

# Eight

## THE CHALLENGING PROTECTOR

## FULL REPORT

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As Christians, we desire to become more like Christ through the power of the gospel and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Throughout this discipleship process, God calls us to a deeper knowledge of Him and of ourselves. The more we cooperate with God, the more we understand the greatness of God and the reality of our sin. As we apply the gospel to this new understanding, we grow closer to Christ and begin to resemble him more.

The Enneagram is an ancient personality map, a helpful guide on our journey toward self-knowledge. Based on nine archetypal styles, the Enneagram helps reveal a person's core motivations. Rather than confine us to a "type," the Enneagram simply helps us understand why we do what we do. Though our basic style will not change, circumstances and spiritual health will significantly affect how we express that style throughout our lives.

In addition to being a personality tool, the Enneagram works as a spiritual tool as well, exposing our tendencies toward sin and revealing a personal pathway to repentance. The Gospel Enneagram is designed to help us turn away from sinful motivations and self-defeating habits, turn toward Christ, and begin to live in line with our God-given gifts. As we cooperate with the work of God in our lives, we live out our individual style in a redemptive and world-changing way.

This report specifically addresses the spiritual development of a person whose style is Eight: The Challenging Protector.

### Summary

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As Challenging Protectors, Eights want to protect themselves and others from the injustices of the world. They empower others and protect the innocent. They do this by being resourceful, pragmatic, determined and action-oriented. Eights are direct, assertive and strong, which is evident in the way they relate to others. Eights will move forward with self-assuredness and with the determination to make things happen.

Eights are honorable, loyal and will fulfill their commitments when they have given you their word. They have strength, stamina and tend to be a "take charge" kind of people. Because they are honest and direct in their communication, others may be intimidated by their presence.

Others tend to follow the leadership of Eights because of their strong presence, persuasiveness and protective nature. Eights base their relationships on trust and commitment. They build and maintain lifelong friendships. When their compassion is coupled with their boldness, they can be fearless and inspirational, causing great change in the world.

### Motivation & False Belief

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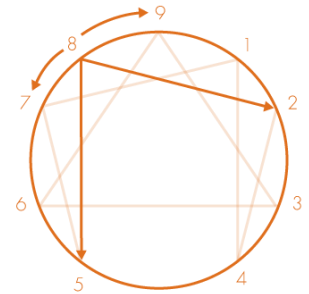
Eights are motivated by the desire for power and control. They want to protect themselves and others as they are very aware of real or perceived injustice. This motivation is driven by their fear of being weak, vulnerable, powerless and controlled. While they greatly desire protection, they have developed a false belief that they must remain strong and in control.

## Wings

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Each person is unique. Thankfully, the Enneagram recognizes this and actually shows how each style carries “flavors” of the other styles.

On the diagram to the right, the lines on the outside of the Enneagram drawing (pointing from the Eight to the Seven and to the Nine) are called “Wings.” If you’ve taken our assessment, your wing is the number in which you received a higher score.



An Eight with a Seven Wing is often called “The Independent.” Having Independent tendencies means that you are probably charismatic with the ability to bring people together to support your vision. You are action-oriented. You are able to challenge others to grow and reach their potential. You are most likely entrepreneurial and enjoy the act of creating. You are sociable, talkative and very confident in yourself.

On the other hand, an Eight with a Nine Wing is often called “The Bear.” Having Bear tendencies means that you are probably grounded with a warm nature. You exhibit strength, self-confidence and a quiet determination. You tend to “size up” others by reading their actions and non-verbal cues in a friendly way. And you lead them with a protective, reassuring and calming presence.

## Stress and Security

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The lines on the inside of the Enneagram drawing (pointing from the Eight to the Five and the Two) are called “Arrows.” They reflect how a person operates in times of stress or security.

Generally, Eights gain a few characteristics of Fives under stress. They can be preoccupied with gathering information in an attempt to better control a situation or problem. They need time to sort things out before they are able to move forward. When they feel overwhelmed they can pull away from others. They often become cynical or disrespectful toward the beliefs, values and feelings of others. They may struggle with insomnia or fail to take care of their own physical, emotional and spiritual needs. However, when they feel loved, Eights can be more moderate, objective and carry themselves with humility even in stressful situations.

In a more secure or relaxed setting when Challenging Protectors feel comfortable expressing their innermost thoughts and feelings, they gain a few characteristics of Twos. They relax their guard, open up and allow themselves to be vulnerable. This takes a great amount of courage, but allows them to powerfully express their love for others. They grow respectful of the boundaries of others. If Eights feel that someone has violated their trust, they can disregard these boundaries and set unrealistic demands upon them.

## Childhood

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As children, Eights felt that they needed to be protected. They often report a time of rejection, betrayal or abuse from someone important in their life. They learned to hide their wounds and protect themselves to avoid being vulnerable. Eights developed a tough exterior, standing up for themselves and others. Sometime in their childhood, it’s as if they resolved, “I’ll never let them see me cry.” This longing for protection gives them a passion to protect others who are vulnerable.

## At Work & In Relationships

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Eights can be confident, strong and passionate workers, especially when they are operating from within their identity in Christ. At their best, high-functioning Eights have the ability to look at a broad picture and know how to implement a bold course of action. They take on challenges with little fear of failure, fully-assured that they will reach the goal. Healthy Eights are good mentors who help others grow. They do not fear conflict and can work effectively to find resolutions.

Eights can also misuse these characteristics, becoming so focused on the end result that they fail to pay attention to details. Because they have a higher level of confidence, they can put too much pressure on themselves and others. They can be divisive to a team, become controlling and forcibly pushing others toward their agenda like a snow plow. Others may tend to avoid them since they can be intimidating. As a result, Eights can miss out on valuable relationships and opportunities to help others grow.

Eights need to accept that being vulnerable is not a sign of weakness. They must receive the protection and security that come through the gospel. When they do, Eights will treat others and themselves with respect, appreciation and genuine care. They will also surrender their own fear of being unsafe and unprotected by working to right injustices against humanity.

## Spiritual Health

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Eights seek the power and protection that only the gospel provides. When Eights are motivated to create protection for themselves, they operate in the flesh and often become demanding, intimidating and confrontational. But when Eights trust *Jesus* and rest in His protection, they can improve the world by fighting for justice.

The following table shows your responses in the assessment. They are your characteristics when you are walking in the Spirit (gold box) and your characteristics when you are resorting to the flesh (gray box):

<p><b><u>Strong</u></b> I have a powerful presence.</p>	<p><b><u>Demanding</u></b> I am not afraid to press for what I want.</p>
<p><b><u>Direct</u></b> I get straight to the point in my communication.</p>	<p><b><u>Intimidating</u></b> People are afraid to say no to my requests.</p>
<p><b><u>Assertive</u></b> I confidently step into difficult situations.</p>	<p><b><u>Overbearing</u></b> I can be too much for other people to handle.</p>
<p><b><u>Protector</u></b> When threatened, I aggressively guard myself and others.</p>	<p><b><u>Confrontational</u></b> When I am challenged by others, I become argumentative.</p>
<p><b><u>Compassionate</u></b> I will fight for the victims of an injustice.</p>	<p><b><u>Overly Aggressive</u></b> I operate in attack mode.</p>

## Spiritually Healthy

Healthy Eights live a compassionate life devoted to caring for and loving others. Instead of focusing on their own protection, healthy Eights fully know, believe and trust that Christ redeemed them from their need to control and gave them His power and protection as a gift.

This knowledge of the gospel also stirs up compassion and mercy in the heart of an Eight. Once they are forgiven and set free from condemnation, healthy Eights allow themselves to be vulnerable, heal from the

hurt they have experienced and seek reconciliation. They no longer seek their own power and protection and are able to work to bring justice for those who have been mistreated, marginalized or oppressed.

Healthy Eights are honest, trustworthy, empathetic and deeply connected to others. They courageously open up emotionally and let others know who they really are. They release control, help to create deep relationships and encourage collaboration. They also welcome constructive criticism as an opportunity for growth.

These Eights are filled with curiosity, wonder and excitement. They have more faith in themselves and others. They learn to live with more self-control and grow more passionate about loving with a Christlike tenderness and gentleness.

## **Spiritually Average**

While there are times that they do depend on God to meet their needs, spiritually average Eights spend too much time focused on being independent. They can be more guarded and highly competitive with others. They will work so hard that they often neglect themselves and their needs.

Average Eights mentally know the gospel and the call to surrender to God. But they struggle to trust God and still seek control. When pressed, they can become confrontational and fight for their beliefs with such strong conviction that others may be hurt. They can become impatient and aggravated at inaction and when others appear to be indecisive. They have a tendency to see life in “black and white,” seeing others who are in the “gray” as weak.

## **Spiritually Unhealthy**

Unhealthy Eights do not put their trust in God and fear that others will betray them. When they feel others are pulling away from them, they will preemptively cut ties. They become angry, resentful and even vengeful when their influence is no longer effective. At these times, they disregard the boundaries of others. They are overly-focused on winning at all costs with little regard for the casualties they leave behind. At their worst, they can go on rampages, destroying anyone in their path.

## **Spiritual Growth**

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### **Gospel Meditation**

While all doctrine is essential for Eights, many find comfort in meditating upon the doctrine of “Christus Victor.” It is based on the fact that God is powerful and that Christ’s work is victorious over the evil forces in the world. Because of His victorious work, we are transferred from the reign of evil to His reign and given His power to bear fruit of good works.

Helpful scriptures to meditate on and memorize: Colossians 1:11-14, 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 and Micah 6:8.

You might find it helpful to practice the following “self-talk” to remind yourself of the implications of the gospel in your life:

- Only God is powerful and we have protection in Him.
- I am sinful. I am not to take control and use my power to rule others.
- Jesus has taken the punishment for all of my guilt and offers me daily forgiveness.
- Because of Jesus, I am fully forgiven every day.
- I do not have to try to protect myself or dominate and control anyone else.
- I am free to live, love and forgive by the grace of God.
- I can open myself up to being vulnerable without fear because God is on the throne. In His transforming power, the fruit of gentleness, love and self-control will be evident.

## **Spiritual Disciplines**

Eights benefit from selecting spiritual disciplines that will help them accept the love, patience and grace of God. Based on your assessment, you may want to experiment with the following spiritual disciplines in order to keep yourself saturated with gifts of the gospel:

- **Meditating on God's Word:** Use God's Word to contemplate justification by faith. As you read the stories of real people in the Bible, look for how God uses everyday people--not because they're capable but simply because of His grace. You could benefit from a Bible reading plan that will help you internalize God's Word and share it with others. We highly recommend the Community Bible Reading Journal at [www.theibrjournal.com](http://www.theibrjournal.com).
- **Prayer:** Talk to God regularly in order to deepen your relationship with Him.
  - Praise Him for his protection and for being in control. You can own your weaknesses because He is strong.
  - Thank Him for His justice and mercy that comes through the work of Jesus.
  - Affirm your trust in Him, reminding yourself that He is trustworthy and His love is unconditional.
- **Serving in the Church:** Find an outlet for your gifts in the Church. Look for ways to serve in the Church where you can do justice. Where you see brokenness in your church or community, look for ways to bring the actions of the gospel to those in need (homeless, poor, illiterate, etc.). Under the guidance of your church leadership, make a plan for bringing mercy to those in need. If you do not have a church home, contact us at [info@gospelenneagram.com](mailto:info@gospelenneagram.com) and we will offer you some suggestions on how to find a good gospel-centered church near you.
- **Activism:** Since you are passionate about fighting for the underdog, ask yourself, "Who am I drawn to love by fighting for their cause?" Remind yourself that God is merciful and loves justice. God is tender and full of grace and He is delighted when you step into the "fallenness" of the world around you and work alongside Him for redemption and reform.
- **Accountability:** Find a few trustworthy friends to be vulnerable with and develop a deep relationship. By doing so, you are allowing yourself to be known for who you are instead of the image of power you try to project. To know and be known helps you let down your guard. In your weakness, you are made humble and dependent on God and His grace.
- **Confession:** Practice the discipline of confession with a trusted friend or family member. Open up and be honest about your sin and how you use your power and strength in ways that are hurtful to others. Once you have confessed your sin to another, seek reconciliation with others and rest in the assurance that God forgives you.

## Next Steps

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As you process what you've learned through your Gospel Enneagram assessment, consider taking the following next steps:

- **Make It Personal!** Begin by reading through your report with purpose. Grab a highlighter and mark any word or phrase that is especially true of you. This process will help you evaluate your results and "hone in" on the truths that are most applicable to your growth.
- **Schedule a Consult.** We can walk you through your Enneagram style and teach you an activity called "FUEL." This activity helps you reflect on your beliefs and emotions in order to better understand yourself and God's work in your life. So, instead of emotionally reacting to difficult circumstances or thoughts as you typically would, we teach you how to slow down, consider your Enneagram style and respond in a redemptive way. We show you how to ask God to uproot any false beliefs that are driving you in a negative direction. Most of all, this activity will help you know that God is on the throne and will help you understand what it looks like to love others well. If you're interested, contact us at [info@gospelenneagram.com](mailto:info@gospelenneagram.com).
- **Join or Host a Training Event!** We also teach the Gospel Enneagram through webinars, retreats and conferences. These training events are designed to help people find freedom from sin, unleash giftedness, develop empathy for others and grow more productive as they rest upon the

- power of the gospel. For more information, contact us at [www.gospellenneagram.com](http://www.gospellenneagram.com).
- Become a Certified Coach! The Gospel Enneagram is an excellent tool to develop people in your workplace, church, parachurch ministry or simply so that you can care for your friends and family members. After you participate in our webinar we'll give you more training to earn this certification. You can find out more at [www.gospellenneagram.com](http://www.gospellenneagram.com).

## Conclusion

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The secret to spiritual health isn't knowing your Enneagram style. Prioritizing and living daily in light of the good news of Jesus Christ is the essential ingredient for spiritual health. The Enneagram may help you understand your pathway of growth, but the gospel is the power for change. Thankfully this means that a person's value, worth and identity are not found in their style nor their level of health; they are found in Jesus. When this happens, spiritual health results, and we begin to resemble Jesus more.