

MEDIA SPOTLIGHT



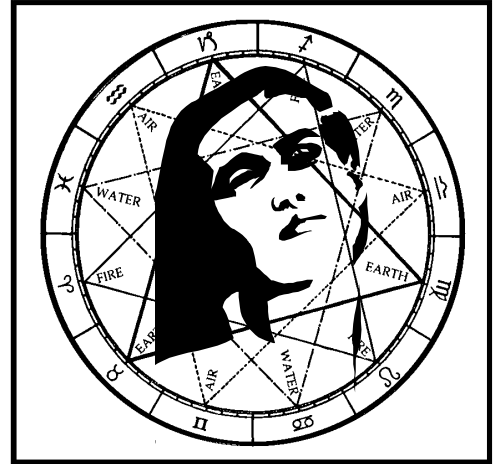
A BIBLICAL ANALYSIS OF RELIGIOUS & SECULAR MEDIA

SPECIAL REPORT

FOUR TEMPERAMENTS

ASTROLOGY & PERSONALITY TESTING

Condensed from the book by Martin & Deidre Bobgan



You've been searching for a long time. You decide to try one more church that advertises itself as a "Bible-believing" fellowship. The worship portion of its service is uplifting; the music glorifies the Lord (and sometimes the Church). Overall, its teachings are biblical, and there are no far-out doctrines to be concerned about.

After you've settled in and become acquainted with the leadership, and they with you, you tell them that you would like to serve this church in some capacity. You are handed a survey to complete. The survey asks questions relative to your likes and dislikes, as well as how you feel you would react in certain circumstances. The purpose of the survey is to determine your spiritual gifts. You come to find out that it is based upon a theory known as the Four Temperaments. You are told that you will be placed in an area of service within the church according to the strengths of your particular temperament as revealed in the test.

WHAT'S GOING ON?

Many churches today are buying into the Four Temperament theory in attempts to determine where their congregants' spiritual gifts lie. Because Christian bookstores carry numerous books on the subject, authored by well-known and respected personalities within the Christian community, it's assumed that there is no problem with incorporating such a theory into a church's assignment of ministry to individuals. Since Scripture does not address anything like the Four Temperaments, it is assumed that there is nothing wrong in utilizing them as a guide for ministry. In fact, however, the opposite is true.

When it comes to ministry, or anything that touches the spirit of man—especially in his relationship and service to God—Scripture must be the only guide. All theories, whether purported to be scientific or not, must be tested by God's Word. This is true of the Four Temperaments theory no less than any other psychological theory.

WHENCE CAME THE FOUR TEMPERAMENTS?

In the *Encyclopedia of Human Behavior*, R.M. Goldenson defines temperament as "A general term for emotional make-up, including characteristic energy level, moods and mood changes, intensity and tempo of reactions to people and situations."¹

The Four Temperaments theory is one of several behavior-oriented theories that modern psychology has adopted from ancient schools of philosophy. The theory states that there are four basic personality types known as "sanguine," "phlegmatic," "choleric," and "melancholic." What this all means will become clear as we consider the origins of the four temperament theory.

A brief look at the history of the four temperament theory will reveal that its origins lie in ancient myths and occult practices. From ancient times through the Middle ages, physicians and philosophers used their understanding of the four humors (body fluids), the four temperaments, and signs of the zodiac to treat diseases and understand individual differences in people.

Greek cosmology's four elements are basic to the four temperament personality theory. Greek philosopher Empedocles (495-425 B.C.) taught that there were four primary elements in the known universe: fire, air, earth and water. Each had specific qualities of warm, cold, dry, and moist, with fire being warm and dry; air being warm and moist; earth being cold and dry; water being cold and moist.² Because of the inherent mixture of cosmology with mythology, each element also had its corresponding god or goddess. Zeus is the fire, Hera the air, Aidoneus the earth, and Nestis the water. The four elements and their qualities were also part of early Greek astrology.³

Hippocrates (460-377 B.C.) later expanded on Empedocles' theory of four elements and taught that there were four corresponding body fluids or humors: blood, yellow bile, black bile, and phlegm. He theorized that health depended upon the proper balance of those humors in the body and that illnesses were caused by an imbalance of the body fluids. He also taught that there was a relationship between the body fluids and the yearly seasons, with seasonal variations for each fluid. For instance, phlegm was noted to increase in the winter and to be weakest in the summer.⁴

Hippocrates believed that people had different proportions of the humors with one humor more or less dominant. Thus his scheme of relationships among the elements and their qualities, the body fluids (humors) and the seasons would look like this:

Element	Qualities	Humor	Type	Season
Air	Warm/Moist	Blood	Sanguine	Spring
Fire	Warm/Dry	Yellow Bile	Choleric	Summer
Earth	Cold/Dry	Black Bile	Melancholy	Autumn
Water	Cold/Moist	Phlegm	Phlegmatic	Winter

Hippocrates is generally credited with the humoral temperament theory of personality, since he connected the types with both mental and physical states. For instance, blood, being warm and moist, made the cheeks rosy and promoted a cheerful (sanguine) temperament. Phlegm, on the other hand, was considered cold and moist and brought about watery-looking, colorless skin and a bland or sluggish temperament.

Others continued to use and to build upon Hippocrates' original premises. Plato (427-347 B.C.), who had studied under Socrates, contended that madness resulted from morbid humors contacting a person's mortal soul.⁵ In teaching that the qualities of the elements and the constitution of the humors related directly to behavior, Plato stated:

The truth is that the intemperance of love is a disease of the soul due chiefly to the moisture and fluidity which is produced in one of the elements by the loose consistency of the bones.⁶

Plato compounded his erroneous theory by arguing that bad behavior is at least partly caused by bodily condition:

For no man is voluntarily bad; but the bad become bad by reason of an ill disposition of the body and bad education, things which are hateful to every man and happens to him against his will.

For where the acid and briny phlegm and other bitter and bilious humours wander about in the body, and find no exit or escape, but are pent up within and mingle their own vapours with the motions of the soul, and are blended...and being carried to the three places of the soul...they create infinite varieties of ill-temper and melancholy, of rashness and cowardice, and also forgetfulness and stupidity.⁷

Plato's student, Aristotle (384-322 B.C.), believed that the shape of the body reflected the activities of the soul as well. He was interested in how the humors were involved in forming the body and the mind. He associated warm, thick blood with strength, and cold, thin blood with intelligence.⁸

Claudius Galen of Pergamum (A.D. 130-200) was a physician who advanced Hippocrates' theories and took them to the Roman world. He built on Hippocrates' original theories and wrote more fully on the relationship between humors and temperaments. In his text book on psychology, *Understanding Human Behavior*, James V. McConnell says of Galen:

...His studies of the functioning of human and animal bodies were so excellent that he is often considered the father of modern psychology.

One of Galen's main interests was the various glands in the human body, and the chemicals these glands secreted. Like most other physicians 2,000 years

ago, Galen called these glandular secretions the humors of the body. Galen stated that four of these humors were mainly responsible for creating four different types of temperaments. Galen believed that these "four temperaments" were the basic structures of the human personality.

As far as Galen was concerned, blood was a "humor." If a woman was most influenced by her blood, Galen called her a sanguine, or "bloody," person. People with sanguine temperaments were supposed to be cheerful, hearty, outgoing, sturdy, fearless, optimistic, and interested in physical pleasures.

The second humor was phlegm, the thick, white material that you sometimes cough up when you have a cold. From Galen's point of view, phlegm was cold, moist, and unmoving. If your bodily processes were dominated by too much production of phlegm, you had a phlegmatic temperament. That is, you were cold, aloof, unemotional, uninvolved, dependable, and perhaps just a trifle dull.

Galen believed that the human liver produced two different "humors"—yellow bile and black bile. He called the yellow bile cholera, because it supposedly caused the disease we now refer to as "cholera." The choleric temperament was one easily given to anger, hate, and fits of temper—someone who gave in to most of his or her bad impulses.

Black bile was even worse, for it symbolized death in Galen's mind. If your personality was dominated by black bile, you had a melancholic temperament. That is, you were always depressed, unhappy, suicidal.

Each of Galen's "four temperaments" is really little more than a collection of associated traits. Galen assumed, obviously, that the biochemical "humor" that predominated in your body caused this collection of traits to dominate your personality.⁹

The word temperament itself comes from the Latin *temperamentum*, which means "proper mixing." The idea was that if the body fluids were tempered, that is, reduced in their intensity by balancing the humors with each other, then healing would occur. Because the early Greeks and Romans believed that the body fluids were influenced by the universal presence of the four elements (air, fire, earth and water), they also believed that balance could be achieved through atmospheric changes. Even the positions of the planets were thought to alter the fluids for better or for worse because of the belief that there was a direct relationship between the macrocosm (the greater universe) and the microcosm (individual organism).

Early Links With Astrology

The four temperaments theory was intrinsically tied to another corresponding system of typing personality: astrology. The *Encyclopedia of Psychology* says:

Though the shifting patterns in the sky were first studied for the sake of finding portents of events that would affect the life of the group, a rationale for the relationship between personal traits and time of birth began to evolve well before the beginning of the Christian era. Central to astrological views of personality is the system of 12 patterns or types that correspond to the 12 signs of the zodiac. The 12 types

may be viewed as including three modes of expression of each of the four elements noted by Empedocles, as there are said to be three air signs, three earth signs, three fire signs, and three water signs. This typology has enjoyed some popularity for over 2000 years.¹⁰

The twelve zodiac personality types are arranged in four sets with three signs in each set. These are called trigons or triplicities. Each triplicity corresponds with one of Empedocles' four elements. Furthermore, each triplicity corresponds with one of Hippocrates' four humors and with one of the four temperaments.

From Empedocles to Galen, every person who developed those categories believed in the influences of the planets and stars on the elements, humors and temperaments. This belief was based on the theory that each person is a microcosm of the macrocosm.

The following chart reveals the link between the four temperaments and the zodiac:

Air	Blood	Sanguine	Gemini Libra Aquarius
Fire	Yellow Bile	Choleric	Aries Leo Sagittarius
Earth	Black Bile	Melancholy	Taurus Virgo Capricorn
Water	Phlegm	Phlegmatic	Cancer Scorpio Pisces

Although much of what Galen wrote dealt with physical medicine, he also produced two works that focused on astrological medicine. In his *Prognostication of Disease by Astrology*, Galen presented his theory of how the relative arrangement of the moon, the constellations and the planets could guide the physician in treating disease.

In his book, *Psychological Types*, Carl Jung also notes the relationship between astrology and the four temperaments theory:

From the earliest times attempts have been made to classify individuals according to types, and so to bring order into the chaos. The oldest attempts known to us were made by oriental astrologers who devised the so-called trigons of the four elements—air, water, earth, and fire. The air trigon in the horoscope consists of the three aerial signs of the zodiac. Aquarius, Gemini, Libra; the fire trigon is made up of Aries, Leo, Sagittarius. According to this age-old view, whoever is born in these trigons shares in their aerial or fiery nature and will have a corresponding temperament and fate. Closely connected with this ancient cosmological scheme is the physiological typology of antiquity, the division into four temperaments corresponding to the four humours. What was first represented by the signs of the zodiac was later expressed in the physiological language of Greek medicine, giving us the classification into the phlegmatic, sanguine, choleric, and melancholic. These are simply designations for the secretions of the body. As is well known, this typology lasted at least seventeen

hundred years. As to the astrological type theory, to the astonishment of the enlightened it still remains intact today, and is even enjoying a new vogue.¹¹

Another chart that may help to explain the trigons and their relationship to the temperaments in occult theory is presented here:

Zodiac	Element	Humor	Temperament
Aries	Fire	Yellow Bile	Choleric
Taurus	Earth	Black Bile	Melancholic
Gemini	Air	Blood	Sanguine
Cancer	Water	Phlegm	Phlegmatic
Leo	Fire	Yellow Bile	Choleric
Virgo	Earth	Black Bile	Melancholic
Libra	Air	Blood	Sanguine
Scorpio	Water	Phlegm	Phlegmatic
Sagittarius	Fire	Yellow Bile	Choleric
Capricorn	Earth	Black Bile	Melancholic
Aquarius	Air	Blood	Sanguine
Pisces	Water	Phlegm	Phlegmatic

Thus there are three fire signs (choleric), three earth signs (melancholic), three air signs (sanguine), and three water signs (phlegmatic). The repetitions of three make up the fire triplicity, earth triplicity, air triplicity, and water triplicity. Each of the triplicities is identified with a temperament as well as with an element and a humor.

The four temperaments' connection to astrology is not accidental, but rather by original design. The temperament theories were built upon the same premises as astrology, and they were subsequently used together for many years. Even in the twentieth century the four temperaments maintain their place in astrology.

Neither astrology nor the four temperaments theory is scientific. Both are deceptive and invalid. Both reinterpret biblical doctrine. Both are bound to their occult roots.

The Middle Ages

Galen's four temperaments theory continued to be used well into medieval times within its original context of astrology. In the *Encyclopedia of Psychology*, K.J. Shapiro says:

Synthesizing ideas from classical Greek medicine and astronomy, a theory of temperaments prevailing well into medieval times held that, for example, a sanguine disposition reflected a particular combination of humors in the body and that, in turn, this combination had been fixed by a certain configuration of the stars at the time of an individual's birth.¹²

Medieval alchemy was based on the Greek philosophy of the elements and astrology:

The medieval alchemist believed following the tradition of the great Aristotle, that man's body, like all other material things, was composed of four elements, earth, air, fire and water. Each individual had his own particular mixture of these—his temperamentum, as they called it. This was determined at conception and birth by the influence of the constellations and planets. The

aptitudes, weaknesses and chances of success or failure of each human being sprang from his elemental composition. Since no one had been properly mixed since Adam, the problem emerged of discovering some sovereign remedy—secretum maximum—which would cleanse and rectify man's composition and so produce a superman, full of physical and mental vigor and enjoying a life prolonged through many joyous centuries. Hence the persistent search for the elixir, or philosopher's stone, which should produce these marvelous results, as well as transform the baser metals into gold.¹³

In spite of being condemned by churchmen during the Middle Ages, many clerics followed astrological principles when practicing medicine. In her book, *Suggestion of the Devil*, Dr. Judith Neaman declares that medieval charts, diagrams and aphoristic poems prove that astrology was used together with the four humors and temperaments both in medicine and in daily affairs. The medieval view of personality was that the arrangement of stars and planets in the zodiac determined each person's personality both at birth and throughout his life.

Through the years, philosophers, psychiatrists, and psychologists have devised numerous typologies to classify people according to social behavior, modes of feeling and perceiving, attitudes, and even bodily physique as it might relate to temperament. The four temperaments, however, were eventually devalued and considered relics of limited, ancient attempts to understand and deal with individual differences. Today they are enjoying a revival among pop psychologists and amateur psychological theorists.

Much degraded, but strangely influential, the traditions survive to our day in the popular forms of horoscopes and words like "sanguine," "choleric," "manic," "phlegmatic" and "melancholic." The modern world is experiencing a resurgence of interest in the relationship between genetics, birth seasons, physical traits and psychic dispositions.¹⁴

And nowhere are the four temperaments more popular than among astrologers and evangelical Christians.

TEMPERAMENT TEACHERS IN THE CHURCH

In spite of the preponderance of evidence proving the occult roots of the four temperament theory, it has become popular among many Christians of every persuasion from fundamentalist to charismatic. This is largely the result of popular authors Dr. Tim LaHaye and Florence Littauer. Their books and seminars have touched and influenced millions of Christians. More than anyone else, they can be credited with having enticed Christians into understanding and explaining themselves in terms of sanguine, choleric, melancholic, and phlegmatic.

Those who promote the four temperaments theory sincerely believe in what they are doing. LaHaye contends that "it is essential to know your temperament and to be able to analyze other people's temperaments."¹⁵ He further testifies that "of all the behavior theories ever devised, it [the four temperaments theory] has served as the most helpful explanation."¹⁶

LaHaye's Temperament System

LaHaye introduced the four temperaments to evangelical Christians in 1966. He credits Dr. Ole Hallesby, a Norwegian theologian, for much of his material. Hallesby wrote *Temperamentene I kristelig lys*, published in 1940, and translated into English in 1962 as *Temperament and the Christian Faith*. LaHaye says he "drew extensively" from *Temperament and the Christian Faith* when writing his own book, *Spirit-Controlled Temperament*.¹⁷

Hallesby's book has no footnote references to undergird his statements about the four temperaments. His book is a combination of his own limited observations and the opinions of unnamed individuals. Nevertheless, as he discusses the characteristics of a sanguine, choleric, melancholic or phlegmatic person, his theories unfold in much the same manner of those occult-oriented theorists before him. Was this merely coincidence? Or did Hallesby draw from Aristotle, Galen, Jung, et al?

Some may surmise that Hallesby would draw the same conclusions as these others, because they believe the temperament observations are scientific. Perhaps. But would he end up using the exact same terminology? To suggest so would be to stretch reason beyond reason.

LaHaye follows in the same tradition as Hallesby. Although he credits Hallesby for much of his material, he has no research or other support for the detailed delineation of characteristics. The categories and descriptions have been passed down through the ages in the same way as old wives' tales, against which Scripture clearly warns (I Timothy 4:7).

LaHaye also drew from the book *Fact and Fiction in Psychology* by English psychologist Dr. Hans Eysenck. Eysenck was interested in investigating the four temperaments as well as astrology. He attempted to use the basic four temperaments categories to distinguish individual differences among people as they relate to emotional stability and neuroticism.

Eysenck's research was hampered by subjectivity. Both the reporting and the self-reporting scales were based on subjective evaluations limited to items on questionnaires or tests. Though he developed an interesting personality inventory and conducted extensive research, the very subjectivity of his work prevented it from being considered seriously even among members of his own profession.

Several discrepancies can be observed by comparing LaHaye's and Eysenck's descriptions. For example, while Eysenck classifies the melancholic and choleric among the unstable personalities, LaHaye uses the word unstable to define the sanguine.¹⁸ LaHaye also revised Eysenck's circle of temperaments to show the "strengths" and "weaknesses" of each temperament, and rearranged some of the descriptive terms as well.

While there are some similarities between Eysenck's and LaHaye's descriptions of the four temperaments, there are enough discrepancies to illustrate that they are not dealing with objective data. Descriptions and lists of

characteristics for each of the four temperaments vary from person to person. The entire business of describing the four temperaments and assigning people to categories is so subjective as to be both useless and misleading.

In his book, *Transformed Temperaments*, LaHaye makes several errors regarding the history of the four temperaments. He apparently did not understand the depth and extent of the work of Claudius Galen in the delineation of the temperaments. Moreover, he mistakenly states that Galen lived in the 17th rather than the second century. While this may seem inconsequential, it reveals the lack of solid research conducted in preparation for a book that purports to tell people how to utilize the four temperaments theory for the purpose of spiritual growth.

LaHaye seems to have used minimal resources for his writing. He primarily drew from Ole Hallesby's book (which is totally devoid of academic references or research) and quotes from the German philosopher, Immanuel Kant, as recorded in Eysenck's book *Fact and Fiction in Psychology*.¹⁹

LaHaye also includes Carl Jung's Introvert-Extrovert typology in his scheme, and places the sanguine and choleric under the Extrovert type, and the melancholic and phlegmatic under the Introvert type.²⁰

LaHaye also assigns the "universal sin" of anger to the sanguine and choleric and the "universal sin" of fear to the melancholic and phlegmatic.²¹

The charts and descriptions make the whole setup look factual and reliable, but these are arbitrary classifications and combinations. Throughout his later books he adds and embellishes the lists, and even makes up a test that people can take to fit themselves into his system.

LaHaye lays the usual groundwork of temperament strengths and weaknesses, combines them with Scripture, and comes up with a foreign paradigm of man's sinful nature and the sanctification process. He begins Chapter One of *Spirit-Controlled Temperament* with, "Why is it that I can't control myself?" He then quotes Romans 7:18-20 and says, "The 'sin' that dwelled in him was the natural weaknesses that he, like all human beings, inherited from his parents."²²

People who attempt to wed the four temperaments (or any other such personality types) with Scripture emphasize strengths and weaknesses of each type rather than obedience and disobedience to God. One person may be more prone to sin in one area than in another, and individual differences do exist. But to attempt to deal with these differences through a four temperaments typology undermines the Holy Spirit's work in a person's life. Psychological systems for explaining and understanding man's essence tend to replace relationship with the Lord Jesus with formulas and techniques.

Nevertheless, LaHaye contends that the four temperaments theory is compatible with the Bible. He says:

The four temperaments seem to appeal to Christians because they are so compatible with many scriptural concepts. Just as the Bible teaches that all men have a sinful nature, the temperaments teach that all men have weaknesses. The Bible teaches that man has a besetting sin, and the temperaments highlight it. The Bible says man has "an old nature" which is the "flesh" or "corruptible flesh." Temperament is made up of inborn traits, some of which are weaknesses.²³

Then, even though the Bible does not teach the four temperaments, LaHaye presents four major persons from the Bible in terms of that theory. He warns about indiscriminately using the four temperament classifications on others, yet he audaciously presumes to apply the four temperaments to Peter, Paul, Moses, and Abraham. He turns Peter into a sanguine, Paul into a choleric, Moses into a melancholic, and Abraham into a phlegmatic.²⁴

In his book, *Why You Act the Way You Do*, LaHaye turns King David into a combination of sanguine and melancholic.²⁵ But another popular teacher of the four temperaments, Florence Littauer, says that when people seem to have opposite temperaments, such as sanguine and melancholic, one of the temperaments is actually a mask.

Littauer says, "God didn't create us with antagonistic personalities in one body."²⁶ She then quotes James 1:8: "A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways."

Ignoring the fact that Littauer has taken James 1:8 out of context and erroneously applied it to her theory, does this mean that King David, a man after God's own heart, wore a mask and was double-minded and unstable in all his ways? This serves to demonstrate further the subjectivity of the four temperament theory. Among all the writers, Christian and non-Christian, there is no objective standard upon which they base their conclusions. We are left, then, with an arbitrary system of psychological theory presented by amateur pop psychologists.

Besides, to arbitrarily plop a historical figure into a category is nonsense. It leads to a distortion of that historical person and distracts from the biblical intent. One wonders what strengths and weaknesses one might apply to Jesus—or to our heavenly Father—were the four temperaments theory applied to the biblical revelation of their personalities.

While one of the ostensible reasons for using the temperament theory is to help us see our weaknesses and sins so that we can overcome them, the Holy Spirit doesn't need extrabiblical theory to point out sin.

Our problem is not that we cannot discover our sinful tendencies without knowing the four temperaments. Our problem is that we do not want to notice our own sinfulness. Because of the system's pagan nature and the errors involved, a Christian may come into the bondage of trying to fix himself up by modifying his weaknesses and exercising his strengths, rather than by allowing the Holy Spirit to use them for God's glory.

And this brings us to the need to point out that alleged “weaknesses” in personality are not sin, per se. God’s power is manifested in us through out weaknesses, as Paul said:

For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:

But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:

That no flesh should glory in his presence.

But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:

That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God.

For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.

And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:

That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. (1 Corinthians 1:26-2:5)

And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.

For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.

And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong. (2 Corinthians 12:7-10)

While he may desire to present a biblical anthropology, LaHaye arbitrarily presents his definition of man in terms of psychological theory rather than in terms of biblical categories.

In spite of LaHaye’s contention that “the four-fold classification of temperaments is still widely used,” psychological theorists have generally abandoned the four temperaments typology. In fact, it is difficult to find recent academic material dealing with the four temperaments, though it is, as we said, gaining popularity among pop psychologists and astrologers.

As for validation with external criteria, LaHaye attempts to validate the temperament theory on the basis of handwriting experts!²⁷ Graphologists claim that a person’s handwriting reveals his personality. However, numerous research studies have refuted their claims.²⁸

Littauer’s Temperament System

Florence Littauer followed in LaHaye’s footsteps after reading his book *Spirit-Controlled Temperament*. In her delightful manner and amusing anecdotes, Littauer easily entices Christians into the temperament mentality. She encourages self-analysis through understanding and applying the four temperaments, because she believes that such knowledge can help people truly become what God intended them to be—that they can reach their full potential.

What has been said about LaHaye can generally be said about Littauer. Both utilize the same four temperaments model that is rooted in occult theory; both attempt to justify such usage by alleging that it is God’s way of dealing with our sins and weaknesses.

Amazingly, Littauer states that the four temperaments’ “usefulness and validity remain the same today as they were in ancient Greece.”²⁹

If that’s the case, psychologists and psychiatrists would not have given up on the four temperaments years ago. People would not have spent centuries revising, renaming, and restructuring ways to understand people. And there would be evidence beyond the flimsy, non-valid personality tests people use to sustain typology myths.

Furthermore, if their “usefulness and validity remain the same today as they were in ancient Greece,” then Littauer and LaHaye are admittedly using a pagan system of attempting to know who man is and why he behaves as he does. They are still as useful and valid as the horoscope.

Yet Littauer states that the four temperaments theory “may possibly be God’s answer to the ‘horror-scope.’”³⁰ This is equivalent to saying Buddhism may be God’s answer to “Hindy-ism.” Littauer admits:

The one overwhelming conclusion I’ve come to is that no matter what the traits are labeled, they all seem to spring from the same rootstock of Hippocrates’ theory of the humors.³¹

Yes, and that rootstock is pagan astrology. As Jesus asked, “Can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit?” So we may ask, “if the root is corrupt can the tree be good?”

Tim LaHaye rightly states that “much of the world today worships before the shrine of psychology and psychiatry.”³² Indeed, that is even more evident today than when he wrote those words. However, the four temperaments theory of personality is among the worst kinds of psychology.

Furthermore, it is a means of opening Christians to other psychological theories dressed in Bible verses. Those who integrate the four temperaments theory with Scripture are doing the same as those who integrate any worldly philosophy with Scripture. An admixture of truth with error does not adversely affect the error; it compromises the truth. Only truth suffers when such an admixture occurs, simply because only the truth is objective. Error is subjective. To mix it with truth may produce a new error, but it cannot produce a new truth.

PERSONALITY TESTS IN THE CHURCH

The use of various personality tests is becoming prolific among Christians. Those preparing for the pastorate or missionary work are often required to take such tests. As a result, many have been rejected from service within the churches. However, we find nothing in the research literature that would warrant such a conclusion.

Consider a man preparing for the mission field with a well-known and highly respected missionary organization. He was given one of the well-known personality tests. On the basis of the results, he was rejected from service. This is one of thousands of examples of personality testing at its worst. While one can only speculate, it does raise a question as to what would have happened to the great missionaries of the past if they had been subjected to taking a personality test prior to going to the mission field.

God only knows what would have happened if Paul had been required by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem to submit to a personality test before being allowed to embark on his journeys.

Spiritual Gifts Inventories

Perhaps worse than testing for personality and temperament is the idea that test or inventory would reveal a believer's spiritual gifts. The "Spiritual Gifts Inventory" and its accompanying guide, "Understanding Spiritual Gifts," comprise just one of numerous inventories and tests used to discover one's spiritual gifts.³³

The idea behind these inventories is the same as that behind career tests—personality traits and types match certain activities and preferences. Line up the traits, preferences and activities and you end up with a possible career choice. Such tests reduce spiritual gifts and service in the Body of Christ to career interest inventories and a job in the marketplace.

Since those who create and promote such tests are copying the business world, they at least ought to follow the academic guidelines for validation. In none of these inventories have we seen anything resembling the minimum requirements needed for a statistically valid instrument. People are looking to an unproven, extrabiblical instrument to determine God's will and God's call to service. However, the lack of statistical validity is not the most serious problem with using spiritual gifts inventories. In essence, such inventories deny Paul's declaration that he was "made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power" (Ephesians 3:7). Was he made a minister "according to the gift of the grace of God," or by his natural personality traits?

If people are following career-choice types of inventories to learn how to fit into the Body of Christ, they may be serving from the wrong power base (personality "strengths") and their own self-interest, rather than from the "effectual working" of God's power and from obedience to His will for their lives.

While God may indeed use a person's natural talents for His service, He is not limited to that. Nor is He limited to using His children according to any pagan temperament type. He is sovereign and may sanctify natural talents into spiritual gifts. He may also curb the use of those natural talents to prevent pride from swallowing the soul. He may also endue people with power that goes far beyond their natural abilities and inclinations. While people like to think that God used Paul because of his natural talents, Paul counted as "dung," all that he was and had according to the flesh. He knew the power of the resurrection of Christ indwelling him for service.

How did the Church throughout the ages, from its inception, ever function without these inventories? Very well, as long as spiritual gifts were recognized and exercised totally without the help of the modern-day testing movement and the penchant to worship numbers. Rather than using the ways of the world to identify spiritual gifts and callings, the New Testament believers resorted to prayer and guidance by the Holy Spirit. It was when human philosophy and worldly wisdom gained ascendancy within the Roman Church, and that church spread its net of authority over virtually the entire world, that the Church as a whole became weakened. Why can we not learn from history the results of melding pagan philosophy with biblical truth?

The gifts are spiritual, not mathematical! They cannot be identified by psychological instruments except in the most superficial and erroneous way.

Although we have mentioned one of the spiritual gifts inventories by name, we are not singling that one out as any worse than the rest. We are opposed to all such tests and inventories that purport to identify spiritual gifts. The Bible speaks to the issue of such tests when it warns us:

Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. (Colossians 2:8)

Pastors have told us that spiritual gift inventories are useful for motivating people to serve. However, to use an instrument that purports to identify spiritual gifts when there is a high probability for error (since there has been no validation of the results) is dishonest.

What happens when an inventory gives someone the idea that he can (yea, should!) serve in a particular way that would be detrimental to the Body of Christ? What if the person is aggressive and demands to hold a particular position based upon his test performance? Getting a high score on any gift is no reason for a person to be placed in a particular ministry, especially since there is no proven validity to the results.

Spiritual gifts inventories may lead people to not only serve in the flesh, but also to depend upon their natural "strengths" rather than on the Lord. There is also the danger of focusing on one's self and one's gifts rather than on the Lord who is the Giver of gifts. For both biblical and academic reasons, we strongly condemn the use of all such spiritual gifts inventories.

CONCLUSION

When man looks to his own strength to achieve things for God the results may sometimes be "good," but there will also be adverse consequences. Today, virtually every Bible school and seminary requires candidates for Christian service to take psychology courses in order to learn how to evaluate themselves and others. Scripture is relegated to debate over what may or may not be true, depending upon the particular school. Even many schools that adhere to a strong defense of biblical inerrancy and proclaim "sola scriptura," have bought the lie that human wisdom has something to offer in the pursuit of God's truth. We are reaping the results in the increase in apostate churches and denominations.

Men and women with natural tendencies toward domination have been placed in leadership, rather than men alone who are humble and of contrite spirit. Few today are those pastors who exhibit true humility in the face of God's truth. Rather, they defend untenable positions, fight for worldly wisdom, and refuse correction from God's Word, especially if brought by one of low esteem within the congregation.

And no wonder. When human wisdom in the form of personality tests forms the basis for assignment to ministry, even non-believers can be placed in positions of authority over God's people. This, in fact, is the modern Church's biggest problem. There are many whose natural talents lend themselves to religious service. But religious service has nothing to do with God's calling. He does not call His people to religious service, but to obedience and brokenness before Himself and before others. Only when we come to an end of ourselves are we suitable for His use.

The pastors and other elders of the churches are the shepherds of God's flock. They are supposed to be the leaders of God's people. It is their responsibility to feed only God's Word to His flock. They are not called to feed His flock from the swill of the world's pig troughs of philosophy.

Not only are they to feed God's people the pure Word of God without admixture, they are to protect the flock from wolves who would destroy God's people. Some pastors do feed their flocks well. But they fail to protect them from predators both within and without. They allow the flocks to feed at the trough of human wisdom (secular as well as so-called "Christian" books, television, movies, magazines), without warning them of those areas in which these things lead astray from biblical truth. Members of churches bring polluted grist into the fellowship and feed it to their brethren under the noses of the pastors and elders. Those who attempt to warn the brethren are often ridiculed or ostracized for their strong stand for purity within the Body of Christ.

The sad thing is that, for the most part, pastors and elders are among the most unknowledgeable and naïve. They, too, are deceived, feeding from the world's philosophies. And if the blind lead the blind, will they not both fall into a ditch?

It's time for the shepherds to either take their jobs seriously or abandon the pulpits. Little do they realize the price to be paid for failing God's precious flock. v

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