

“Inside Out: Knowing Ourselves -Type 9 The Peacemaker”  
 Genesis 12:10-20

Richard Rohr tells this story about a Rabbi who must have been a Nine on the Enneagram. “One day a man comes to him and bitterly complains about his shrewish wife, winding up with the desperate announcement: ‘I’m getting a divorce!’ The rabbi listened with great attention and sympathy; at the end he nods thoughtfully, ‘Yes, you’re quite right.’ The next day the wife comes to him and laments her husband’s bad habits. Her tirade likewise ends with the threat, ‘I’m getting a divorce!’ Once again the rabbi has listened, and again he nods and says, “Yes, you’re right.’ His disciple, who has witnessed both meetings, later takes the rabbi to task: ‘But you can’t tell him today that *he’s* right - and then tell her tomorrow that *she’s* right. That won’t do.’ Once more the rabbi has listened attentively, and again he nods: ‘Yes, and you’re right too.’”

The story helps us to get a glimpse into one of the most characteristic traits of the Nines. They can see each person’s point of view. They have the gift and the challenge of being able to identify with other’s struggles and perspectives.

**Enneagram Type 9**

AT THEIR BEST	AT THEIR WORST
Pleasant	Spaced-Out
Peaceful	Forgetful
Generous	Stubborn
Patient	Obsessive
Accepting	Resigned
Diplomatic	Passive-Aggressive
Open-Minded	Judgemental
Emphatic	Unassertive
Caring	Self-Forgetting

**ENNEAGRAM TYPE 9**

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

**Type 9 Core Fear:**  
 Fear of being in conflict, loveless, separate, uncomfortable, unimportant, overlooked, shut out, alone, or inharmonious

**Type 9 Core Desire:**  
 To have inner stability and peace of mind

Your Enneagram Coach

If they are not transformed, Nines try to avoid conflict at all costs. Here is a clip from the movie “Back to the Future” when Marty goes back in time and sees how his dad was bullied by Biff. His dad didn’t know how to handle conflict and it became a life-long pattern for him. [https://youtu.be/95\\_DB6GgLQs](https://youtu.be/95_DB6GgLQs).

This is one of the major pitfalls of Nines. Wanting to keep the peace at all costs, could lead them to accepting behaviors and situations they should not. This is common in families, churches, workplaces, and even within ourselves. Today we look at a biblical character that shows this pattern very clearly. Abraham who is often known as the father of three major religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) was most likely a Nine.

As a Nine, Abraham tended to compromise his values for the sake of peace. He struggled to find his own path in life and in faith. Abraham responded to the call of God to leave his home country to become a nomad and a seeker. He knew that he needed to go on this journey so that he might be transformed into the man God had called him to be. He had lived a very comfortable life up until that point. At an advanced age, it was hard to accept such a challenge, but faith gave him the courage to undertake this journey. This was around the year 1750 BCE. Abraham was from the city of Ur, which was located on the banks of the Tigris-Euphrates River, south of present and ancient Baghdad. The city of Ur was part of a sophisticated civilization. There are excellent archeological ruins from that part of the world in the Mari and Nuzi materials. Their economy was rich and well developed. The children went to school and wrote on clay tablets with styluses. They had sophisticated canals and ditches for water. So to leave all of that behind for the sake of faith was a major sacrifice. He trusted God's call as the path to fulfill his calling to become a blessing to many nations. Yet, the first time a challenge came his way, Abraham buckled. There was a famine in the land and he had to go to Egypt. He was afraid of the Egyptians and decided to do the most convenient thing to avoid conflict and danger. He lied to the officials of Egypt's king about Sarah. He told them that Sarah was his sister. He even sold his wife to the king. It is hard to imagine why anyone with such deep faith in God would be willing to lie in this way! If Abraham had such trust in God, why did he lie to save his own skin? What difference did faith make in his life if at the first sign of danger he was willing to sell out? In this story Pharaoh ends up doing the right thing while Abraham does the wrong thing.

Through the lens of the Enneagram, we can see that what Abraham did was not that unusual for an unredeemed 9. There are several factors at work:

- Not really knowing what he stood for
- Being vulnerable to the desires and perspectives of others
- Being afraid of conflict
- Needing a quick fix for his problems

All of these issues drove Abraham to lie and cheat about Sarah being his wife and not his sister. There are lessons to learn from Abraham. These are good for Type 9 and for all of us when we seek "peace" at all costs:

1. **Learn to Deal with Conflict Openly:** It is essential for us to learn to deal with conflict in healthy ways. We can't avoid it because it is part of life. How we deal with it can make a huge difference for our transformation and the transformation of others. Finding healthy ways to deal with conflict is essential to our well-being and the well-being of others. Talking directly, honestly, nonviolently, and with vulnerability with those you are in conflict with is the only way to allow the Spirit of God to work to bring healing and resolution to our differences and disagreements. What are your thoughts on this?
2. **Don't Delay the Work of Transformation:** Abraham delayed having to confront his fears of Pharaoh and as a result, he caused suffering for others and for himself. It is tempting to put off the difficult work of confronting and releasing our demons and fears, but if we are to find true healing, we must be willing to start the journey and stay the course even as challenges come our way. Any reactions to this idea?

3. **Get in Touch with Your Purpose and Your Inner Truth:** It is easy to go with whatever is popular or convenient. But that kind of posture in life does not let us live up to our God-given potential and purpose in life. It also leads us to live a shallow type of life that lacks energy and imagination. Nines often struggle with being in touch with their own truth because they are so focused on the truth and perspectives of others. Your thoughts?

So today as we conclude this sermon series, I would like to conclude with an overview of each of the types and how God calls us to transformation in all these personalities. This is from a sermon preached on Christmas Eve by Dietrich Koller taken from Richard Rohr's book on the Enneagram. "When Jesus came into the world, the news also reached the nine great sins (personality types) of humanity that the Redeemer had been born. The rumor threw them into a tizzy. It awakened longings in them – but fear as well. A Redeemer! He might exterminate them, might put them out of business. Should they flee? But where? Or should they go off to see the child?" Imagine with me how each type would have reacted (bolded words on the screen)

**Type 1 The Reformer: Anger** How would this sin react to the news of the birth of the redeemer?

Anger came forward and said: Well, after all it finally occurred to the good Lord to do something. Why didn't God just make the world better? This won't change anything.

**Type 2 The Helper:** How would **Pride** react?

"I don't need any redeemer. I've always known how to help myself."

**Type 3 The Achiever:** How would **Falsehood** react? "A redeemer in a primitive stable...that's condemned to failure in advance."

**Type 4 The Individualist:** How would **Envy** react?

"It turned pale when it heard the rumor. A redeemer for *everybody*? It turned up its nose. 'If I went over there, I'd only be one of many.'"

**Type 5 The Investigator:** How would **Avarice** react?

This just does not add up. How could this kind of thing be scientifically true?

**Type 6 The Loyalist:** How would **Fear** react?

"If the Lord of heaven comes," it said, "that won't suit the lords of earth. People say the Messiah will do justice. If we went there, we'd put ourselves under suspicion and get mixed up in the whole affair. I'm staying out of this."

**Type 7 The Adventurer:** How would **Overindulgence** react?

"A stable," it said. "That sounds musty and dismal and depressing."

**Type 8 The Challenger:** How would **Violence** react?

"How is a helpless child supposed to change the world? You need power. Money. Tanks."

**Type 9 The Peacemaker:** How would **Sloth (keeping the status quo)** react?

"The road is hard. I doubt it's worth the effort. Besides the Redeemer will definitely not be interested in me. Let's get comfortable and leave everything the way we're used to."

So how does the birth of this child bring transformation to all these personality types with their nine great sins? Imagine with me the baby in the manger and his love which transforms each of these great sins. What would Jesus say to each of them?

**Type 1:** What would Jesus say to our **Anger**? “You’re furious about God and the world, about how sloppy people are, about the arrogance of rulers and the stupidity of the ruled. And above all about your own defects. Give me your resentment...I’ll give you my patience. It saves the world, slowly – but surely. Have patience with yourself. And forgive your fellows their imperfect condition. Forgiveness is the only thing that changes them...The good grows for a long time; but, even if slowly, it grows.”

**Type 2:** What would Jesus say to our **Pride**? “You’ve made yourself irreplaceable; you’ve constantly rushed in to help, even where you weren’t called; you’ve chained others to yourself. And your feelings are hurt when people don’t thank you. Give me your crown. Trust my care for you. You don’t need to try so hard.”

**Type 3:** What would Jesus say to our **Falsehood**? “You’re afraid to miss your mark, to fail. With your little tricks you want to make sure you won’t be left standing there like a loser. But to me you’re completely transparent. I also see the part in you that doesn’t shine out. Give me your fear of failure.”

**Type 4:** What would Jesus say to our **Envy**? “You have to be constantly comparing yourself, because you doubt yourself...You’re the plaything of your feelings. Give them to me: your emotional peaks and pits, your longing for home and for faraway places. Accept my uncomplicated beauty. Be simply there.”

**Type 5:** What would Jesus say to our **Avarice**? “Your heart was never really warmed. You always had to take care of yourself. You’ve hoarded possessions and knowledge in order to survive. Let yourself be warmed. Let yourself be touched.”

**Type 6:** What would Jesus say to our **Fear**? “You mistrust God and the world and yourself. You fear the authorities. You conform so you won’t attract attention. You long for security. Look at me. You can trust me. And yourself. Don’t be afraid of risk. I am with you.”

**Type 7:** What would Jesus say to our **Overindulgence**? “Do you see how little I get along with? Do you sense the holy seriousness of the manger where I am born? Give me your fear of the dark of suffering and death. Give me your compulsion to deaden yourself by consuming things. And I’ll give you real joy, which doesn’t have to shy away from the dark.”

**Type 8:** What would Jesus say to our **Violence**? “Remember that what seems weak to the world is where my strength lies. Being vulnerable, open, and gentle are the strongest things you can be. That is how you change the world.”

**Type 9:** What would Jesus say to our **Sloth**/our attempts to avoid conflict? “Look how uncomfortable it is in the manger. And yet I’m full of energy. I’ve decided to live, to dedicate myself. And I need you. You are to bring my peace to men and women, even if you pick up a few scratches in the process. Give me your resignation and indifference. You think you are the last. You are to be the first.”

That is how all nine sins are redeemed by the love God made flesh in our human mess!  
Amen.