talk about God and justice. What was going to set him free was his awareness and experience of the Spirit.

Only deep experiences of the Spirit of God can truly have the power to heal, transform and renew people and that was what Jesus invited Nicodemus to embrace. Nicodemus had to let go of the certainties of the teachings he knew. He had to let go of the norms of his society in order to learn a different way. Jesus did not give him an intellectual answer. Instead he offered him a different way to see the world and to live by the power of the Spirit. I love the image of the wind blowing where it wills. Jesus was showing Nicodemus that you can't control faith and your relationship with God. The Spirit and your growth are things that happen when you let go of control, especially the kind of control that comes from the mind.

How did Nicodemus react? He struggled for a while to accept what Jesus presented him. He loved Jesus and wanted to learn from him. He even defended him later on when there was a debate about Jesus in the temple (John 7:50). We know that transformation happened for Nicodemus at the end because he helped Joseph of Arimathea to take down Jesus' body from the cross to help bury him. He carried a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds to prepare Jesus for burial (John 19:39). This is a really interesting detail if we look at it from the perspective of a Five. As a Five, Nicodemus's role would not be so physical and related to the senses. But because he was redeemed and transformed, Nicodemus was willing to risk ritualistic impurity by touching and anointing a dead body. He finally made the journey from loving God only with his mind to loving God with his heart and body. He was willing to get his hands dirty for the sake of love.

I invite you today to ponder two lessons from this story. These are important for us because we live in a part of the world that values intellectual knowledge so much that we tend to forget about the wisdom of the heart and of the body.

1. Relationships: The transformation of Nicodemus was only possible through his relationship with Jesus. Relationships are essential for our transformation. It is not enough to learn about love in books, we have to practice it in real life. It is not enough to think about the faith, we have to have relationships that create soul spaces for our lives so that our views and our commitments are grounded in human experience. Take for example issues related to human suffering. It is not enough to learn about people with disabilities from books in order to be advocates, it is

important to be in relationship with them. When you know and love someone with disabilities, it becomes personal.

2. Mind, Body & Soul: In our Western culture we tend to compartmentalize our human experiences and knowledge. We differentiate between intellectual and experiential knowledge. We see the soul as separate from the mind and the physical being. But a holistic approach to life is how we can have all of our being attuned to God and to life and working in harmony.

We will conclude with a Visio Divina Prayer. As you walked in, you were given a card with an image on it. Look at the image and let your eyes stay with the very first thing that you see. Keep your attention on that one part of the image that first catches your eye. Try to keep your eyes from wandering to other parts of the picture. Breathe deeply and let yourself gaze at that part of the image for a few moments. Now, let your eyes gaze at the whole image. Take your time and look at every part of the photograph. See it all. Reflect on the image. Consider the following questions:

- What emotions does this image evoke in you?
- What does the image stir up in you, bring forth in you?
- Does this image lead you into an attitude of prayer? If so, let these prayers take form in you.

Now, offer your prayers to God in a final time of silence. Anyone would like to share? (by the way sharing is one of the things that stresses out a Five) Amen.