

GRACE BIBLE TRAINING CENTRE (GBTC)
SCHOOL OF MINISTRY
ARUSHA - TANZANIA

SUBJECT: CHRISTIAN CHARACTER

LESSON 2: PERSONALITY TRAITS & CHARACTER

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Introduction: -

The God of creation is the God of grace. In gracious creativity, God has blessed human beings with an array of personality types. Our different personalities are gifts to one another. Different personalities warm to different aspects of the Christian story and different ways of expressing spirituality and character.

Individuals can also be stretched by the emphasis of someone who is rather different. An active person may be inspired and helped by a contemplative person to spend more time in prayer, while the latter may be encouraged by an active person to develop the more practical side of their faith. This is how we can learn from each other and help one another.

Support for discipleship will be more effective if it takes into account the variations in our temperaments or personalities.

The Four Personality Types

Sanguine	Choleric	Melancholy	Phlegmatic
Outgoing	Leader	Artistic	Easygoing
Popular	Confident	Close friendships	Gets along with all
Life of the party	Forceful	Organized	Balanced
Lives for fun	Goal oriented	Analytical	Steady

A brief definition is that personality is made up of the characteristic patterns of thoughts, feelings and behaviors that make a person unique. It is the outward expression of oneself. In addition to this, personality arises from within the individual and remains fairly consistent throughout life.

There are four basic temperaments, which determine our personality types.

When we are able to identify who we really are and our temperamental tendencies, we are better able to regulate ourselves. Being aware of our personal tendencies allows us to create self-control and self-discipline within ourselves to avoid unnecessary problems within our lives. Knowing our own personality type better assists us in our relationships with others. People that we do not get along with are not necessarily 'evil'; sometimes it could simply be a clash in personality types.

Understanding your personality type and that of others will give you the information that you need to properly manage your relationships with them. There is nothing

worse than working with people that you do not get along with. But when you can navigate others by identifying their personality type you are more likely to have a better relationship with that person. Apart from boosting our relationships, understanding your personality type can improve your ministry, your family relations (especially if you are a parent) and even your business.

Although there are four basic temperaments, many of us are a combination of two. One temperament may be more dominant than the other within an individual.

1. SANGUINE

The first temperament type is called sanguine. This is the most emotional type. The Sanguine is the popular person who wants fun out of every situation and always wants to be the life of the party. Sanguines love to talk and carry a lot of influence.

The Sanguines are the easiest to spot because they make grand entrances, love attention, attract people with their magnetism, exude charisma, and tell funny stories. What they want to hear from you is how attractive they are, how you like their hair, make-up, clothes, dangling ear-rings or anything else they have put on to ensure that you notice them. They live for the externals and want you to get excited over their style, sense of humour or new red sports car.

Sanguines are popular, talkative and the “centre of attention” at all times, no matter the setting. They are warm, caring, and enjoying—it's easy for something to warm their heart and then have an outburst of response. Although at times, they may speak before they think, they are sincere and loving. Never at a loss for words, this extrovert is everybody's friend but this person will also be the first one to forget you.

The Sanguine lives for the moment, and tends to go with the flow easily. They are quickly distracted, therefore not very reliable.

A person with a sanguine temperament is affectionate, loving, cheerful, optimistic, hopeful, and confident. Because of their bubbly personality, they often appear as though not genuine and come on too strong. They are apt to dominate the conversation or talk too much about themselves. In their enthusiasm, they may exaggerate the truth, waste time, and forget obligations.

The Sanguine has more natural inner-beauty qualities than the other temperaments. They can work on calmness and on controlling their tongue. This trait can be assisted by using God's Word, particularly in Colossians 4:6, *"Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer every man."*

When a Sanguine discovers a new hobby or interest, they quickly lose interest on something they once considered to be engaging or fun and turn their attention to the new hobby.

An example of a sanguine in the Bible is the Apostle Peter. Another example is King Saul.

Both were quite unstable in their emotions. That is why Jesus changed Peter's name from Simon meaning "reed" to Peter meaning "stone". We saw how Peter changed dramatically when he was filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2 & 3). He became a Christ-confident, stable, reliable and faithful man of God and one of the greatest apostles that ever lived. This is what happens when we allow the Spirit of God and God's word to shape our emotional life.

2. CHOLERIC

The second temperament or personality type is called Choleric. The Choleric is the powerful person who wants to take control of every situation and make decisions for others.

Cholerics love to work and they possess dominance. They are identified as the Powerful Person and are easy to spot because they walk with authority and appear to be in charge of everything. Such people don't want to waste much time on trivial activity with no obvious results or converse with people who have nothing to say of significance.

They are frequently telling other people what to do. They accomplish more than other personality types. They can quickly assess what needs to be done, and are usually right. They don't need to be affirmed on their looks, but they love praise for their accomplishments; their speed in problem solving; their constant goal setting, their loyalty to God, church, mother, business, or country; and their sense of fair play.

The Choleric is the no-nonsense person—practicality is their way of life. Self-sufficient, active, and hard-working, the Choleric gets it done. "I'll do something, right or wrong," is a phrase that characterizes them. They get the job done, whether the results are perfect or not.

Cholerics plan quickly, almost intuitively sizing up what needs to be done, then follows through with the plan. They don't deliberate too long over details. This dogmatic person is a born leader, very keen and capable of responsibility. They will take a stand and stick to it, no matter what—a good and bad aspect of the temperament. As they will not be influenced by what others think and is also the least sensitive or sympathizing of the other four temperaments. You learn to steer clear of the Choleric if you want a shoulder to cry on—they'll just diagnose your problem and give you a solution. Yet, when you come to understand their personality, they are fun to be around and very capable.

The choleric person is an extrovert. They are sure of their ability to handle any situation and can motivate others to action. Their personality perhaps has more weaknesses than strengths. For instance, they are quick tempered and easily angered. Choleric temperaments are irritated easily. The Choleric has to work at developing the inner beauty of a calm spirit. The person who identifies with this personality type can find in God's Word the best way to grow, in Philippians 2:13, which says, "*For it is God which works in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*" The words of James 1:19 may also be helpful: "*Be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.*"

An example of the choleric in the Bible is the Apostle Paul. But when he encountered Christ, he became a very broken and changed man.

3. MELANCHOLY

The third temperament is called Melancholy, who is also known as the perfect person who wants everything done in order and done properly and who appreciates art and music.

Melancholies love to analyze and are cautious.

The Melancholy Perfect Person is usually neatly put together and intellectual looking person. These people are usually quiet, reserved, and a little ill-at-ease in social situations where they don't know everyone. They would rather talk quietly with one person in depth than banter with a group. They consider compliments on clothes and external niceties to be trivial and want to hear about the inner virtues of integrity, wisdom, and spiritual values.

The Melancholy is very sensitive and easily hurt and tends to take what others say in humour as personal and hurtful. Since Sanguines and Cholerics say whatever comes to their minds without weighing their words, they often deflate the Melancholy who is waiting for someone to approach them and say, "I understand you," and really mean it.

The Melancholy is the analytical, systematic person, who labours over details. An extreme introvert, they are constantly analyzing themselves, and others. Though sometimes they can be at the height of happiness, they are more prone to the dark, gloomy and depressed moods, during which they are extremely withdrawn. They don't like large crowds and would usually detest group gatherings. They would not seek to make new acquaintances or new friends.

They have few friends, to whom they are extremely faithful. Self-sacrifice is a great pleasure for a Melancholy, and they feel things rather intensely, though you wouldn't always know it.

They are the studious type, and facts roll easily off their tongue. They can hide much away in their brain and would rather read or study than interact with others.

Gloominess, irritability, and depression characterize the Melancholy. They often times can be sad and unhappy. A melancholic personality type is very frequently gifted with intellect and talent. They are self-disciplined and usually finish every project they start.

The Holy Spirit may have more work to do in the Melancholy because of the need to develop qualities of their inner beauty.

The Melancholy will find help in such verses as Colossians 3:15-16: *"And let the peace of God rule in your hearts ... Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."* Colossians 3:2 will also help, *"And set your minds and keep them set on what is above (the higher things), not on the things that are on the earth"*.

An example of a Melancholic in the Bible is Moses. When he met God in the burning bush, his life changed, and he became a very meek man. Because of the change within Moses, God was truly able to place Moses in his divine destiny, to be a deliverer of God's people.

4. PHLEGMATIC

The fourth personality type is called Phlegmatic. The Phlegmatic is the peaceful person who wants to stay out of trouble, keep life on an even plane and get along with everybody.

Phlegmatics like to rest and show steadiness. The Phlegmatic Peaceful Person is amiable, easy to get along with and relaxed.

These people fit into any situation, can blend in with the wallpaper and modify their personality to get along without conflict. They laugh with those who laugh and cry with those who cry. Everyone loves the low-key nature of the inoffensive phlegmatic, and though they are not loud like the Sanguine, they do have a witty sense of humour.

They don't need a lot of praise like the Sanguine, nor do they want to be in charge like the Choleric or get too deeply involved like the Melancholy. Being told that they are of value and their opinion is respected means much to them.

The phlegmatic is a super introvert. It is difficult to rouse them to action. At times they can be selfish and stubborn but most of the time they are easy to get along with and cheerful.

Phlegmatic people are conservative and usually neat, efficient, and dependable. The Phlegmatic is the easy-going, happy-go-lucky person. They are enjoyable to be around. They are always happy and get many pleasures from life, yet are quite laid-back and don't get too excited about much. Phlegmatics would rather take the blame, whether it's their fault or not, than stir up controversy or pick a fight. On the job, they do not seek out the power or the limelight, but rather they work steadily, patiently, and methodically. They are reliable, patient, and methodical in their dealings, and can either work alone or with the most difficult personalities.

They naturally have a dry sense of humour and their wittiness keeps their companions laughing constantly. Phlegmatics don't get ruffled about much and is the same, consistent, caring person each time you see them. They tend not to get too involved in things, and would rather sit back and watch the action. A phlegmatic is gracious and kind to all – they love everyone and they all love him back.

The phlegmatic has some natural inner beauty. Compassion for others is an area they may need to improve. Romans 12:10 says, *"Be kindly affectionate one to another ... in honour preferring one another."*

An example of a phlegmatic in the Bible is Abraham. After he listened to Sarah about having a baby with her servant Hagar, he did not have a problem with allowing Hagar and Ishmael to live with him and Sarah. Hagar's attitude began to change towards Sarah and their relationship become very toxic. Sarah pleaded with Abraham to send

Hagar and Ishmael out but Abraham contested. After receiving more pressure from Sarah to send them out Abraham had to pray to God and ask Him what would be the best solution for him. It was only until God told Abraham it was okay to send them out that he obeyed and sent Hagar and Ishmael out of their camp.

SPIRIT-CONTROLLED TEMPERAMENTS

Spirit-controlled Temperaments show the temperaments when “modified” –how our natural personality will look when it is Spirit-controlled.

The Spirit-filled Sanguine will show strength of character in the self-control that is much needed in their life. The Spirit-filled Choleric will be dynamic in their love, peace, gentleness, and goodness. The Spirit-filled Melancholy will have a joy and peace, which will revolutionize their outlook on life. And the Spirit-filled Phlegmatic will become less stubborn, fearful, and indifferent, while becoming more open, self-controlled, and much more motivated, to make a great, personable leader for Christ.

After finding our own temperaments, it is easy to become discouraged about our shortcomings, but we shouldn't be. The Holy Spirit-filled temperament does not have weaknesses; instead it has great strength—the fruit of the Spirit which is love! (Galatians 5:22-23). No matter what your natural temperament may be, the Spirit gives us strength for every weakness!

The perfect characteristics of each temperament were shown in Jesus Christ—He is our example, the One we should look to as the perfect Spirit-filled temperament.

Though our natural temperament won't be changed when we're filled with the Holy Spirit, our strengths will be increased and our weaknesses will fade away! We rely on the Holy Spirit for everything in the Christian life. When we learn to be filled with Christ, we'll live like Him and that's when our temperament will be Spirit-controlled, more like Jesus. That's our whole goal in life—to be more like the Master, so others can see Him through us!