

## *Leisurely Thomas*

**The following seven traits and behaviors are clues to the presence of the Leisurely style. A person who has a strong Leisurely tendency will demonstrate more of these behaviors more intensely than someone who has less of this style.**

1. **Inalienable Rights:** Leisurely men and woman believe in their right to enjoy themselves on their own terms in their own time. They value and protect their comfort, their free time, and their individual pursuit of happiness.
2. **Enough is Enough:** They agree to play by the rules. They deliver what is expected of them and no more. They expect others to recognize and respect that limit.
3. **The Right to Resist:** Leisurely individuals cannot be exploited. They can comfortably resist acceding to demands that they deem unreasonable or above and beyond the call of duty.
4. **Man<sup>^</sup>ana:** Leisurely men and women are relaxed about time. Unlike Type-A individuals, they are not obsessed by time urgency or the demands of the clock. To these individuals, haste makes waste and unnecessary anxiety. They are easygoing and optimistic that whatever needs to get done will get done, eventually.
5. **I'm Okay:** They are not overawed by authority. They accept themselves and their approach to life.
6. **Wheel of Fortune:** Leisurely people believe that they are just as good as everyone else and as entitled to the best things in life. They maintain that blind luck often accounts for who fares well and who fares poorly.
7. **Mixed Feelings:** Although they feel impelled to proceed in their own direction, when their choices put them in conflict with the people they care for, Leisurely people are often of two minds about how to proceed. They do not like to risk important relationships, yet they need to feel free.

### **Leisurely Thomases in Action**

Free to be me—no one can take away this right from a person who has a Leisurely Thomas type of personality. These men and women play by the rules and fulfill their responsibilities and obligations. But once they've put in their time, they will let no person, institution, or even culture deprive them of their personal pursuit of happiness, for to the Leisurely person, this is what life is all about. What's important to them is not how they choose to enjoy themselves but that they are guaranteed this opportunity. If threatened, these normally easygoing individuals will vigorously defend their fundamental right to do their own thing.

Unless they are in the creative arts or intellectual pursuits, most predominantly Leisurely people do not get their personal pleasures from their work. They put in their time but are usually not the hard-driving get-ahead types, since they love their leisure time and know how to enjoy it. Unless these individuals have a work-oriented style that balances their

Leisurely tendencies (for instance, Conscientious or Self-confident), they rarely become managers or leaders, because they simply aren't interested in getting ahead.

At home, Leisurely-style people tend to do things they enjoy and may put off tasks they don't want to do, such as chores, paying the bills, or washing dishes. These habits may put a burden on the spouse or other family member. People with Leisurely style generally avoid head-on confrontations—unless they feel that their rights have been violated—preferring indirect resistance. They do not match up well with Conscientious overachievers, either at home or at work.

They have a great ability to enjoy themselves and can lead extremely satisfying lives if they can be free to seek their own pleasures in their own time in their own way.

### **Issues of the Leisurely Thomas**

Flighters by nature, Leisurely Thomases are not afraid of a fight but rather choose to avoid it unless the key word of fairness is there. They often take up causes when they believe either they or someone they care about have not been treated fairly. Leisurelys don't always understand themselves very well, but they have a high need to be understood and to know that you understand them in spite of themselves. Leisurelys like to have fun and that is the other key word. They are motivated much more by positives or the possibility of having fun than by negatives. Their underlying anger will not necessarily be expressed directly if the above issues are not dealt with they way they like them to be, but will come out indirectly in the form of procrastination, forgetting, or other passive aggressive behavior.

### **Scripture for the Leisurely Thomas**

Since they are flighters by nature, the book of 1<sup>st</sup> John has a lot to say to them since the disciple John was also a flighter. In the book of 1<sup>st</sup> John chapter 5 verses 1-12 we read the following: <sup>1</sup>Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is a child of God. And everyone who loves the Father loves his children, too. <sup>2</sup>We know we love God's children if we love God and obey his commandments. <sup>3</sup>Loving God means keeping his commandments, and really, that isn't difficult. <sup>4</sup>For every child of God defeats this evil world by trusting Christ to give the victory. <sup>5</sup>And the ones who win this battle against the world are the ones who believe that Jesus is the Son of God.

<sup>6</sup>And Jesus Christ was revealed as God's Son by his baptism in water and by shedding his blood on the cross<sup>o</sup>—not by water only, but by water and blood. And the Spirit also gives us the testimony that this is true. <sup>7</sup>So we have these three witnesses<sup>o</sup>—<sup>8</sup>the Spirit, the water, and the blood—and all three agree. <sup>9</sup>Since we believe human testimony, surely we can believe the testimony that comes from God. And God has testified about his Son. <sup>10</sup>All who believe in the Son of God know that this is true. Those who don't believe this are actually calling God a liar because they don't believe what God has testified about his Son.

<sup>11</sup>And this is what God has testified: He has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. <sup>12</sup>So whoever has God's Son has life; whoever does not have his Son does not have life.

Here John is writing under the influence of the Holy Spirit and God's direction to instruct the Leisurely and the rest of us that as God's children since he loves us we should be obedient. This also means loving the rest of God's children as well. It also means keeping his commandments in spite of the pleasures the world has to offer. So that we know without a doubt that Jesus was who he says he was God gives evidence to support his

claim by his baptism and his blood--the same evidence given to Thomas the leisurely disciple. Otherwise we are calling God a liar, harsh words for a leisurely.

## Doubt

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### IS IT OK TO DOUBT MY FAITH?

PSALM 95:9

God gives us plenty of evidence to believe in him. Doubt comes when we fail to stop long enough to observe all the evidence. And when doubt turns to lack of trust, we are in danger of ignoring God altogether.

JOHN 20:27-29

Doubt can be healthy or destructive, depending on how we use it.

GENESIS 3:4-6

One of Satan's tactics is to get us to doubt God's goodness. He tries to get us to forget all God has given us and focus on what we don't have. If you are spending much of your time thinking about what you don't have, you may be slipping into unhealthy doubt.

### ARE THERE THINGS WE SHOULD NEVER DOUBT?

EPHESIANS 1:14; HEBREWS 13:5

We should never doubt our salvation. Once we become Christians, Satan can never snatch us away.

2 CORINTHIANS 6:2

We should never doubt God's desire or ability to help us.

*Promise from God: Mark 11:23*

<sup>23</sup>I assure you that you can say to this mountain, 'May God lift you up and throw you into the sea,' and your command will be obeyed. All that's required is that you really believe and do not doubt in your heart.

## Stubbornness

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### HOW ARE PEOPLE STUBBORN IN THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO GOD?

EXODUS 8:19

When we see God working and refuse to believe it is God.

EXODUS 9:12

A habit of stubbornly refusing to get to know God may cause God to give up on you. What hope do you have then?

MATTHEW 17:17

Stubborn resistance to God and his ways is a persistent rejection of God himself.

### WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN STUBBORNNESS AND STRONG CONVICTIONS?

2 KINGS 17:13-18

Stubbornness is the result of foolish pride that rejects the will and word of God.

JOSHUA 14:6-12

Caleb's conviction is based on the promise of God, not his own pride.

DANIEL 1:8; 6:1-10

Daniel's convictions about purity and prayer were based not on self-preservation, but on obedience to God.

### **HOW DO I KNOW WHEN I AM BEING STUBBORN?**

EXODUS 8:15-19

Stubbornness is refusing to admit the truth, even in the face of overwhelming evidence.

PROVERBS 13:10

When your position is rooted in pride, not truth, you are being stubborn.

### **HOW DO I DEAL WITH STUBBORNNESS IN SOMEONE ELSE?**

JONAH 2:1-10

God dealt with Jonah's stubbornness with both patience and confrontation.

MARK 6:7-11

Jesus recognized there are times, regrettably, when we must leave people to the consequences of their own stubbornness.

#### *Promise from God: Hebrews 3:12-14*

<sup>12</sup>Be careful then, dear brothers and sisters. <sup>13</sup>Make sure that your own hearts are not evil and unbelieving, turning you away from the living God. <sup>14</sup>You must warn each other every day, as long as it is called "today," so that none of you will be deceived by sin and hardened against God. <sup>15</sup>For if we are faithful to the end, trusting God just as firmly as when we first believed, we will share in all that belongs to Christ.

### **The Leisurely Thomas's Role in God's Kingdom**

We need doubters and fun lovers. People who both enjoy themselves and bring joy to us by helping us see the lighter more fun side of things. We also need those who question their faith and our beliefs. We also need them to believe and accept the truth when it is presented to them with substantial and significant evidence and not to reject it with their stubbornness. We needed Thomas to miss the meeting with the other ten disciples after Jesus' death so he could validate with stubborn human eyes Jesus' resurrection for all those of us who are hesitant to believe even what our heart tells us is true. To better understand the character of a leisurely read what we know of the life of Thomas.

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## **Thomas**

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Thomas, so often remembered as "Doubting Thomas," deserves to be respected for his faith. He was a doubter, but his doubts had a purpose—he wanted to know the truth. Thomas did not idolize his doubts; he gladly believed when given reasons to do so. He expressed his doubts fully and had them answered completely. Doubting was only his way of responding, not his way of life.

Although our glimpses of Thomas are brief, his character comes through with consistency. He struggled to be faithful to what he knew, despite what he felt. At one point, when it was plain

to everyone that Jesus' life was in danger, only Thomas put into words what most were feeling, "Let's go, too—and die with Jesus" (John 11:16). He didn't hesitate to follow Jesus.

We don't know why Thomas was absent the first time Jesus appeared to the disciples after the Resurrection, but he was reluctant to believe their witness to Christ's resurrection. Not even 10 friends could change his mind!

We can doubt without having to live a doubting way of life. Doubt encourages rethinking. Its purpose is more to sharpen the mind than to change it. Doubt can be used to pose the question, get an answer, and push for a decision. But doubt was never meant to be a permanent condition. Doubt is one foot lifted, poised to step forward or backward. There is no motion until the foot comes down.

When you experience doubt, take encouragement from Thomas. He didn't stay in his doubt but allowed Jesus to bring him to belief. Take encouragement also from the fact that countless other followers of Christ have struggled with doubts. The answers God gave them may help you, too. Don't settle into doubts, but move on from them to decision and belief. Find another believer with whom you can share your doubts. Silent doubts rarely find answers.

### **STRENGTHS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

- ◆ One of Jesus' 12 disciples
- ◆ Intense both in doubt and belief
- ◆ Was a loyal and honest man

### **WEAKNESSES AND MISTAKES**

- ◆ Along with the others, abandoned Jesus at his arrest
- ◆ Refused to believe the others' claims to have seen Christ and demanded proof
- ◆ Struggled with a pessimistic outlook

### **LESSONS FROM HIS LIFE**

- ◆ Jesus does not reject doubts that are honest and directed toward belief
- ◆ Better to doubt out loud than to disbelieve in silence

### **VITAL STATISTICS**

- ◆ Where: Galilee, Judea, Samaria
- ◆ Occupation: Disciple of Jesus
- ◆ Contemporaries: Jesus, other disciples, Herod, Pilate

### **KEY VERSES**

"Then he said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here and see my hands. Put your hand into the wound in my side. Don't be faithless any longer. Believe!' 'My Lord and my God!' Thomas exclaimed" (John 20:27, 28).

*Thomas's story is told in the Gospels. He is also mentioned in Acts 1:13.*

## Doubters in the Bible

<b>Doubter</b>	<b>Doubtful Moment</b>	<b>Reference</b>
Abraham	When told he would be a father in old age	Genesis 17:17
Sarah	When she heard she would be a mother in old age	Genesis 18:12
Moses	When told to return to Egypt to lead the people	Exodus 3:10-15
Israelites	Whenever they faced difficulties in the wilderness	Exodus 16:1-3
Gideon	When told he would be a judge and leader	Judges 6:14-23
Zechariah	When told he would be a father in old age	Luke 1:18
Thomas	When told Jesus had risen from the dead	John 20:24, 25
<p>Many of the people God used to accomplish great things started out as real doubters. With all of them, God showed great patience. Honest doubt was not a bad starting point as long as they didn't stay there. How great a part does doubt have in your willingness to trust God?</p>		