

He Is In Your
Temperament

Which Temperament is the Best?

No temperament is better than another one. Each temperament has strengths and each temperament has shortcomings. The characteristics listed below may not *all* apply to *every* person with that temperament, but they are a good representation of the typical strengths and shortcomings.

The Sanguine Temperament

Strengths:

- Spontaneous, cheerful, fun-loving
- Sociable, warm, likes being with people
- Persuasive, optimistic, enthusiastic, lively
- Generous, kind-hearted, wants to please others

Shortcomings:

- Talkative, interrupts others frequently
- Impulsive, makes unrealistic promises
- Unpredictable, moods and interest change rapidly
- Weak-willed, wants to be accepted by others

The Choleric Temperament

Strengths:

- Decisive, confident, know what they want, pioneering
- Natural leader, organiser, motivator, purposeful
- Extremely active, likes pressure, keen to achieve
- Strong will-power, determined, self-disciplined

Shortcomings:

- Unsympathetic, insensitive to the feelings of others

- Domineering, wants to be in control, stubborn
- Impatient, critical, makes others feel inferior
- Self-sufficient, uses others only to achieve own goal

The Melancholy Temperament

Strengths:

- Gifted, talented, creative, genius-prone
- Sensitive, loving, compassionate, loyal
- Analytical, deep-thinking, extremely high standards
- Avoids the limelight, self-sacrificing

Shortcomings:

- Indecisive, perfectionist, difficult to satisfy, easily angered
- Pessimistic, suspicious of the motives of others
- Moody, touchy, easily depressed, self-pitying
- Introspective, dissatisfied with self, self-deprecating

The Phlegmatic Temperament

Strengths:

- Easy-going, accepts others as they are, fits in with them
- Many friends, few enemies, good listener, peacemaker, dry sense of humour
- Controlled emotions, calm, thinks before acting, high stress tolerance
- Extremely faithful – especially in jobs that require patience

Shortcomings:

- Slow, lethargic – a procrastinator and spectator to life
- Hesitant, reluctant to take risks, leaves decisions to others
- Self-protective, diplomatically stubborn
- Unenthusiastic, withdrawn, seldom reveals feelings, unresponsive

Some Familiar Characters

The Bible always depicts men as they are, describing both their strengths and weaknesses. There are four biblical characters that seem to illustrate the four temperaments rather vividly. They are Peter, the sanguine, Paul, the choleric, Moses, the melancholy and Abraham, the phlegmatic. In his book *Transformed Temperaments*, Tim LaHaye has analysed these characters particularly well.

The most significant thing about their lives is the fact that they all rose to great heights. When they allowed God to take control of their lives, He built on their strengths and neutralised their weaknesses.

Sanguine Peter

Peter was extremely *impulsive*. For example, trust a sanguine to invite his friends home while his mother-in-law is sick in bed! (Mark 1:29-30) When Jesus came walking on the water to the disciples, Peter impulsively asked to do the same. It was only after he had taken a few steps that he realised what he was doing and started to sink (Matt 14:28-29). In the garden of Gethsemane he impulsively drew his sword and cut off the ear of the high priest's servant (John 18:10), while at the lakeside he couldn't wait for the boats to go ashore – he jumped overboard impulsively to get to Jesus (John 21:7).

Peter was also very *talkative* – a man with a foot-shaped mouth. On the Mount of Transfiguration he was the only disciple who said anything – and it was obvious that he didn't know what he was talking about (Luke 9:33). When Jesus told His disciples that He was going to die in Jerusalem, Peter told Him that it would not be so (Matt 16:22) and Jesus rebuked him sharply.

At the trial of Jesus, Peter was accused of being a disciple because they could hear by his *accent* that he was from Galilee (Matt 26:73). Why did he have to open his mouth? He could have merely warmed himself by the fire but he was a sanguine who just couldn't stop talking.

Peter was very *self-centred*, often drawing attention to his own virtues (Matt 19:27; 26:33). His denial of Jesus showed how weak-willed he was and how easily he compromised his beliefs (Matt 26:69-74) in order to be *accepted by others*. His *rapidly changing moods* are indicated by the fact that one minute he was cursing in his denial of Jesus and the next he was weeping bitterly (Matt 26:74-75).

Yet when the Holy Spirit took control of Peter's life, he became a changed man. He spoke *fearlessly* to the crowds as well as to the Jewish Council (Acts 2:14, 4:19-20). His love of attention made way for *humility*, as he raised Dorcas from the dead without any publicity (Acts 9:40). He accepted Paul's rebuke graciously (Gal 2:14) after his natural inclination to compromise had momentarily got the better of him. Even in the heat of discussion Peter was now able to *control his emotions* and not become involved until the end (Acts 15:7).

Peter's life certainly showed that God can use even extreme sanguines for His glory.

Choleric Paul

Paul was extremely *aggressive*, particularly in the way he persecuted the early Christians (Acts 26:10-11). He was also extremely *achievement orientated*. Nothing could prevent him from preaching the gospel and he endured incredible hardships to achieve this goal (2 Cor 11:23-28). Even in his writings we can sense his *determination* to press on towards the goal (Phil 3:14) and his *self-discipline* to keep himself fit for the race (1 Cor 9:26-27).

He was also a *pioneer*, constantly looking for new areas where he could proclaim the Good News – unwilling to go where other missionaries had already been (Rom 15:20). He wanted to conquer virgin soil with the gospel. He was simply a *dynamic leader*. Even when he was a prisoner, he started giving orders to the Roman soldiers – and they listened to him (Acts 27:20-36).

On the other hand, Paul could be very *hard on others*. In Antioch, he tore a strip off Peter in front of everybody (Gal 2:11-14). He refused to take Mark on the second journey because Mark had not completed the first one. Paul was so *unyielding* on this issue that he was even willing to break

up his partnership with Barnabas – the man to whom Paul was so indebted (Acts 15:37-39).

He was *self-sufficient*. He provided for his own needs and for those of his travelling companions (Acts 20:34). He even stayed in his own rented house while a prisoner in Rome (Acts 28:30). He was also very *independent* as far as doctrine was concerned. Initially, he did not consult the other apostles and even referred somewhat sceptically to ‘those who seemed to be important’ (Gal 1:16-19; 2:6).

Paul was also *stubborn*. Despite the many warnings he received on the way, he was determined to go to Jerusalem, for no other reason than that he *wanted* to go (Acts 21:10-14).

The Choleric Christian displays less of the fruit of the Spirit (as listed in Gal 5:22) than any other temperament. Yet we see again how God changed Paul until every fruit of the Spirit – love, joy, peace, gentleness, meekness, faith, kindness, friendliness and self-control – was evident in his life. God can certainly use choleric – He used Paul to give us two-thirds of the New Testament!

Melancholy Moses

Moses was a very *gifted* man. The Bible tells us that he was ‘educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in speech and action’ (Acts 7:22). Giftedness is a distinct characteristic of the melancholy temperament. Most of the world’s great artists and composers, for example, had melancholy temperaments.

Yet despite his genius, Moses was *meek* (Num 12:3) and *self-sacrificing* (Ex 33:32). He did not want to be in the limelight. Hebrews 11:24-27 tells us that he did not want to be known as the son of Pharaoh’s daughter but preferred to be mistreated along with the people of God.

Moses also exhibited some great weaknesses. He was *self-depreciating* – running himself down. In spite of all his abilities he suffered from an *inferiority complex*. That’s why he was quite happy to waste all his abilities on tending sheep in the desert. And when God called him, he tried to think of every possible excuse. First he told God that he was not suited for the task (Ex 3:10-11). Then he said that he did not have any theological training (Ex 3:13). After that he expressed his fear of being

rejected (Ex 4:1) – perhaps thinking of the time that the Israelites had rejected him 40 years before. Next he claimed that he was not gifted – not eloquent enough (Ex 4:10). When God countered all of his excuses, he made a last attempt to get out of the task (Ex 4:13) and God became very angry with him.

Running yourself down is not humility. It is an inverted form of pride because it still focuses on self. True humility is to say, ‘I can do everything through Him who gives me strength’ (Phil 4:13).

Moses was also a *perfectionist*. He would sit from sunrise to sunset to hear the people’s cases – simply because he didn’t believe that anybody could do it as well as he could. It was only when his father-in-law (the first management consultant!) advised him on these matters that Moses was willing to delegate (Ex 18:13-18).

He was inclined to become *depressed* (Num 11:10-15) and he often became *angry*. For example, he smashed the stone tablets on the ground in anger. (He was the only man ever to break all of the Ten Commandments at once!) His anger made him sin against God (Num 20:3-5, 9-12) and thus he was not allowed to enter the Promised Land.

Yet despite all these weaknesses, God formed Moses into *one of the greatest leaders of all history*. God can and does use melancholies who are willing to obey Him.

Phlegmatic Abraham

Abraham was initially a very *cautious* person, not exhibiting a great deal of faith. God had called him to settle in Canaan but when he got halfway to Haran, he settled there, until God had to urge him to move on again (Gen 11:31).

He found it *difficult to trust God*. As soon as there was a famine in the land, he immigrated to Egypt and there, to preserve his own life, he was willing to let his wife marry Pharaoh (Gen 12:10-15). When the truth was eventually discovered, he was chased out of Egypt in disgrace. Yet he did the very same thing some years later (Gen 20:11).

Abraham wanted *peace* – at any cost. When his herdsmen started quarrelling with the herdsmen of his nephew, Lot, Abraham was prepared to be the least – and even give up the Promised Land – just for the sake of

peace (Gen 13:7-9). Because of his *passive* nature, he was also *henpecked*. His wife told him to have intercourse with her maid, Hagar, yet later she blamed him for this and told him it was his fault. His only response was to tell her to deal with Hagar as she pleased (Gen 16:5-6).

Abraham was a *faithful friend*. When Lot was kidnapped, Abraham mustered his men and rescued him, not taking anything for himself in the process but giving a tenth of the loot to Melchizedek (Gen 14:14-24).

Phlegmatics are extremely *reliable* people once they can be persuaded to accept responsibility but that does not happen easily. Where a choleric, for example, will see a problem and say, 'Let's do something about it' the phlegmatic will ask, 'Why doesn't somebody do something about it?' However, Abraham underwent a change. He took the risk and put his trust in God (Gen 22:12) and so great did his faith become that he was known as 'the father of faith' (Rom 4:16-22) and he took his place in God's 'Hall of Fame' (Heb 11:17-19).

Amazing what God can do with phlegmatics who are willing to trust Him.

Are we stuck with our weaknesses?

The answer is a resounding *no*. We can all change dramatically if we:

- Want to change.
- Know what to change to.
- Receive encouragement in making the change.

Looking at these four men is ample evidence that when we allow God to take control of our lives, He uses our strengths and eliminates our shortcomings.

Analysing and understanding your own temperament is therefore *no excuse* whatsoever to indulge in your weaknesses. The only reason for taking a closer look at yourself is to do something about your shortcomings and to continue to build on your strengths.

...men and women live a good life and love God, by mental conception. But the real hiding place is in the heart, hid with Christ. And when Christ, the Holy Spirit, comes into your heart, He is in you with your temperament, and He is living His Own Life through His Own will, through you.

*56-0101 - Why Are People So Tossed About?
Rev. William Marrion Branham*

...“To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.” Not me that liveth anymore, but Christ that liveth in me. Christ living in the individual so surrendered, when Christ speaks through the lips, and thinks through the mind, sees through the eye, acts through the temperament...

*56-0101 - Why Are People So Tossed About?
Rev. William Marrion Branham*

...I’m a temperamental person, melancholy sort of a person. I can’t let myself get away. Satan takes advantage of that on me. See? I’m one of those types that could break down.

*52-0727 - Led By The Holy Spirit
Rev. William Marrion Branham*

I don’t mean to repeat it, but when I get before you, I—I get nervous, and I get melancholy, and sentimental, and temperamental, too. I am that, to begin with, so I...it makes me all tore up inside.

*64-0614E - The Oddball
Rev. William Marrion Branham*

Opposites Attract in Marriage



Rocky
Choleric



Polly
Phlegmatic



Martha
Melancholy



Sparky
Sanguine



Martin
Melancholy



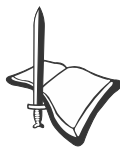
Sarah
Sanguine



Clara
Choleric



Phil
Phlegmatic



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