

Personality Traits of Jesus - Some Might Surprise You!

adapted from *Beautiful Outlaw* by John Eldredge (FaithWords/Hachette Book Group)

PLAYFULNESS

Notice how casually Jesus enters the scene. His best friends don't even know it's him. This is the resurrected Lord, mind you. He simply stands on the beach, hands in his pockets like a tourist, and asks the question curious passers-by always do of fishermen: "Catch anything?" Then, "Try the other side." Again the nets are bursting. Just like the good old days. It's how he lets them know it's him. Do you see the *playfulness* of Jesus? His timing, the tension, his hiddenness, a tourist-like question, then bang – the catch. This is a beautiful story, made so much richer *because of* the playfulness of Jesus. After all, it was God who gave us a sense of humor. Do you really think Jesus came to take it away?

FIERCE INTENTION

The animals would have panicked in every direction, their keepers running after them, shouting, which only incinerates the panic. Add the greedy moneychangers scrambling around on the ground grasping for their careening coins. Imagine the *noise* – bellowing of frightened livestock, crashing of corrals, tables, coins, and the angry shouts of the incensed men. Over this, the shouts of Jesus. It is absolute pandemonium. Could a small, unintimidating figure pull off such a sustained riot? Jesus is a locomotive.

DISRUPTIVE HONESTY

The things Jesus says—apparently he's not worried about being invited back. Remember, Jesus is not strolling through the Israeli countryside offering poetry readings. He's on a mission to rescue a people who are so utterly deceived most of them don't even *want* to be rescued. His honesty and severity are measured out precisely, according to the amount of delusion and self-deception encasing the listener. Jesus strikes with the precision of Michelangelo.

CUNNING

Jesus won't take the shortcut of a power play. He seems rather reluctant to do his miracles. He never overwhelms anyone's will with a fantastic display of majesty. He woos, he confronts, he delivers, he heals, he shoots straight, and then he uses intrigue. He lives out before them the most compelling view of God, shows them an incredibly attractive holiness while shattering the religious glaze. But he lets them walk away if they choose.

HUMILITY

What about the humility of simply getting from here to there by means of *walking*? Jesus makes trips by foot all the time, from Bethany to Cana, back down to Jerusalem. God has to get from one place to another like a guy who can't even come up with bus fare. Here is the greater humility of setting aside the power—the Son of God lays down his glory to become a human being. It is the humility of utter dependence. Jesus wept, he prayed, he learned obedience. So that we might learn to do the same.

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SCANDALOUS FREEDOM

A single Jewish rabbi initiates conversation with a single Samaritan woman, outside of town. They are alone. She knows it's scandalous. This is the equivalent of a white man asking a black woman for a ride in her car in the Deep South at the height of segregation. The freedom Jesus models for us is based in an understanding of a holiness much deeper than anything religion ever concocted. The man is free—free from what people think, free from religion, free from false obligation. O, to be so free.

EXTRAVAGANT GENEROSITY

The miracle at Cana, turning water into wine - six stone jars holding up to thirty gallons each. That would be one hundred eighty gallons; six hundred eighty-two liters; nine hundred eight bottles of wine. He doesn't give them cheap wine, as the maître d' expected. He doesn't give them just a touch for one last toast. Jesus does it *lavishly* – just as he is lavish with himself. He doesn't only give his life *for* mankind, he also gives his life *to* mankind. It is showered upon us daily like manna.

TRUENESS

Jesus is simply himself. Playful, cunning, generous, fierce—not one moment of it is contrived. He never plays to the audience, never kowtows to the opposition. He is simply himself. The diversity of Jesus' actions, timing, manner, words, dare we say moods, his sudden changes of direction, then his stillness. It's almost dizzying. Perhaps that's because we've never seen anyone act like this before. Maybe what we are witnessing is actually one single quality, not many. Maybe Jesus is simply being true.

BEAUTIFUL

Jesus is the playfulness of creation, scandal and utter goodness, the generosity of the ocean and the ferocity of a thunderstorm; he is cunning as a snake and gentle as a whisper; the gladness of sunshine and the humility of a thirty-mile walk by foot on a dirt road. Reclining at a meal, laughing with friends, and then going to the cross. That is what we mean when we say that Jesus is beautiful. But most of all, it is the way he lives. Love in action, love as strong as death.

For more information about *Beautiful Outlaw* and to view clips of John reading from the book, visit www.beautifuloutlaw.net

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