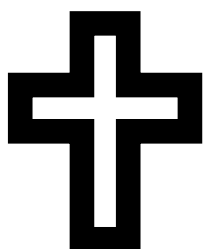


**Twelve Lessons**  
*on*  
***Christian Psychology***

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*by*  
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## **THE FOUR TEMPERAMENTS – LESSON 1**

**Introduction:** There are four basic temperaments, personalities, behaviors, traits, or characteristics. Being a Bible student and constantly aware that numbers are important in understanding the Bible, I was immediately conscious of the fact that FOUR is the number of the world. Everything that God has created is unique in itself. There are no snowflakes, drops of rain, or blades of grass that are alike. Even so, mankind is divided into FOUR temperaments. We are as different as we can be. Everyone has a different fingerprint. Yet everybody is trying to place everybody in their own mould. God made us a unique individual, and God used individuals such as Nehemiah, the Kings and the Judges to change nations. God uses our talents, personalities and gifts for His good purpose. The purpose of these studies is to find out who you are and how God can use and change you for His glory. A trumpet is not a piano but both can play the same tune.

### **Lesson Goals:**

1. To discover the background of these studies.
2. To study the fact that everyone is different and falls into one of the temperaments.
3. To understand that this used for constructive not destructive criticism.

### **Definitions of Important Terms and/or Phrases:**

1. Flesh – In an even stronger sense, flesh is the earthly part of man, representing lusts and desires (Eph 2:3). The flesh is contrary to the Spirit (Gal 5:17). Those who are in the flesh cannot please God (Rom 8:8). Gal 5:19-23 contrasts works of the flesh with the fruit of the Spirit. The flesh is not completely condemned, however, for Christ Himself was described as being "in the flesh" (1 John 4:2). Christ alone is our salvation, since by the works of the law "no flesh shall be justified" (Gal 2:16). (Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary).
2. Soul – The word soul also refers to the inner life of man, the seat of his emotions, and the center of human personality. The first use of the word soul in the Old Testament expresses this meaning: "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being (soul)" (Gen 2:7). This means more than being given physical life; the biblical writer declares that man became a "living soul," or a person, a human being, one distinct from all other animals. (Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary).
3. Generation – While generation is sometimes used in the Bible to indicate a more or less specific span of time (Gen 15:16), the word is far more frequently applied in an indefinite way. So it is best to avoid forcing our English understanding of generation (the average period of time between the birth of a parent and the birth of his firstborn child, about 25-30 years) upon the word as it is used in the Bible. (Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary).

## **I. A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE FOUR TEMPERAMENTS** – Tim LaHaye's book, The Spirit Controlled Temperament, pages 8 and 9 of the Introduction.

### **A. The oldest record is found in the Bible:** Prov. 30:11-14

1. Vs. 11 – *"There is a generation that curseth their father, and doth not bless their mother."*
2. Vs. 12 – *"There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness."*
3. Vs. 13 – *"There is a generation, O how lofty are their eyes! And their eyelids are lifted up."*
4. Vs. 14 – *"There is a generation, whose teeth are as swords, and their jaw teeth as knives, to devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from among men."*
5. Hippocrates – They were named by the father of modern medicine.
6. Galen, a Greek doctor detailed the strengths and weakness of the four around A.D. 200.
7. Ole Hallesby who wrote "Temperament and the Christian Faith" was a Norwegian theologian who wrote the first modern book on the subject.

### **B. Temperament could be called our Old Depraved Nature** – The natural man, the flesh, the old man and corruptible flesh, to name a few.

1. We must realize that Adam and Eve were created with a Nature that was innocent and pure. Sin entered in and corrupted their Nature. Psa. 51:5 – *"Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me."* Our nature came under the curse of sin. That which was innocent and pure became guilty and polluted.
2. Gen. 2:25 – *"And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed."* Gen. 3:7 – *"And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig Leaves*

together, and made themselves aprons.” (They became ashamed). Their character was corrupted.

3. Originally, there was nothing wrong with our nature. Psa. 139:14-16 teaches that we were “...fearfully and wonderfully made” and that “all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.” Now according to that verse, the temperament that God desired for each of us was designed in our conception. So if God designed us to have a certain temperament or trait then it can be used for God’s glory and our good. Sin has corrupted our temperament but that is no excuse for remaining controlled by sin. “Sin shall not have dominion over you...” (Rom. 6:14).
4. The old nature can mould the activities and plans of life. Eph. 2:2 – “Where in time past ye walked according to the course of this world (character), according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.”

### **C. Two Changes must take place:**

1. Redemption – Gen. 3:21 – “Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them.” Jay Adams tells us that the “root of all behavior problems is sin.” The very first thing God did was “redeem” Adam and Eve.
  - a. II Cor. 5:17 – “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”
  - b. II Pet. 1:4 – “Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.”
- c. Regeneration transforms temperament: The Thompson Chain Reference Bible in its topical section, number 836 lists people whose temperament was changed by being “born again.”
  - (1) Peter, the profane fisherman, Matt. 26:74, becomes a man whose very shadow heals, Acts 5:15.
  - (2) The restless demoniac, Mark 5:5, becomes a quiet disciple, Mark 5:15.
  - (3) John the vindictive Jew, Luke 9:53-54 becomes the apostle of love, I John 4:7.
  - (4) The woman of Samaria of unsavory reputation, John 4:17-18, becomes an evangel of truth, John 4:29.
  - (5) Saul the bloodthirsty persecutor, Acts 9:1, becomes Paul, the tender-hearted brother, Acts. 21:13.
  - (6) The cold-hearted Philippian jailer, Acts 16:24, becomes a sympathetic friend, Acts 16:33.
- d. Christian psychologists have long said there is no use to try to change one’s behavior until one is born again. On page 9 of Spirit Controlled Temperament, Dr. Henry Brandt states: “You can use your background as an excuse for present behavior only until you receive Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Saviour. After that you have a new power within you that is able to change your conduct.”
2. Recovery – The N.T. gives the Recovery – Rom. 12:2 – “And be not conformed to this world (character): but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind...” The only way the old Sin Nature can be controlled is for the New Nature to be controlled by the Holy Spirit. Being controlled daily by the Holy Spirit is the only answer:
  - a. II Cor. 4:16 – “For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.”
  - b. Col. 3:10 – “And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.”
  - c. Eph. 4:23 – “And be renewed in the spirit of your mind.”
  - d. Everyone has a struggle with the Old Nature. Rom. 7:18-20 is the classic example of a saved man struggling with his old nature. Paul concluded that now he has two natures. He calls one “I” and the other “sin.”

### **D. The Division of The Person** – Tim LaHaye divides each person into temperament, character, and personality.

1. Temperament comes from a combination of genetic traits that subconsciously affects our behavior. As Psa. 51:5, the lost man comes into this world, a prisoner of genetic combinations. These genetic traits predict body features such as height, body size, color of eyes and hair, but also important, our outward expression such as being an introvert or an extrovert. As a lost person, “we can’t help it.” We are born into a world and we are born different from anybody else.
2. Character is the “soul” of man which is a “jumper cable” between the “spirit” and the “body.” The “soul” made up of mind, emotions, and will can be trained, manipulated, patterned, and influenced. This is the real “you” which has been molded by all of the forces around you. **Note:** If you will look back and analyze your life, you may remember yourself a different person as a child but perhaps different now because of a parent, a mate, or an occupation.
3. Personality can be true or a hypocrite. The “body” is controlled by the “soul” of man. But if the “soul”

of man is lost or not controlled by the Holy Spirit, it can be deceitful. A person may be totally opposite from the “person” God intended them to be and spend their life in misery. I Sam. 16:7, “...for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.” David cannot wear Saul’s armour physically but so he cannot wear his armour psychologically. In these lessons, we will seek to change our conduct by looking inside ourselves. Prov. 4:23 – “Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.”

**E. We must acknowledge that even the best Christians have “lapses.”** There is a clear Biblical teaching.

1. One must not only be saved but must regularly experience the power of the Spirit-filled life. Eph. 5:18, the verb means to be constantly “filled with the Spirit,” not as a one time experience but a continual experience.
2. John 7:38, “...out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” “Rivers” wash all the trash downstream but not if the river is dammed up or restricted. In Eph. 5:18, God commands that we keep the “rivers” flowing. It is our cooperation as a redeemed believer with the Holy Spirit to control our genetic nature so we can live the life of Christ.
3. Gal. 2:20 – “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”

**F. What are the Four Temperaments?** To quote Tim LaHaye, page 11, “Hippocrates, the brilliant Greek physician and philosopher, propounded the theory that there are basically four types of temperament. He erroneously thought these four types were the results of the four liquids that predominated in the human body: blood “choleric: or “yellow bile”; “melancholy” or “black bile”; and “phlegm”. Hippocrates named the temperaments in correspondence with the liquids he thought were the cause. The Sanguine, he thought, is characterized by rich, warm blood. Choleric must have too much yellow bile. Melancholies he saw as having black or dark blood – black bile. Phlegmatics he saw as having thick blood, which he called phlegm. To him, these suggested lively (Sanguine), active (Choleric), black (Melancholy), and slow (Phlegmatic) temperaments.

1. So we have the four temperaments, Sanguine, Choleric, Melancholy, and Phlegmatic. Everyone because of genetics is born in one predominant category with various mixtures of the others because of different contributing factors. But, essentially, it should be fairly simple to trace the dominant trait.
2. Tim LaHaye calls them by name: Sparky Sanguine (the happy way), Maestro Melancholy (the right way), Flip Phlegmatic (the easy way), and Rocky Choleric (my way).

**G. There are Dangers and Advantages of learning these Four Basic Traits.**

1. The Dangers are learning these traits in our friends and criticizing them. Many companies give their employees tests to reveal their temperaments and then elevate or eliminate them. Also, no one person has just the one temperament but will have to some degree, varying combinations of temperaments. So don’t compartmentalize an individual.
2. The Advantages are understanding these temperaments, learning how to accept a persons weaknesses and strengths, anticipate behavior and try to avoid unnecessary conflicts.

**Conclusion** – As we will find out, Paul, Peter, Moses, and Abraham had different temperaments but through the power of God they became mighty leaders for God. Acts 10:34 – “Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness is accepted with him.” No one temperament is considered better or worse with God. Each temperament contains strengths and richness, yet each is loaded with its own weaknesses and dangers. It is important to remember that these four traits are relevant to both men and women. The next lessons will be learning the Four Temperaments. Florence Littauer in her book, Your Personality Tree, page 26 says “do you think you were born to be...”

1. A Sanguine who wants to have fun?
2. A Choleric who wants to be in control?
3. A Melancholy who wants everything to be perfect?
4. A Phlegmatic who wants to keep out of trouble and have peace?

**NOTE:** At this point, hand out the Personality Scoring Sheet and explain. These are to be filled out and returned.