

## Temperament Ingredients

### Temperaments - the raw materials we are born with

Our temperament is the combination of basic traits with which we were born. Hippocrates (460-370BC), often given the title 'the father of modern medicine' discerned patterns in those traits that enabled him to make distinctions between four main temperaments. He gave those patterns names that have passed into our modern language. He called them Choleric, Sanguine, Phlegmatic and Melancholic.

We cannot swap temperaments – only understand what we have and use them to the full.

#### a. We have at least two temperaments – some have three

Most people have a combination of extrovert and introvert but some are 'double introverts' and others are 'double extroverts.'



#### b. We have them in different proportions

We may have 10% of one temperament and 90% of another. Someone else may have 40% of one temperament, 10% of another and 50% of another. Understanding what we have and how they interact will give us real insights into understanding ourselves. Again, these percentages are fixed – it is all about how we use what we have got.



#### c. One is not better than another

When we go on to describe the different temperaments some of you might quickly develop a preference for any temperament other than your own! Be aware of your responses as they will tell you a lot about how you feel about yourself. The truth is that no temperament is to be preferred to another – they all have their strengths and corresponding weaknesses.

### Strengths and weaknesses

#### a. Each temperament has its own set of 'ingredients' or 'attributes'

These are fixed and complete. For example, 5% of who we are might be one temperament and 95% the other. Even within that 5% will be the complete set of attributes.

#### b. These are all positive

We read, 'God saw all that he had made, and it was very good' (Genesis 1:31). That includes us and although the 'sin principle' has come in and given us a bias towards wrongdoing, what was originally put within us was good. Jesus came to this world, and, in his humanity, was the embodiment of all that we could have been and yet can be.



**c. How we use these attributes determines whether they come out as strengths or weaknesses**

Although we talk about temperament strengths and weaknesses it is more accurate to think of the different temperament attributes as ‘ingredients’ that will show themselves as either strengths or weaknesses. If we use who we are for our own ends then those ingredients will come out as weaknesses. If Jesus is at the centre of our lives, then they will be expressed as strengths.



**d. The weaknesses are the results of strengths ‘gone to seed’**

If we recognise that each of our weaknesses started life as a strength then we will quickly get in touch with what we are feeling in a given situation and, instead of using those feelings destructively, we will turn them around to produce a constructive result.

**We must not use our understanding of our temperaments to:**

**a. Excuse bad behaviour**

We are setting out to understand so we can change what is not good. Once we know what temperaments we have, it is tempting to use them to stay as we are because we can think ‘that is just me – that is who I am – I am not responsible.’

**b. Criticise others**

If we try to determine another person’s temperament the reason must always be so we can be more understanding and supportive. No temperament is ‘worse’ than another!



**The real issue is: what we do with who we are.**



When God put us together he got it exactly right! He knew what we would need for the situations and circumstances of our lives. The challenge is to know who we are and use that to the full. It is about making good choices. We may have made poor choices in the past. Now we have the opportunity to do something different with what God has given us.

**How it all fits together**

Imagine a lamp with a prism on each side. The lamp represents the real you – your soul. It includes intellect, will, emotions and character. The prisms represent your particular temperaments. The white light from the lamp hits the prisms and refracts into a glorious array of colours. Your combination of temperaments produces its own unique blending of colours. The quality of those colours depends on the quality of white light emitted from that lamp. Who you are on the inside determines whether your temperament traits come out as strengths or weaknesses.



**Temperaments**

**Melancholic**

subjective		self-absorbed
rigid	<b>SELF</b>	moody
revengeful		impractical
negative	critical	unsociable

**Melancholic**

principled		self-sacrificing
gifted	<b>Jesus</b>	creative
perfectionist		sensitive
aesthetic	loyal	analytical

**Melancholic Key Concepts**

- a. How much are you worth?
- b. Sensitive – but to whom?
- c. Talk – don't isolate yourself
- d. Use your creativity – it is an expression of who you are

**Phlegmatic**

self-protective		unmotivated
anxious	<b>SELF</b>	lazy
indecisive		selfish
spectator	procrastinator	fearful

**Phlegmatic**

diplomatic		conservative
leader	<b>Jesus</b>	calm
easy-going		dependable
efficient	practical	humorous

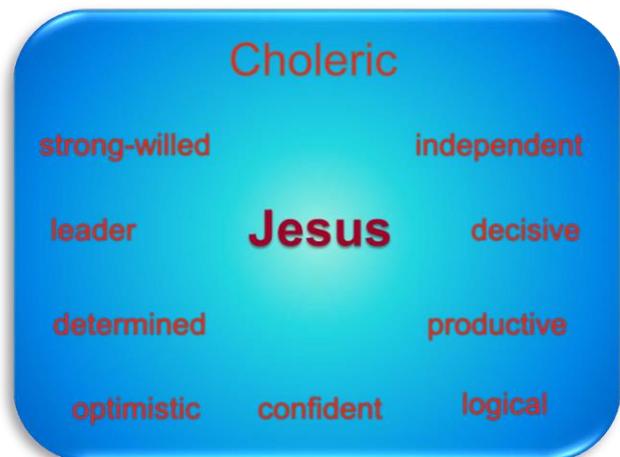
**Phlegmatic Key Concepts**

- a. Feels fragile – so protects
- b. Takes line of least resistance
- c. Get involved – don't stand on the edge
- d. Stubborn – use it for good!



**Sanguine Key Concepts**

- a. Great fun
- b. Afraid to look beneath the surface
- c. On the move – slow down!
- d. Neither the centre nor the edge



**Choleric Key Concepts**

- a. Strong – use constructively
- b. Narrow vision – goal-orientated
- c. Represses emotions
- d. Independent