

GROWING IN THE IMAGE OF JESUS

(The Four Temperaments, Part 2)

INTRODUCTION

The first lecture described the four temperament types: sanguine, choleric, melancholy, and phlegmatic. At this point you may be feeling resentful about someone trying to fit you into a box. We all want to be special and unique—and we are! These temperament traits we have been talking about are basically what you inherited, but that is not the total picture of **YOU**. One of the things that some of you will have observed already is that you are a mixture of two or three of these temperaments. As you have scored your own Personality Profile, you have found that you are unique.

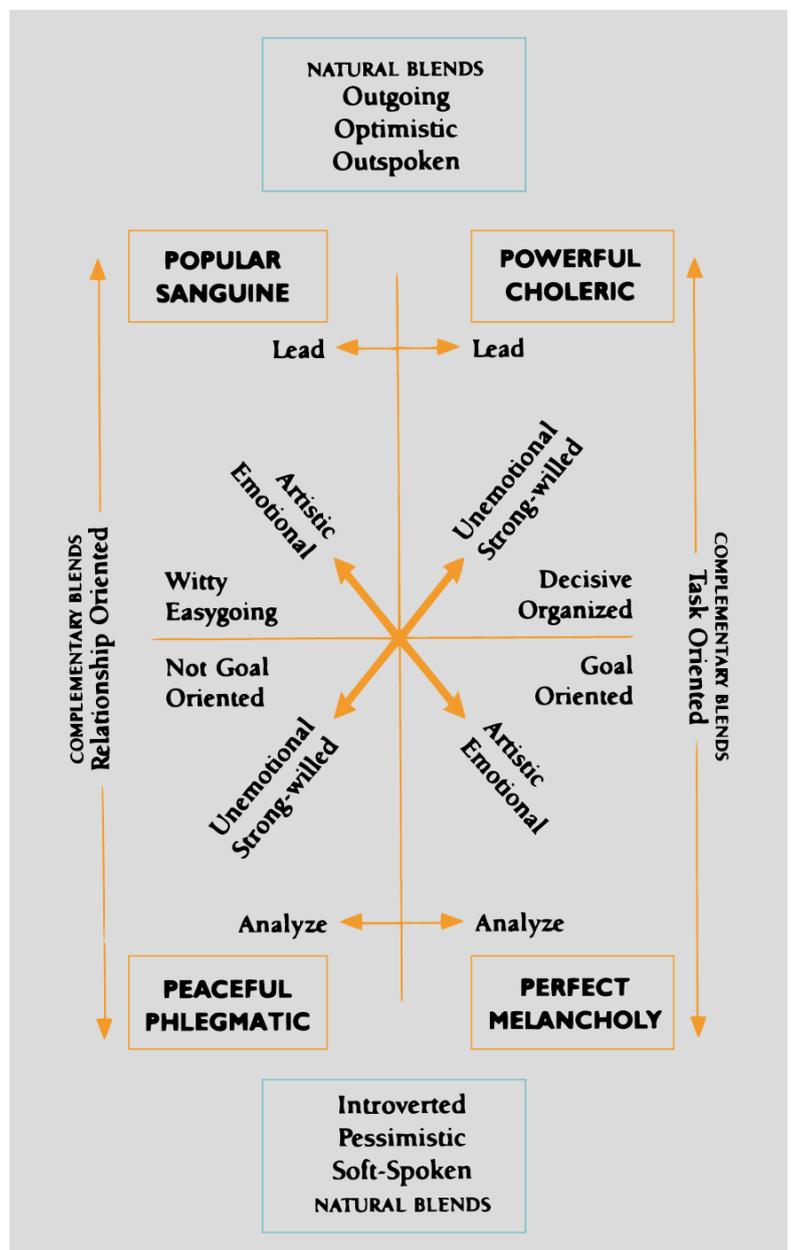
I. UNIQUELY YOU—ONE OF A KIND

Probably no one else has ever come up with the exact blend of strengths and weaknesses you have. Most people have high totals in one temperament, with a secondary in another temperament and some scattered traits. Let's look at some of the possible blends.

A. Natural Blends

As you can see by the chart, the Sanguine/Choleric combination is a Natural Blend. They are both outgoing, optimistic and outspoken. The Sanguine talks for pleasure, the Choleric for business, but they both are verbal people. If you have this blend, you have the greatest potential for leadership. If you combine your strengths you have a person who can direct others and make them enjoy the work; a person who is fun loving yet can accomplish goals. If this person however is blended in weakness he might be a bossy individual who doesn't know what he is talking about; an impulsive person who is running around in circles. There are many different forms these blends can take.

The other Natural Blend is the Melancholy/Phlegmatic. They are both introverted, pessimistic, and soft-spoken. They are more serious, they look into the depths of situations, and they don't want to be center stage. The Phlegmatic lightens the seriousness of the Melancholy, and the



Melancholy organizes the looseness of the Phlegmatic side. This combination makes great educators as the Melancholy love of study and research is brightened by the Phlegmatic ability to get along with people and present material in a pleasant manner. They may have trouble in decision making because they are both slow in this area, and they both procrastinate.

B. Complementary Blends

The Choleric/Melancholy temperament is a Complementary Blend, a combination that fits well together and completes the lacks in each other's natures. The Choleric/Melancholy makes the best business person because the combination of Choleric leadership, drive, and goals, with Melancholy analytical, detail-conscious, schedule-oriented mind is unbeatable. Nothing is beyond the range of this combination, and they will be successful no matter how long it takes. If they set out to remake a mate, they will keep it up until they have a perfect product.

One lady was confused about her own temperament, but when she was asked what she was like in college, her whole face changed. She went from reserved to radiant as she told about being one of the most popular kids and being voted most likely to succeed. She began to change under the direction of her boyfriend who became her husband. He was Choleric/Melancholy and when she wrote him letters, he would circle her mistakes and send them back to her to study. When he came home he would drill her on spelling, criticize her buoyancy as being undignified. She had tried so hard to please him that she had become an actress trying to live by the script he had designed for her. His intentions were good, but she was so overcome by his personality that she had lost herself. Because this blend is decisive, organized, and goal oriented, Choleric/Melancholy has the most drive and determination and can hold tight onto a cause forever. Headed in a positive direction, it's great, but carried to extremes, even their strengths become overbearing.

The other Complementary Blend is the Sanguine/Phlegmatic. The combination of double portions of humor with easygoing natures makes them the best friends possible. Their warm, relaxed natures are appealing and people love to be with them. The phlegmatic side tempers the ups and downs of the Sanguine, while the Sanguine side brightens up the Phlegmatic. This blend is the best of all in dealing with people. Unfortunately the other side of this blend shows them as lazy, without desire or direction to produce anything they can avoid, and very poor in handling money. As with each temperament blend, there are exciting strengths and corresponding weaknesses.

C. Opposites

We have seen Natural Blends and Complementary Blends. Now we will look at the Opposites. There are obvious internal conflicts that the Sanguine/Melancholy and Choleric/Phlegmatic create in one person. It is very hard to have one person who is both an introvert and an extrovert with both optimistic and pessimistic outlooks. Sanguine/Melancholy is the more emotional of the two, as one body tries to accommodate the little ups and downs of the Sanguine and the deeper, more prolonged traumas of the Melancholy. This split personality can lead to emotional problems. Because these Blends don't go naturally together, usually one side has been "learned." From some necessity or circumstances to avoid pain or to cope with a specific situation this person has assumed traits from another temperament.

D. Other factors to create an individual

There are many other influences in our lives. We also inherit a certain nationality, race and gender, all of which have an influence on us, and this is totally out of our control. For instance, whether you are male or female will affect you, especially in the area of emotions. Women are usually more emotionally expressive than men. Even the hardest of women will weep sometimes whereas some men never do. Even the order of our birth in the family influences us. For example, first-born children tend to be more responsible and perfectionistic. The youngest child tends to be more of a people pleaser. We are raised by parents who have molded us in a certain direction, whether that was intentional or not. We belong to a particular culture or society from which we learn certain standards of behavior. And we have made decisions throughout life that influence who we are.

We are going to use two other terms here to clarify what a unique person you are. The first one is character. This is the real you. The Bible refers to this in 1 Peter 3:4 as "the hidden man of the heart." Your character is the result of your natural temperament modified by childhood training, education, basic attitudes, beliefs, principles, and motivations. This is what you as a believer are constantly working on to bring in line with the character of God.

And the other term is “personality.” This is the outward expression of ourselves, what other people see. It may or may not be the same as our character. It depends on how genuine we are. Many people are acting a part on the basis of what they think a person should be, rather than what they really are. That is why some people seem very inconsistent in their lives. They cannot keep up this kind of façade all the time.

E. Summary

So you are a special person with your own particular strengths as well as weaknesses. Some of what you are is inherited, some of it you have picked up from your environment, and all of it is blended together by the decisions you have made, the attitudes you have chosen, and how much you have allowed God to work in your life. **You are not a victim who has no control.** You are a unique individual that God has created **so that you can exhibit uniquely to all the world what God can do in the life of one person.** You may ask, “What am I supposed to do with all this information?” Our hope is that this information will set you free to be all that God created you to be, and that it will open your understanding to people around you so that you can be a compassionate, Godly leader who can give a helping hand.

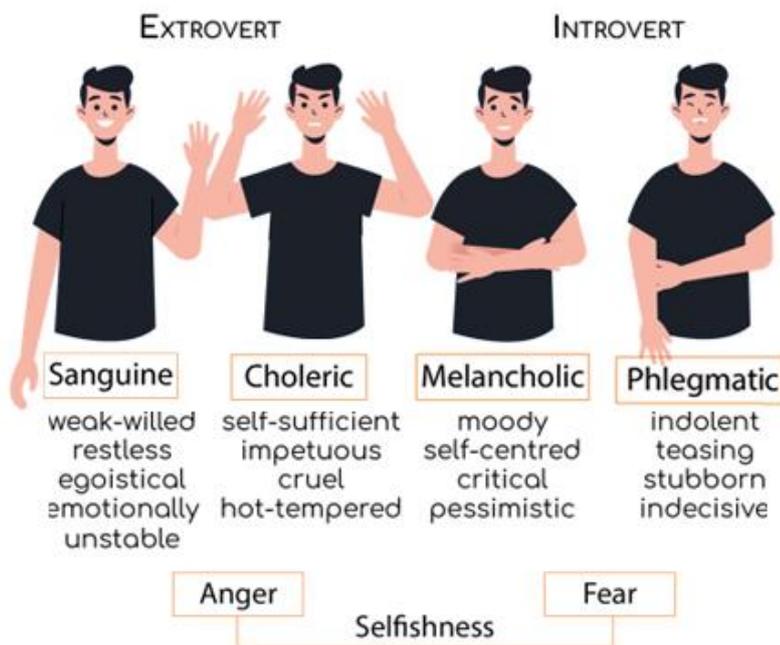
II. HOW TO OVERCOME YOUR WEAKNESSES

Now that you know where you are strong and where you are weak, what next? Information is never an end in itself. We want to take these new insights that we have gained and look into Scripture to see what we need to do. A Christian psychologist, Dr. Henry Brandt, has defined a mature person as one who “is sufficiently objective about himself to have examined both his strengths and his weaknesses and has a planned program for overcoming his weaknesses.”

An honest examination of your weaknesses can reveal to you the areas of your life that need the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Remember one important fact: If you are a Christian, you do not have to be a slave to your natural weaknesses. *“Now thanks be unto God, who always causes us to triumph in Christ.”* (2 Corinthians 2:14) God has created you for a specific purpose and through His power you will become the finished vessel God wants to use.

A. Selfishness—The seat of it all

This chart identifies the natural weaknesses of each temperament with some of the basic sin problems involved.



As you can see, all of man's basic weaknesses stem from selfishness. Man's self-interest is what causes him to be restless, weak-willed, hot-tempered, impetuous, lazy, critical, fearful or depressed. Selfishness was the original sin of Satan, Adam and Eve, and Cain. A study of human history will reveal man's inhumanity to man caused by selfishness. It is man's selfishness which is the basic cause of all the heartache and misery from the beginning of time to the twenty-first century.

Egotism, self-centeredness, self-contemplation, self-consciousness and many other words are used to describe it, but the fact is that man's basic weakness is selfishness. Selfishness shows itself in different ways in the different types of temperament. The Phlegmatic protects himself from change and involvement so that he can stay comfortable; the Sanguine feels that he is the center of the world and everyone is just dying to hear what he has to say; the Melancholy gets caught up in self-analysis unendingly, examining every feeling, every aspect; and the Choleric wants to control his environment and the people in it because he feels he is the only one who is right.

As you can see from the chart this selfishness is evidenced by anger in the Sanguine and Choleric temperaments and by fear in the Melancholic and Phlegmatic temperaments. Not that a Sanguine is never fearful, or a Melancholy is never angry, but there is a predominance of the sin of anger in the first two types, and a predominance of fear in the second two. And both of these sins stem from selfishness. A focus on what I want, what I need, what my rights are.

One of the hardest things for man to learn is the Lord Jesus' principle, "*Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.*" (Matthew 10:39) When a man reaches the place where he is willing to give his life over totally to Jesus Christ, the Spirit of God will cure him of his selfishness. As you turn your life over to Christ and ask for the Holy Spirit to fill you completely, you will begin to develop the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. These traits will replace the negative traits evident in your life from your temperament type. And God's Spirit is the only One who can make a permanent change in your life. He is the One who can create a spirit of forgiveness in you, which will get rid of that anger. He is the One who is trustworthy and faithful and can replace your fears with faith.

I'm sure there is not a single one of you who does not understand that the closer you draw to God the fewer problems you will have with your weaknesses. But I would like to give some specific examples and suggestions that I hope will help you think of what active measures you can begin to take to change your weaknesses.

B. Let's organize Sasha Sanguine

Sasha Sanguine is the most willing to change, because he loves new ideas and projects, and because he is sincerely devoted to being popular and inoffensive. There are two major problems, however, that keep him from making the necessary improvements.

First, while he has good intentions, he seldom follows through on any given plan. He is full of excuses for why he can't do it right now. And second, he is such a fun-loving fellow with such an engaging personality he can't really believe he has any major faults. He doesn't take himself seriously.

If this describes you, then you will need to listen carefully to those around you and pray and ask God to show you where your shortcomings are and give you the self-control to work on them.

Problem: Sanguines talk too much.

Solution 1: Talk half as much as before.

The simple way to control yourself is to delete every other story you feel compelled to tell. You will feel sorry for what the public is missing, but they will never know what they didn't hear, and that's all to the good. It is better to have the group enjoy what you said than be frustrated with your total control of the conversation—no matter how good your story is! Or, even better, one time try not saying anything until someone asks a question of you directly! Instead focus on the people around you. What do you see about them that you never noticed before? Pray for each person who is standing or sitting there. Memorize Proverbs 10:19, "*When words are many, sin is not absent, but he who holds his tongue is wise.*"

Solution 2: Condense and focus your comments.

Even though it is fun to be colorful, practice getting to the point. It is one thing when you are at a social gathering, but especially with people where you work, say what you need to say, and then stop.

One Sanguine lady decided to try something. She made an agreement with herself that if she was in the middle of a story, and somehow it was interrupted, she would not continue the story unless someone asked her to. Her first test came when she was in a car with group and was in the middle of a delightful story full of suspense when the driver asked to see the map to make sure they were going the right way. Our Sanguine friend held her breath and waited for someone to ask what happened, but no one ever did. That may be humiliating, but it will put things into perspective.

Solution 3: Stop exaggerating

You may feel that you are only making it interesting, but other people think of it as lying if you don't control this tendency. Another story to illustrate this:

A lady went to visit her friend Sanguine Sophia. As she walked in Sophia exclaimed, "Every dog and cat on this street is dying of mange." Now you may picture dozens of dying dogs and cats laying in the street gasping out their last breath. But Sophia's daughter was there shaking her head in despair. She raised her eyebrows and said, "The lady next door has a sick cat." That of course was not too exciting. Sophia's interpretation was much more dramatic, but far from the truth.

You don't want people to be able to say, "Of course, He's a sanguine, so you can't believe a word he says." Think it over. How accurate are you? Proverbs 12:22 says, "*Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD: but they that deal truly are his delight.*" What does the Bible say about truth? Get a concordance and look up every verse that refers to lying. Choose at least 3 of them and memorize them. As you read your Bible regularly during your devotional times, mark every reference that uses the word "truth" or "true." Then every time you read your Bible you will have that constant reminder of truth. And then pray and ask God to have His Spirit of Truth prick your conscience every time you are tempted to say more than is true.

Solution 4: Learn to listen.

Instead of trying to get everyone to focus on you, make yourself focus on another person. Try to get the other person to talk. Instead of telling your own story, ask them questions. Proverbs 23:19 says, "*Listen, my son, and be wise.*" You will be surprised how much wisdom you can learn from others just by listening. Make it a point to listen wholly to at least one person every day without interrupting, especially those who are close to you—your wife or husband, children, coworkers. You will not lose importance in these people's eyes because you talk less. You will become the most well-loved of all because you have learned to listen—And you might even learn something!

Now that we have shown you some solutions to one small weakness in your Sanguine life, take time to look over other weaknesses we have listed and if you are struggling in some of those areas, make a list of solutions, ask other people for advice, look to see what the Bible has to say, pray about it, and then become firmly committed to making a plan and making some changes. Be willing to be humble and ask someone to hold you accountable to your plan. This won't be easy, but it is God's way.

C. Let's cheer up Misha Melancholy

The Melancholy person is a study in contrasts. He has the highest highs and the lowest lows. He loves the study of the temperaments because it gives him analytical tools to use in his constant search for introspection—and yet he resists this study because he is afraid the theory is too simple, too easy to understand, and not deep enough to be significant. He refuses to be put in a box with a label because he feels he is a unique being, complex, not known even to himself, and surely not able to be put in any general grouping.

There are people who hold seminars explaining this study of the temperaments to people. Then they ask everyone to go into groups according to what their predominant temperament is. The Melancholies don't like to do this because they don't want to just "play games." But when they do get together, suddenly their eyes are opened! They all pull their chairs up neatly to the table; they all are dressed meticulously; they all have their pens in hand; and they all are suspicious of one another. As they look around and begin to analyze the group, the light goes on and they see that they *are* similar.

One man said that this moment of truth was the changing point in his marriage. His wife was a Sanguine and had left him already twice and was ready to again. He thought all of their problems were because she took life too lightly and had won all the children to her side, and she had failed to master housework in 28 years of marriage.

When he went to the group of Melancholies he was shocked to sit at that table and see clones of himself. He said, "At that very instant, I could see what my wife had been looking at all these years. I could see in the faces of the others the reflection of me. I could see the depth and seriousness of purpose, but I could also see a superior attitude and a total lack of humor. I went home that night and apologized to my wife for

being her stone-faced judge for 28 years. She cried and said, 'I never thought you'd be able to see yourself as others see you. Thank God.'" Suddenly his marriage reached a place of healing.

Problem: Melancholies are easily depressed

Solution 1: Realize no one likes gloomy people

With Melancholies it is sometimes hard to tell happy from sad, because they don't ever want to get too excited, and most of life is serious—if not downright depressing. While the Melancholy is offended by the loud, manipulative Choleric, what he doesn't realize is how he controls others by his moods. As people learn what turns him off, they try their best to not trigger him into a decline. This touchy relationship is difficult at best, and people try to avoid contact if possible.

Once you realize what you are doing with your moods, you can begin to improve. As the Sanguine has to force himself to get organized, you have to force yourself to be cheerful. No one likes gloomy people. Even if you have every reason in the world to go hang yourself, no one wants to hear about it. As Melancholies get older, they tend to get more mournful. They decide no one loves them anymore and because of their constant complaining people avoid them, and they prove themselves to be right!

So, once you realize this, start smiling! You may think, but I have no reason to smile. If you are a child of God you have every reason to smile. A smile doesn't mean you are in a state of ecstasy. It doesn't have to reflect your mood at all. You can smile because it ministers to other people. You can smile because you belong to a great and loving God. And the more you smile, you will find that you feel happier too! Smile at at least five people today. Did it hurt? No. And it is free.

There has been a clinical study done where actors were asked to mimic a smile. The effect of the smiles on their hormonal system was studied. Researchers discovered that even a mimicked smile produced beneficial results to their immune system. Next the actors were to mimic a frown. This caused a negative effect on the immune system. The study suggested that doctors might be giving out prescriptions for patients to smile so many hours a day. The Bible says, "*A merry heart does good like a medicine.*" (Prov. 17:22) Put it on your list of things to do every day!

Solution 2: Don't look for trouble

Melancholies tend to take everything too personally, and they frequently look for trouble. Melancholies have an especially hard time with the Sanguine/Cholerics because they blurt out whatever goes through their minds without thinking of the consequences. Because the Melancholy has preplanned each statement, he assumes others have also and therefore he reads a deep, hidden meaning into each casual comment.

As you, dear Melancholy friend, begin to understand the different temperaments, a big weight will be lifted from you. You will realize, perhaps for the first time, that Sanguine/Cholerics are not out to get you. They haven't given you that much thought, and they surely have not planned ahead what they were going to say. As you learn to evaluate others by their set of temperament traits (and not by your own), you will have a whole new outlook on people. You can smile at each passing person, and stop looking for trouble.

You also probably remember every negative thing that happened to you since childhood and are interested in every morbid detail from the tragedies on the news or in the neighborhood. Don't pick up these troubles. It is only logical to assume that when one spends much mental energy dwelling on the negative, such a mind falls easily into depression. You need to keep your thoughts on the positives and the minute you find yourself focusing on the negative aspect of anything, refuse that thought and replace it with a positive one. "*Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee...*" (Isa 26:3). "*If there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.*" (Phil. 4:8)

Begin to make it a habit right now to praise the Lord. As you learn to spend more time praising God, focusing on Him, and thanking Him, you will have less time to think on the negatives.

Solution 3: Don't get hurt so easily

Melancholies actually enjoy getting hurt and this problem again focuses their eyes on themselves and how everyone makes misuse of them. They tend to focus on their grievances. If someone doesn't shake hands with them, they are sure that it was done on purpose. If someone makes a joke, it is taken as a criticism.

So, you need to remind yourself of some of the things we have already said about the other temperaments. Most people are not setting out purposefully to hurt you.

When you catch yourself thinking something like this, you can do one of two things. Either say to yourself, "I refuse to let my imagination run away with me," and think of something good that person or

someone else has done for you. Or if that is too difficult then you need to utter a silent prayer of forgiveness to God for that person and then go out of your way to do something especially kind for the one who has offended you. Go and speak to them especially, or give them a compliment. Whatever you can think of. But replace the negative thought with a positive action.

Solution 4: Look for the positives

Melancholies gather criticism that no one ever made. If they hear their name mentioned across the room, they will know people are saying bad things about them. In contrast, Sanguines feel that if they're being talked about at all, it's good. They believe the old adage, "There's no such thing as bad publicity."

The Melancholy mind is like a radio dial on which the station is set on negative, but much of the emphasis can be changed when he decides to look for the silver lining, instead of sitting under the black cloud. Look for the best in people, and when things go wrong, thank God for the experience and ask Him what positive lesson you are to learn from this. "*Happy is the man who puts his trust in the Lord.*" (Prov. 16:20)

D. Let's tone down Kostya Choleric

As Sanguines see their weaknesses as trivial, and Melancholies see them as real and hopeless, Choleric refuse to believe there is anything about them that could be offensive. Because of their basic premise that they are always right, they naturally can't see that they could possibly be wrong.

As an example, during a marriage seminar which covered this material on the temperaments, one Choleric man came charging up to the front waving his temperament papers in the air. "I have all of these strengths and none of the weaknesses," he shouted. Behind him his little Phlegmatic wife was shaking her head no but not daring to speak. "Furthermore, these things aren't even weaknesses. Look at this word impatience. I would never get impatient if everybody would do what I told them to when I told them to do it!" And totally serious he concluded, "Impatience is not a weakness in me; it is a fault in others."

This is the heart of the Choleric problem, and the reason they don't try to improve. They are always able to rationalize why the weakness is not theirs but is a fault in others. If a choleric can ever be convinced of his abrasive nature, he will be the quickest of all to improve because he is goal oriented and must prove to himself that he can conquer anything if he sets his mind to it.

As with each one of the temperaments we are just going to choose one problem to give an idea of how you, brother Choleric, can deal with it.

Problem: Choleric don't know how to handle people

Solution 1: Practice patience

The message of James 1:2,3 is "*Is your life full of difficulties and temptations? Then be happy, for when the way is rough, your patience has a chance to grow. So let it grow, and don't try to squirm out of your problems.*" What a great Scripture for Choleric who want everything done their way **now**, and who try to squirm out of anything that isn't positive. Choleric are impatient by nature, but this weakness can be overcome, once they realize it is a problem.

Since Choleric can accomplish more in a shorter time than any other temperament, it is very hard for them to understand why others can't keep up with them. They feel that quiet people must be stupid and nonaggressive people must be weak. From a position of strength and self-confidence, they judge others to be inferior.

You, dear brother, need to look at other people through the eyes of Christ and realize that He created each special individual, and the task He has set before you is to develop patience with others.

Solution 2: Keep advice until asked

Because the Choleric has a compulsion to correct wrongs, he assumes everyone with a problem would love his solution. He feels led to give directions to everyone who needs help, whether or not he has been asked. If you are a true man of wisdom, then you will seek ways to give people the advice they need without forcing it down their throats. A good rule is to not give advice unless you are asked for advice. Proverbs 16:23 says, "*A wise man's heart guides his mouth, and his lips promote instruction.*" A man of true wisdom will be careful how and when he gives advice. Proverbs also says, "*Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.*" (12:18) Even when you are in a position of authority (which includes being a father) when you need to give advice as part of your responsibility, don't be abundant with advice.

When you do feel you need to give advice, pray and ask God to fill your heart with love for that individual, and do not say anything unless it is in God's love, and ask Him to give you wisdom in how to say it. When people know you are giving them advice because you really care, not because you think you know better than other people, they will listen and take it to heart.

Solution 3: Tone down your approach

In a survey people were asked what traits people disliked most in others. Number one was "bossy." No one liked bossy people. Then those same people were asked to write down a list of their own negative traits, and not one of them wrote down bossy. Isn't it amazing how we dislike bossy people, and yet not one of us is 'bossy'. The obvious conclusion is that over-bearing people don't see themselves as others see them. They feel they are being helpful and others should be grateful for their instructions.

Because the Choleric thinks so quickly and knows what's right, he says what comes to his mind, without worrying about how people will take it. He is more concerned with getting things done than with the feelings of others. He feels he's helping the cause, but those in his way may look at him as bossy.

Memorize 1 Peter 3:8 "*Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one on another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous.*" Spend time meditating on this verse and then measure your daily actions by asking yourself these 5 questions:

- 1) Did I bring harmony today, or dissension?
- 2) Who did I show compassion to today?
- 3) How did I treat someone as a brother today?
- 4) Did I show kindheartedness at all today?
- 5) Was I courteous at all times today?

Develop sensitivity to those around you. Sensitivity means perceiving the true feelings of others and adapting our responses to them. Find out what the feelings of other people are, including whether they think you are bossy and abrasive. Ask God to open your heart to the spirit of others.

Solution 4: Stop arguing and causing trouble.

Because the Choleric knows he's right, he loves to lead the confused, insecure public into battle—and then win triumphantly. Proving others wrong is a challenging hobby for the Choleric. He loves controversy and arguments. Whether it is for serious or for fun, this stirring up problems is an extremely negative characteristic. Proverbs 20:3 says "*It is to a man's honor to avoid strife, but every fool is quick to quarrel.*" Make a study in the book of Proverbs looking up the words strife and quarreling and other related words. Make a summary of what these verses say. Then examine your life. Do you enjoy arguing? Are there people who are angry at you because you have been arguing with them? Make a list of who they are. Go and ask each one of them to forgive you. Make yourself accountable to someone to ask you every week if you have been arguing with someone. And ask God to bring humility into your life and remove this spirit of strife from you.

As you begin to implement these few suggestions you will be surprised at the change in people's attitude towards you. But also be aware of the fact that because you are trying to change doesn't necessarily mean that people will believe it right away. You will have to prove yourself by consistent actions. But you can do it—in the power of the Holy Spirit, not in your own strength. And remember, this is only one area of your life. Look for other weaknesses and ask other people what your weaknesses are. Then make a plan of how you are going to overcome them.

E. Let's motivate Philip Phlegmatic

As with each temperament, the types of strengths have corresponding weaknesses. Philip Phlegmatic has low-key strengths, so he has low-key weaknesses. Whereas Kostya Choleric lays his strengths right out before you, so his faults are obvious and out in the open. Philip Phlegmatic keeps his best and his worst under cover. Many Phlegmatics can't imagine they could possibly be offensive because they are so quiet and kind. As a matter of fact you could say that the greatest strength of the Phlegmatic is his lack of obvious weaknesses. He doesn't have temper tantrums, sink into depressions, make a silly fool of himself. He just stays unenthusiastic, worries quietly, and can't make decisions.

Problem: Phlegmatics seem lazy

Solutions 1: Learn to accept responsibility for your life.

It is very easy for the Phlegmatic to let other people run his life and not take any responsibility, however we have a parable about that. Remember the master who gave his servants different amounts of talents, and the man who had only one buried it? What was the reaction when the master returned? You do have responsibility, and God will hold you responsible for how you have lived your life. Not making decisions **is** a decision. And you are responsible before God. God has given you specific responsibilities to carry out and He wants you to do them with diligence.

Here is a personal evaluation for you to take:

- 1) Do you complete an assigned task quickly and enthusiastically, or do you reluctantly fit it into your schedule?
- 2) Do you plan ahead on a job to do it the quickest and most efficient way?
- 3) Do you redeem valuable minutes by moving quickly on the job, or do you walk slowly?
- 4) Do you look forward to going on to a new job or to resting after a job?
- 5) Do you do a job to first please the Lord and then your employer?
- 6) Do you go the extra mile, working wholeheartedly to complete each job?
- 7) Do you use every minute of work time to make your employer successful?

Solution 2: Don't put off until tomorrow what you can do today.

The problem of procrastination is prevalent with both Melancholies and Phlegmatics, but for different reasons. The Melancholy cannot start anything until he has just exactly the right equipment and feels he can do a perfect job; but the Phlegmatic postpones because underneath he doesn't want to do it. He tends to be lazy and postponements keep him from making a decision to get to work. His motto: Never do today what you can put off until tomorrow.

God on the other hand challenges us to be diligent. Proverbs 12:27 "*The slothful man roasts not that which he took in hunting: but the substance of a diligent man is precious.*" Here is a man who is too lazy to prepare the food he has hunted for. But the diligent man values what God has given to him and makes good use of it. One of the most special gifts God has given us is that of time. You have no more and no less time than anyone else, and God tells you to redeem the time. Make good use of it.

There is a sad story in I Kings 13 about an unnamed prophet who was on a special task for the Lord, and when he was almost done, he stopped to rest under a tree. That's when Satan brought temptation to him, in the form of another Christian, another prophet, who said, "Oh come on and rest and eat with me." Read the story and see what happened to that man.

Make a list of tasks you have been putting off. Write them on your calendar and begin to do them **NOW**. Tell another brother what you have purposed to do and ask him to call you and ask if you have done it. And then see if you can call and tell him you have already accomplished it **before** he calls you. Ask your wife what needs to be done around the apartment. What promises have you made to your children that you have not kept yet? And what is it that you know God wants you to do, and you have been procrastinating. Get down on your knees and beg His forgiveness and ask him to help you do it now. Delayed obedience is disobedience. Disobedience is sin.

Solution 3: Motivate yourself.

While Phlegmatics need direct motivation from others, they resent being pushed. This contradictory problem is a source of conflict, especially in the home. If you feel there is this kind of conflict in your home, or at your job, or in your ministry, you need to start developing initiative. Don't wait on someone to ask you to do something. Look for the things that need done—and do them! This will take a lot of time because you are moving from being a passive person to an active person. You need to take spiritual initiative and then seek for the practical outworking of this initiative in your life.

Here are a few ideas:

- Rise early in the morning to spend time with God, before the rest of the household is up.
- Ask God to give you direction from His Word.
- Begin to regularly memorize Bible passages and meditate on them.
- Make and use a prayer list.
- Set aside times for fasting.
- Examine your apartment and make the needed repairs

And this is just the beginning, but these are the basics where you must begin if you are going to be successful. Don't put it off. Do it now! As you begin to develop initiative look for other ways that you can improve --and do it!

CONCLUSION

As you can see, for every problem, God has an answer in His Word. We have chosen just one area of weakness for each temperament to show you what can be done. Now the challenge is to examine your life with what you have been learning, choose the areas that you feel you need to work on now, and look to see what the Biblical solutions are. If you see the problem, but just don't know what to do, look for someone who can give you wise counsel. Chances are you will find it right in your own family! List what you need to do, and then do it in the power of the Holy Spirit!

Blessings to you, our dear friends!

We are happy to present the video, audio and paper materials that have been prepared by **New Life for Churches**. You have the privilege *upon completion of your practical assignment* to use this lecture with others.

Practical assignment

SANGUINE

Below are a personality weakness and the solutions as suggested in the lecture. Each week this month choose a different solution to work on. Write down your experiences and be prepared to share them with your seminar leader or other group members.

Problem: Sanguines talk too much.

Solution 1: Talk half as much as before.

One time for a minimum of one hour try not saying anything until someone asks a question of you directly! Instead focus on the people around you. What do you see about them that you never noticed before? Pray for each person who is standing or sitting there. Choose a meal or other time when you will be with a larger group of people.

Memorize Proverbs 10:19.

Solution 2: Condense and focus your comments.

Make an agreement with yourself that if you are in the middle of a story and you are interrupted you will not continue the story unless someone asks you to. Try this for a minimum of three days, but preferable the whole week.

Solution 3: Stop exaggerating

What does the Bible say about truth? Get a concordance and look up every verse that refers to lying. Choose at least 3 of them and memorize them. As you read your Bible regularly during your devotional times, mark every reference that uses the word "truth" or "true." Then every time you read your Bible you will have that constant reminder of truth. Pray and ask God to have His Spirit of Truth prick your conscience every time you are tempted to say more than is true.

Solution 4: Learn to listen.

Make it a point to listen wholly to at least one person every day without interrupting, especially those who are close to you—your wife or husband, children, coworkers. You will not lose importance in these people's eyes because you talk less. You will become the most well-loved of all because you have learned to listen

Now that we have shown you some solutions to one small weakness in your Sanguine life, take time to look over other weaknesses we have listed, listen carefully to those around you and ask God to show you where your shortcomings are. When you find an area you are struggling with, make a list of solutions, ask other people for advice, look to see what the Bible has to say, pray about it, and then become firmly committed to making a plan and making some changes. Be willing to be humble and ask someone to hold you accountable to your plan. This won't be easy, but it is God's way.

CHOLERIC

Below are a personality weakness and the solutions as suggested in the lecture. Each week this month choose a different solution to work on. Write down your experiences and be prepared to share them with your seminar leader or other group members.

Problem: Choleric don't know how to handle people

Solution 1: Practice patience

Look at other people through the eyes of Christ, realize that He created each special individual, and the task He has set before you is to develop patience with others. To help you in this area, keep a "patience journal" for a week. Write down every time you are impatient with someone, what the situation was about and how you responded. Take time at the end of each day to go over your journal, pray over the entries and ask the Lord to show you how you could have responded better. Write down at least one suggestion for each entry.

Solution 2: Keep advice until asked

A good rule is to not give advice unless you are asked for advice. When you do feel you need to give advice, pray and ask God to fill your heart with love for that individual, and do not say anything unless it is in God's love, and ask Him to give you wisdom in how to say it. When people know you are giving them advice because you really care, not because you think you know better than other people, they will listen and take it to heart.

Memorize Proverbs 12:18 and 16:23.

Solution 3: Tone down your approach

Memorize 1 Peter 3:8. Spend time meditating on this verse and then measure your daily actions by asking yourself these 5 questions, write your findings down in your journal:

- 1) Did I bring harmony today, or dissension?
- 2) Who did I show compassion to today?
- 3) How did I treat someone as a brother today?
- 4) Did I show kindheartedness at all today?
- 5) Was I courteous at all times today?

Solution 4: Stop arguing and causing trouble.

Make a study in the book of Proverbs looking up the words strife and quarreling and other related words. Summarize what these verses say. Then examine your life. Do you enjoy arguing? Are there people who are angry at you because you have been arguing with them? Make a list of who they are. Go and ask each one of them to forgive you. Make yourself accountable to someone to ask you every week if you have been arguing with someone. And ask God to bring humility into your life and remove this spirit of strife from you.

As you begin to implement these few suggestions you will be surprised at the change in people's attitude towards you. But also be aware of the fact that because you are trying to change doesn't necessarily mean that people will believe it right away. You will have to prove yourself by consistent actions. But you can do it—in the power of the Holy Spirit, not in your own strength. And remember, this is only one area of your life. Look for other weaknesses and ask other people what your weaknesses are. Then make a plan of how you are going to overcome them.

MELANCHOLY

Below are personality weakness and the solutions as suggested in the lecture. Each week this month choose a different solution to work on. Write down your experiences and be prepared to share them with your seminar leader or other group members.

Problem: Melancholies are easily depressed

Solution 1: Realize no one likes gloomy people

Force yourself to be cheerful. This may sound hard or even impossible, but you can do it through the power of the Holy Spirit. One simple place to start is your smile. Smile at at least five people every day this week. Each day in a journal write down one wonderful thing that makes you smile.

Solution 2: Don't look for trouble

You probably remember every negative thing that happened to you since childhood and are interested in every morbid detail from the tragedies on the news or in the neighborhood. Don't pick up these troubles. It is only logical to assume that when one spends much mental energy dwelling on the negative, such a mind falls easily into depression. You need to keep your thoughts on the positives and the minute you find yourself focusing on the negative aspect of anything, refuse that thought and replace it with a positive one. Begin to make it a habit right now to praise the Lord. As you learn to spend more time praising God, focusing on Him, and thanking Him, you will have less time to think on the negatives.

Memorize Isa 26:3 and Phil. 4:8.

Solution 3: Don't get hurt so easily

When you catch yourself wondering why someone was talking about you, or why they didn't say hello or something like that, you can do one of two things. Either say to yourself, "I refuse to let my imagination run away with me," and think of something good that person or someone else has done for you. Or if that is too difficult then you need to utter a silent prayer of forgiveness to God for that person and then go out of your way to do something especially kind for the one who has offended you. Go and speak to them especially, or give them a compliment. Whatever you can think of. But replace the negative thought with a positive action. This week compliment or do something kind to at least three people every day.

Solution 4: Look for the positives

Look for the best in people, and when things go wrong, thank God for the experience and ask Him what positive lesson you are to learn from this. In your journal write down the things that went wrong every day, and for each one find something positive that has come out of it.

Memorize Prov. 16:20.

Now with the Lord's help search out other weaknesses and begin to work on them. Look for the Biblical solutions first, but don't be afraid to ask other people what they think or what they would do.

PHLEGMATIC

Below are a personality weakness and the solutions as suggested in the lecture. Each week this month choose a different solution to work on. Write down your experiences and be prepared to share them with your seminar leader or other group members.

Problem: Phlegmatics seem lazy

Solution 1: Learn to accept responsibility for your life.

Take the personal evaluation that is in the lecture. Work on these areas each day this week. Write down your successes and failures in a journal. At the end of each day present it to the Lord. If you have had success (through His strength) you will have a lovely offering to present to Him, if you have struggled, then share that with Him.

Read through Proverbs and mark all the verses that speak about a lazy or slothful person. Then go through Proverbs again and mark all the verses that speak about diligence. Choose three verses to memorize.

Solution 2: Don't put off until tomorrow what you can do today.

Make a list of tasks you have been putting off. Write them on your calendar and begin to do them **NOW**. Tell another brother what you have purposed to do and ask him to call you and ask if you have done it. And then see if you can call and tell him you have already accomplished it **before** he calls you.

Solution 3: Motivate yourself.

Don't wait on someone to ask you to do something. Look for the things that need done—and do them! This will take a lot of time because you are moving from being a passive person to an active person. You need to take spiritual initiative and then seek for the practical outworking of this initiative in your life. Here are a few ideas:

- Rise early in the morning before the rest of the household to spend time with God.
- Ask God to give you direction from His Word.
- Begin to regularly memorize Bible passages and meditate on them.
- Make and use a prayer list.
- Set aside times for fasting.
- Examine your apartment and make the needed repairs

This is just the beginning, but these are the basics where you must begin if you are going to be successful. Don't put it off. Do it now! As you begin to develop initiative look for other ways that you can improve --and do it!

Solution 4: Keep your promises

Ask your wife what needs to be done around the apartment. What promises have you made to your children that you have not kept yet? And what is it that you know God wants you to do, and you have been procrastinating on. Get down on your knees and beg His forgiveness and ask him to help you do it now. Delayed obedience is disobedience. Disobedience is sin. Make it a point to fulfill at least one promise every day. Keep a record of your progress in your journal.

Now with the Lord's help search out other weaknesses and begin to work on them. Discover what the Biblical solutions are and ask members of your family for advice, then act on it!