

Quiz: What's Your Obstacle to Intimacy?

No matter how introverted or independent you consider yourself to be, we all want to have some level of intimacy with other people. We desire friendship, romance, a place to be vulnerable yet still accepted. God designed us for this. 1 Peter 4:8 says, "Above all, love each other deeply." **To be loved "deeply" is to be loved intimately.** That's why we call attitudes that block this kind of love *obstacles to intimacy*.

The obvious question is, if we all *desire* this kind of love, then why would be ever put up obstacles against it? Well, when we block others from loving us and shut down our hearts to loving others, it's because we're *hurting*. We could say that our emotional cup is full of negative emotions, and there's just no room for the positive ones that would come from giving and receiving this "deep" love.

There are three main types of intimacy obstacles. **Take this quiz to find out which one is more your "style" when your cup is full.** Be honest! If you can't narrow down an answer, then ask someone close to you who will be straight with you. Remember, we'll never grow if we aren't honest with ourselves.

It's OK, too, if your answers turn out to be all over the place. **We all struggle with all three obstacles at one time or another.** The one you score highest on here is just the best one to start with when growing in your ability to give and receive love and care!

1. When you feel strung out and overwhelmed, lonely and frustrated, which of these thoughts are you most likely to have?
 - a. "I'm ashamed to reach out to others, and my needs probably wouldn't get met anyway.
 - b. "I don't have needs that require reaching out. I can take care of myself."
 - c. "I have so many needs, and others ought to help me. But they are probably too selfish."
2. Which set of bad habits sounds more like the kinds of things you manifest when under a great deal of stress?
 - a. self-hatred, self-destructive behaviors (like eating disorders, self-injury, promiscuity), depression, negative self-talk, sabotaging good relationships
 - b. impatience, irritation, numbness, judgmental attitude, criticism of others, overwork, perfectionism, boasting, coldness toward others
 - c. controlling or manipulative behaviors, abusive language or actions, excessive talking, interrupting, inappropriate attention seeking, unreasonable demands, jealousy
3. What is the main thought that would keep you from going to God, church, and the gospel with your emotional and relational problems?
 - a. These things probably wouldn't work for me. I don't deserve what they offer anyway.
 - b. I might choose these things, but I don't really need them in order to solve my problems.
 - c. These things might help a little, but my needs are more profound than most people's.
4. Let's say that you felt like your emotional cup was full-to-the-brim with negative emotions, whether that is hurt, anger, fear, etc. What if someone came to you for care in the midst of all that and asked you to give that person the care (s)he felt (s)he needed? How would you probably feel?
 - a. overburdened and simply not have anything left to give, and I would feel bad about that.
 - b. irritated, like too much is being demanded of me already!
 - c. threatened/jealous, like this person is asking for the care that I need so much more than (s)he does!

Scoring Your Quiz: The Three Obstacles to Intimacy

Mostly “a”?

SELF-CONDEMNATION

When your emotional cup is full, you tend to *denounce* your neediness: “I’m ashamed that I have needs. And they probably shouldn’t/won’t get met.”

View of God/the Church/the Gospel: *ineffectual* (“wouldn’t work for me”).

Might manifest as: self-destructive behaviors like anorexia, self-injury, and promiscuity; depression; self-hatred; false guilt; negative self-talk.

Might be disguised as: humility, others-focus, selflessness.

When others express needs, you might feel: overburdened.

Treatment: Treat self-condemnation with *gratitude* and receptivity to blessings. It’s impossible to feel gratitude at the same time that you feel like you have nothing.

Scripture references to help: *Romans 8:1*: “There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”

Philippians 4:19: “And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.”

Emotional Life Hack: When you start to say, “I’m sorry you had to help me,” say instead, “Thank you for helping me.” Instead of “I’m sorry I’m crying,” try “Thank you for letting me cry.”

Mostly “b”?

SELF-RELIANCE

When your emotional cup is full, you tend to *deny* your neediness: “I have no needs. But if I did, I’d take care of them myself.”

View of God/the Church/the Gospel: *unessential* (“not necessary for me”).

Might manifest as: impatience, irritation, judgmental attitude, criticism of others, overwork, perfectionism.

Might be disguised as: confidence, holiness, “having it all together.”

When others express needs, you might feel: irritated.

Treatment: Treat self-reliance with *humility* and a sober view of yourself.

Scripture references to help: *Revelation 3:17*: “You say, ‘I...do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.” *Galatians 3:1–5*: “How foolish can you be? After starting your new lives in the Spirit, why are you now trying to become perfect by your own human effort?”

Emotional Life Hack: When you start to think, “There’s nothing I can’t handle,” remember, “God gives me more than I can handle so that I will reach out for help.” Instead of “I take care of myself,” try “God takes care of me, and He sometimes uses others to do it.”

Mostly “c”?

SELFISH TAKING

When your emotional cup is full, you tend to *exalt* your neediness: “I have needs, and I will take from others to get them met.”

View of God/the Church/the Gospel: *insufficient* (“not enough for me”).

Might manifest as: abusive or manipulative behaviors, over-talking and interrupting, unreasonable requests/demands, racism, strife.

Might be disguised as: righteous anger or zeal, dramatic suffering for Christ.

When others express needs, you might feel: threatened (or jealous, if you see their needs getting met).

Treatment: Treat selfish taking with *faith* in God’s promises. Learn to *receive* as God provides rather than *taking*.

Scripture references to help: *Philippians 2:3*: “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit.” *James 4:12*: “What causes fights and quarrels among you?...You want something but don’t get it.”

Emotional Life Hack: If you want to say, “That’s nothing! You should hear this...,” say instead, “I can relate,” and keep listening. Instead of sharing all the details of all your problems, remember that God already knows the full story and cares about it all.