

# **Torrey 1988 Weaknesses under the Spirit's Control**

## **By Lee Ezell**

Today. See if we've got something useful and practical for you to take home and be able to change. I imagine most of you are single. I can relate to that. I was single till I was almost 29. I used to often very unselfishly pray, 'Lord, I pray not for myself, but send a son in law for my mother.' And maybe others of you can relate to that and are in that same category. My desire in tackling this big subject of personalities and temperaments and spirit control and motivational gifts is a risky one because it's actually a full semester course for sure.

But hopefully we'll be able to be clear in it. Although I know if you're not too clear, then you get a lot of surprises in life. It's like the Italian couple who the man, the husband went over to Polermo to have a vacation and his wife called him on the telephone and she said, "Giovanni, I got the news for you." He said, "Good, but how is it the cat?" She said, "The cat? Oh, the cat died." He said, "Don't tell me the cat die. You should have said-- first you call, you say the cat got on the roof. Then you call again. You say the cat fall off of the roof. He got a coma. Then you call again and you say, 'Well, the cat die.' How's the grandma?" She said, "Grandma? She's on the roof."

So I know it's important to be clear as we go through the subject today. Hopefully we will be happy to meet you and greet you in the back where my books are and these outlines. Did anybody take an outline home and have fun with it back at the dorms? Yes, they really are something to have fun with. They're a dollar. That is all the pages of stuff that we've been going

through on the overheads together, as well as my speaking schedule of where I'm--how you can track me, where I'll be speaking.

I will be speaking tonight at 08:00 in the gym as well as tomorrow morning giving my testimony because I was born and raised in an inner city area back East, I really gained a love for language and things ethnic, and I've gotten to speak a little Chinese since I've been here, Spanish, Swedish, and I love things ethnic and that's kind of what melts into what I do and the way I present what I do. How many of you were not here yesterday but are here today?

Wonderful. Well, we were going through four different kinds of temperaments or personalities, which God seemed to have fun making and we were looking at ourselves. Really. I believe it's important to know who we are and I want to cautiously say it's important for the reason that we want to grow up and mature and we want to be able to explain our behavior but not excuse it as we went through our strengths and weaknesses. We didn't want it to be an excuse for someone to say, oh, I talk too much.

I know everybody tells me that, and I laugh too loud. That isn't the idea. It's not to excuse your behavior, but to certainly explain it. It's not for you just to say, Well, I get depressed all the time and down. That's why people always have to try to keep me up. No, it's to understand that even though you have strength, maybe all that glitters is not Jesus in our lives. And maybe our weaknesses are something that we can honestly bring under control to actually turn into a strength.

The idea of putting four different categories of people is for us to know our own strengths and overcome our own weaknesses, to bring them all under the control of the spirit, to be able to understand and appreciate other people better, to understand what makes them tick and how we can get along better with them. This study is so helpful for anyone in Christian leadership who wants to self-examine themselves and also the Bible is so clear about how we need to know ourselves in order to love our neighbor like we love ourselves.

This is not in an effort to stereotype you. It's not an effort to pigeonhole you. "Oh, she's just making you get in the category and you got to stay there forever and die." No, it's not like that. It's kind of to help explain your behavior, to understand better who you are, not to doom you to be that kind of a person that you think can never change. A sanguine person who's up and outgoing and frivolous and loves the day, can be a nurse or a research scientist, a phlegmatic person.

I had three of them dead asleep here on the floor yesterday. Three guys dead asleep. Did you gals see them? They were out. The one guy was--every once in a while over here, which is very interesting. But even that kind of a person can become a dentist. There is no limit to what you can do in God when you come under control. As you evaluate yourself, you will definitely be affected by the stage you are in life, the place you are in life, how secure you are.

I don't think any of us were ourselves when we were in junior high. That was just one of the toughest places of our lives. You are affected by your heritage, by your nationality, by many different things. But the important thing is I want you to be sure to know that you have definite

strengths. God has given you the raw material it's going to take to help you to be able to get through life and really make something out of yourself, to please yourself and to please God.

The study is not just too emotional or too psychological or too frivolous. But if there are any of you who say well, I believe that I was sold four. I sold myself in all four. Then maybe you either really don't know who you are and you need to know desperately the strengths, the raw material God has given you to work with. Ask a friend, flip through the pages of the outline or your notes and say, which category do you see me fitting in better than this?

Or perhaps you're just phlegmatic, and it really doesn't matter. The whole thing is, erroneous. It doesn't make any sense. How many of you think after yesterday's study, which we really don't have time to go through, but I believe there is a tape available as well as the outlines. How many of you feel that you grasp a little better, really, who you are and what categories you see yourself fitting in? Great. You will see yourself as a blend of two for sure. And tonight I'm thinking about the presidential debate tonight because my husband is going to be there on the 9th row, and I look at those two candidates.

And I would say I have met Mr. And Mrs. Bush and some of the family members and, oh, I've impressed somebody. And I would say that he is rather, I would say he's predominantly melancholy, phlegmatic. He's a very deep thinker. He's the one who said, I'm the quiet man. I listened to the people and I have not met Mike Dukakis. But what I have seen of him convinces me that he is a total choleric, and he comes off that way, nothing for a political statement. But I am wearing a badge that says, Beware of Greeks bearing gifts has nothing to do with it.

But my own husband is a phlegmatic melancholy, which might seem like, Well, he'll never amount to nothing. And yet he is the regional Commissioner of immigration out here in the west. He has his hands full and a very excellent manager, a guy who knows how to get things done. I find when you know who you are, whom God has made you to be. You can better interpret his direction in your life and the place to which you can go and feel comfortable and operate. Those outgoing personalities that are very interested in truth are very much truth oriented as they head toward the ministry.

Those who are more introspective and more analytical are much more spirit-oriented as they go through in the ministry. And a very wise person once told me all truth, you dry up. All spirit, you blow up. But spirit and truth, you grow up. So it does take this balance in God as well as in personalities and temperaments. And I'd like to take a chance to go through what I have discovered as motivational gifts of the spirit. Peter Wagner's books, and I'd like to make a short correlation of them, as I have seen them in direct correlation, fitting in with the temperaments which we have been studying together.

I know it's a little risky business, but I exhort you to consider in this short time that how naturally you can begin to recognize and even operate in a motivational gift of the spirit. I find if you are a certain temperament, there will be a certain motivational gift that comes to you very easily because that is your bend. That is kind of the way you are headed. And if you are familiar with those four motivational gifts that are described in, I think it's Romans 12, is it? Romans 12:8.

The motivational gift of exhortation is a fabulous gift, a motivational gift of the Spirit. That is, that person who is an outgoing person who is the encourager and encouragers which really does correlate well with the sanguine person always finds themselves wanting to do things in Church and in Christian service, which correspond with that dramatically and sincere, deep interest in evangelism and in strong, innovative programs for the Church. If that's a pastor who is a sanguine, they'll be totally involved and the people will absolutely love him and services will even be fun.

This kind of a person is really given to the outgoing things and receives those things easily from God in the way of a gift of encouragement. That second motivational gift of the spirit we know is described in Romans twelve, the gift of governments or the gift of organization. And I find the majority of choleric people whom I know receive so easily the activation of the spirit of organization, gifts and governments because their aim is order like their aim of their temperament is to achieve. They love verses like, "Let us have everything decently" and how? In order, because this is very important to this person who is a Bible teacher and apologetic.

One of those people who is very interested in those deeper type of things, correction and instruction, assuming responsibility, confronting problems. If they're a youth director man, the kids in the Church are busy every night, got the programs going from here to eternity. And if it's a pastor's wife, she will sometimes seem cold to the people because this kind of a person is not showing their emotions as much as they are showing their desire to achieve and have things decently and in order. The third motivational gift of the Spirit is mercy.

And I definitely see this working so often in those who have a melancholy tendency in their temperament makeup. That person who has empathy and identification with people, great intercessory prayer, people visiting the sick gifts of healing and caring, sensitive, dedicated people, quiet and shy, not the bombastic people in Ministry that others might be, but the people who get things done, who are loved and who love other people. And that last one is the motivational gift of giving. That is definitely what happens to the phlegmatic who sits back and watches and observes.

They learn how to give the right answers. They learn how to be the terrific counselors that we need with hearing ears, they supply. They're often the givers. God loves a cheerful giver. They're the people who sit in the wings. They're not known like the other upfront people, but they have discerning of spirits. They can really understand what your problem is and give you a terrific answer to it. Now that going through that is pretty fast. But I find that a motivational gift provokes you to action.

It stimulates you, and it influences your thinking, and that definitely fits. It isn't too simple, I don't think because Jesus said, I thank Thee, Father of Heaven and Earth, that you've hid these things from the wise, and you revealed them unto Babes. And many times we want the things to be more complicated than really what they are. But I find Christ activates the natural with the supernatural in people and the thing that you have always wanted to do and desired to do. He wants to give you the desires of your heart because they're from Him.

And I don't think that the more gifted a person is or the more personality a person has, the more fruit they have in the Christian life. We talked yesterday about the greatest strengths also carry with them the greatest weaknesses. As a Christian, and we want to make fruit and not just flowers, for sure. What is our goal in the Christian life? Anyhow somebody yell out some brave soul, glorify God serve God witness that's it. I believe the goal of our Christian life is conformity to the image of Christ.

To conform our temperaments and personalities, whether they be strong or weak down to one simple thing is witnessing and service and all those things. But basically it is to become a spirit controlled temperament, a spirit controlled saying when to become conformed to the image of Christ. So let's review some things that are in the outline today, and we'll talk about the different temperaments which we have reviewed yesterday, like the sanguine, that outgoing person and that's pretty low. The goal of each temperament will be today is to become a spirit controlled sanguine, not a person who's totally wired and out of control, but a person who has learned that strong is not wrong when it's under control of the spirit.

If you are living with a sanguine, how many of you because of our study yesterday discovered that you really have to live or work or deal with a sanguine person? Okay. Oh, I see those faces. They're going, okay. Please do recognize that they have difficulty in accomplishing tasks that's natural. It's so hard for them to hang in there until it's done. That's why the room is piled up in different corners with things that they're going to do with the best of intentions, and you can love them in spite of it because, you know, it's a natural weakness for them in the area of living with someone who is or working with someone who is this temperament.

You give a lot of Grace, but in the area of yourself, you don't give the Grace you give, the ruthless wanting to change. So we're talking about giving Grace. Now. You're helping them to understand that they got to keep from volunteering because they want to be involved in everything and loved by everyone. And you have to help them count the cost before they go to war. Give them praise for their accomplishments. They are weak in that area and they do need to be told. You clean out your drawer. "Hallelujah, you clean out your drawer! I'm so proud of you. You know, the Angels are looking down right now at this drawer and they're saying glory to God."

Because this person needs the encouragement that comes from you in order to accomplish things and get them done. Allow them flexibility, accept their motives as sincere. If they are getting into selling Shackley or Amway or whatever it is, they really believe in that product. They're not just trying to snow you and get money out of you. They really believe that this is the way to make money for God.

That's what I did when I was here, Biolamus went down the tubes trying to get successful doing it. But practice Philippians 4:8, about this person you live with, who's difficult. If there is anything true, anything honest, anything of virtue, anything of praise, think on that thing and begin to dwell on that thing about that person. If you are a sanguine, okay. No greasy Grace here. We're getting down to brass tacks here. Sanguine, I can relate with you. Cultivate discipline in all areas of your life.

When you get up in the morning, do the thing you hate the most. First. Getting up is the worst. Yes, I know. Guard against the sins that so easily beset you. You know what they are. You cannot just say, oh, well, I'm saying when you can't depend on me. Wait, hold it, hold it, honey. In the Kingdom of God, you can't have any rejects and dropouts like that. Fortify your will make sure that when you say yes, I'll be there. Your Yay means Yay. How important?

Be more sensitive to the interests of others. And remember not everybody. Liz loves to listen to you talk on and on and on and on. Talk less and listen more. I have learned more as a sanguine person since I've shut my mouth and opened my ears than I ever did with my mouth open. Be a more consistent friend. Remember when you meet someone, try to remember their name, repeat it over and over because they're going to remember yours. And the next day when they come up to you and say Hi and you say, Hi, have I met you yet?"

"Yes. We prayed together yesterday for 3 hours in your car." "Oh, yeah. Peggy." "No, not Peggy. Linda." "Linda, Lina! I'm sorry." You see, that makes a person feel like dirt. Feel worthless. But it's just one of those little things. Now, the aim of each one of our temperaments and changing is to determine what parts of my temperament interfere with my spiritual life and become ruthless with myself in overcoming these weaknesses. Hebrews 12 says, "Let us lay aside every weight, every weakness, and this in which doth so easily beset us and run with patience, the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. For you have not yet resisted unto blood striving against sin."

And we have not. We have made easy excuses for ourselves. And it's time to stop that and grow up. Increase your consistency. Sanguine. If you say to somebody, I'll pray for you, I'm learning. When I feel that I want to pray for someone. I say, what is your name? Let me write your name. I write it down and I put it in my wallet. Or I say, I'd like to let's pray right now because I know that my weakness is he's out of here.

He's history. You're never coming back into the memory banks again. Unless I guard against that sin that so easily besets me in order to be the person God means for me to be. Don't over commit yourself, whether it's volunteering or devotions or what it is, I think an excellent biblical example of a sanguine. It's definitely Peter. There are many but St. Peter, man. He was the guy before conversion. He was profane and boisterous. The big fisherman impulsive. He walked on the water, he jumped out of the boat.

Nobody else did. We're always jumping in and out of things. And when I was here at Biola, I am embarrassed to say I never finished because I got a chance for Ministry and I was out of here. I split impulsively, doing what is not good in the long run. The tortoise and the hare. This talkative fella, great preacher, always speaking out too frequently, though. You're not going to the cross. No way, man. I'll see to it. All these other dudes may forsake you, but count on me. Count on me, man. I'm there for you.

Egotistical. A braggart. Not really sorry, easily. But they need the Spirit's help to repeat, not to repeat things again and again. I think the greatest spiritual need of the sanguine is in one Corinthians 9:27, it's really to cultivate a disciplined will. To cultivate a disciplined will. One

Corinthians 9:27 says, I keep my body under. I bring it into subjection, lest by any means, when I preach to others that I myself may become a castaway. Whoa. Study the book of James the Practical Disciple.

We cannot excuse these things forever. We must become ruthless with ourselves in recognizing and in fighting against the sin that so easily besets us according to our temperament. Secondly, let's look at the choleric. This was the strong activist, the leader. Wow, this terrific person who is undaunted in Christian service a strong person if you live with one or have to work with one, except that their struggle for leadership is inborn. They're always trying to take over and boss you and convince you of how wrong you are and how much better you could be if you were only a disciplined person.

Realize that that is not a personal vendetta. They're not trying to wipe you out and make you feel like a wart on the body of Christ. It's not a personal thing at all. It just happens to come from that strength of spirit of that person. A 17th century nun wrote this prayer and I know she was choleric. She said, oh, Lord, keep me from the fatal habit of thinking. I must say something on every subject and every occasion. Release me from craving to straighten out everybody's affairs with my vast store of wisdom.

It does seem a pity not to use it all, but I know, Lord, that in the end I would like a few friends. And so it is for the collar. X, I would say, as Jesus said, Give to Him that asks of Thee if we choleric could learn to hold our advice until it's asked for. Perhaps it would be received on more

open, loving hearts. If you are living or struggling with this kind of a person, insist on two-way communication. Don't allow them to clam up and go into their corners and think naughty of you.

Tell them, please don't. Don't do that to me. Express what you're feeling. What a difficult thing that is for choleric. Encourage that expression of feeling, not logic. It's so easy for us to say, Well, I think that in the Daniel vision, actually the third toe from the left on the gold one. And then there was in between the bronze ring and I would hold it. Hold it, hold it. In the long picture. In the scheme of things, our feelings affect not only us, but other people in a devastating way.

Encourage that expression of feelings. Realize that these choleric are not naturally compassionate. They're not trying to hurt you intentionally. They're just kind of cold, but it's not a conscious thing. And they need to be encouraged in the loving way that we can. If you are falling in that category of being a choleric, please remember that you got to struggle against that strength that is naturally in you to subdue the flesh that self will that comes in. Let others make some decisions for you, even if they do it wrong.

Go ahead. Let them try. We mustn't always push everybody into slots and boss them around. Keep your advice until somebody asks for it. Strive for sensitivity. Shoot for the moon. You may hit the trees, go for sensitivity all the way. Try and watch those beautiful melancholy. Watch how they look at people and listen and analyze and pray quietly, trying to think, how can I be of service and supply and help to these people. Tone down your approach. Don't be a joy killer. I know you're right, but you're dead right, too many times.

Killing the plans of other people. Telling why that project will definitely not work. Use that strength and insight to build up rather than to criticize and always continuously break down. Refuse to say, I told you so, because that just is a real killer of relationships. Open up, giving compliments. You may have to go in front of the mirror and practice. Thank you. That was good. I appreciate you. I'm sorry. Excuse me. I blew it. I made a mistake. We've got to start operating these things in the sensitivity side of our temperaments.

People are more important than projects. Strive ruthlessly against that strength in you Proverbs 16:32 says, better is the man, it's good to be slow to anger. He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty. And he that ruleth his own spirit than he that ruleth city. Get the reins on that strong spirit of yours and get it into control. Titus 3:9 says, avoid foolish questions and endless genealogies. That continuous strivings about the law. It doesn't matter. Don't practice brain teasing on other people. That's no good.

Study. John the Beloved. Wow. What a beautiful example he was of a melancholy whom Jesus loved. Who knew the things that were important in life? A good biblical example. We know. We got to know. First one comes to mind is Paul the Apostle. That activist, that discipline, strong, cruel, strong, strong-willed man, well educated, braggart, perfectionist, always determining in his own mind what he was going to do and setting his face like a Flint. Not even the Spirit of God could get him off the track. He said in AZ, I'm going up to Jerusalem.

And the Holy Spirit said, don't go up to Jerusalem. And he went. And he spent some time in jail. Because choleric, whatever you want to do, you can set your face to it and do it. Whether or not

God is behind it. What a danger. Because our greatest need. Really, I believe for the cholera is the need for humbling. James 410, says, Humble yourself, therefore under the mighty hand of God, so he may exalt you in due season. Sure, we're exalted now. We're leaders. We're all these things recognized.

But what does God say? God had to put Paul in jail so he'd stop crusading and write. You feel like you're in jail. Tolerance. Okay. We're learning. We're learning how to change, learning how to waste time on God. Mary and Martha. Martha was a good choleric, and Mary was a good melancholy. And she chose the better to sit at the feet of Jesus and learn melancholy. We have a lot to learn. How can you come under the control of the spirit? Ok. Melancholy. Some advice for living with one.

Our time is running away. Please realize that they are sensitive and easily hurt. Be careful what you say to them, because it's hard for them to forget. Compliment them, point out their gifts. How sad that this most talented and creative introspective, artistic, musical art. All these beautiful areas of life also is straddled with this bad self-image, this introspection which never ends the psychoanalyst that goes on forever that takes this person down the grease tubes of depression down to the hell they often live in below. What a melancholy should work on?

Okay, melancholies. You've got what it takes. Resist negative thinking. Turn off the TV, turn off the people who put negatives into you. Gossip and ugly, fearful stories know that you are so open and receptive to that dark side that once it goes into you, it's hard to get rid of it and get over it. So guard against that sin that so easily besets. You realize nobody enjoys a gloomy

person. Nobody wants to be with them. Don't take everything personally. Concentrate on the positives about people. Get that Philippians four eight tattooed on your arm.

If there's anything good, anything worthy, true virtue of praise, think on those things and begin to practice having a smile and an up. Now this is not. A friend of mine has a boy, a highschooler who is a very depressed, melancholy person. And she told me that once when he rounded the refrigerator in the kitchen before school, he was already depressed and down and he had the black cloud over his head. His mother said, hey, David, look, why don't you just kind of shell put it on a smile?

She put the smile on your face a little bit and smile today because something good might happen. It's very early. And he said, If I showed a smile, enjoyed, I'd be phony, she said, David, I'd rather have phony joy than genuine depression. And so with those who have to deal with us.

Melancholy, concentrate on the positives. Remember GIGO garbage in, garbage out. Let's not sit in a pile of garbage for the rest of our life. Reach out and unselfishly to someone else. Resist comparisons because you'll always bring yourself up short in that if you walk in the light, you have fellowship, one with another.

Guard your heart because with all diligence because out of it come the issues of life. How true? How true? Melancholies Moses has got to be the best example for you folks. Beautiful melancholy. Moses filled with negative thinking patterns. Creative, educated, talented 40 years in Egypt suffered from such a poor self-image. Yet God wanted him depressed. Moses, who felt

so sorry for himself most of the time to lead the children of Israel out. And what happened as soon as God came to him, Moses said, I don't have any talents.

Really? What shall I say? I can't talk good. They won't believe me. And Aaron, he's a nice, sanguine person. You should use him. And Melancholies, God wants you, not just those outgoing people who seem to have friends everywhere and never have a care. God wants to use you for some great purpose in life. He was hot tempered. He refused to cradle that he killed the guy. We know what he went through. That's why I believe the greatest spiritual need for melancholy is to capture your thoughts, to capture your thoughts like two Corinthians ten, five says, casting down vain imaginations and every high thought that exalts itself against the knowledge of God and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ seeking truth rather than emotions will begin to stabilize.

You begin to say to yourself, my heart has no desire to stay where doubts arise and fears dismay those Sunday dwell where these abound my prayer. My aim is higher ground and go for it. Melancholy. You have what it takes to make it. You're in good company with the great prophets of Old Jeremiah, the weeping Prophet Isaiah, the Apostle John. My, what good company you're in. And how about you, phlegmatics? You guys are great. I live with one. I should know. Why is it that a person who's funny always marries a person who doesn't think they're funny?

I don't know why that is, but in my case, that's quite true because phlegmatics just don't really seem to see and get slapstick jokes. And that kind of thing in life. If you are living with a phlegmatic, okay, realize that they need direct motivation to get up and get even out of bed to get

rolling in the morning. That's why we can offer rewards. You're giving Grace. You're giving Grace. You're giving love to that person whenever they make a decision which is not real often. But whenever they make a decision, say good.

That was good when they said, where do you want to go? You said Cocos. That was great because it's not natural for them. What is natural for them to say? I don't care. Whatever, doesn't matter. No Biggie. I'll go along with the crap. I'm easy, but this person has to learn to begin to make decisions in life, appreciate and enjoy their disposition. It's easy going. It's inoffensive how wonderful. And what about you if you are a phlegmatic? No greasy Grace here. Boy, this is where we're going for it.

Get up earlier. Rip that snooze alarm off that clock because that sucker can go down eight times in the morning and begin to, oh, my. They're taping this thing and I said, Sucker, force yourself to perform duties that are things that you don't like to do. You're beginning to get a hold of those weaknesses in your personality. Cultivate a keen conscience. I find the majority of folks who have phlegmatic tendencies have very wishy-washy consciences because everything really is no big deal. But it does matter your weight, the way you keep your room.

It does matter if you got a job or you're going nowhere. It does matter and begin to stop this compromised spirit that says, Well, I got this girl and we fool around a little, but it's no Biggie. Yeah, well, that is a biggie. Get out of your rut of thinking that everything's kind of the same and try something new. You may like it. You can't tell till you give it a try. Resist that compromise.

No more compromise. Commit yourself to actively serve in some area. If you are doing the numbers at Chapel, please give me a break.

You need to be involved and committed to some Christian service that's going to stretch you and commit you and bring you into being the person God wants you to be. Who is it that does numbers in Chapel here? They were pointing him out yesterday. Oh, there he is. Okay, what kind of temperament do you have? He doesn't know, and he doesn't care. Well, there you are. What can I say? Apathy and indifference. All right. Isaiah 35:3 says, Strengthen the weak hands, put your hand to the plow and say, I'm not going to turn back. Make a commitment.

I think that Abraham was a terrific example of a phlegmatic in the Bible. The father of faith, a very lethargic man, very cautious. He wanted to keep the peace at all costs and compromise soothing others. He told Lot, I don't care which land you want. Just pick it. It doesn't matter. Sure. He never asserted his leadership qualities because he never really got in there and made the decisions passive and easily. Hand-picked, he gave in to Sarah. Sarah said, look, all these years I'd be having a baby. We're not having a baby. So how about Hagar?

He said sounds like a good idea to me. No biggie. Can't make that much difference in the long run. Oh, yeah. Old Abraham's riding down the road with his wife, Sarah. See some threatening guys riding toward him. What does he say? Pretend you're my sister. Pretend you're my--yeah, it won't matter. You see, compromise does matter. I believe the greatest need that the phlegmatic has is for self-motivation not to get out and do like Psalm 37 says, Trust in the Lord and do good.

That means to commit yourself to something. Noah Samuel, the Apostle James, all of these beautiful phlegmatics. You are not doomed to being a useless, no good phlegmatic in life. No, it's not like that. It's important to know your temperament because you will find God dealing with you in accordance with your temperament blend. When I was a young Christian, I can remember sitting in a Baptist Church at my first missions conference. And as naive as I was, these two missionaries, fabulous fellas, long term missionaries. One had been in Africa, the other had been in Central America. And I raised my hand and I said, how do you know if you're called to the mission field? And the one fellas stood and he said, Well, I've been in Central America for 23 years, and I see what the Bible says it says, Go into all the world and preach the gospel.

And I'd always been interested in Central America. I took a little Spanish in school, and I figured that that was the way God was leading me. And I believe I'm called to Central America. Wait a minute. The African missionary grabs the mic. Listen, sister, if you're going to get out there, you got to know that you've got a call from God. I remember the night when he called me, and I was found asleep in my bed and the lightning came in the door, and I jumped up out of the bed.

And the Lord was saying to me, Africa, Africa, Africa. And I walked over to the map and I flipped open the Atlas. And there was the continent of Africa. Hallelujah, I said, all right. Okay. I thought, well, which one is right? God dealt with them both in accordance with their needs, in accordance with their temperament, spirit or truth. How helpful this is. Which temperament was Christ? Ah, yes, that one to whose image we are to be conformed had the strengths of all four and displayed the weaknesses of none.

He never gave in to that which was inside of him. He could be the choleric. He could be strong. He could overturn the tables in the temple, and he could go and teach. He could go out into the wilderness undaunted like a choleric, like a melancholy. He could go to a funeral and cry over the grave of Lazarus. And Jesus wept like a phlegmatic when all the people were all around him. And he was tired. He said, I think I'll take a boat here and push off into the Lake and take a nap.

What? This was the strength of the phlegmatic and the sanguine. He could tell stories and parables and spin them in such a beautiful, colorful, dramatic way. The Kingdom of God is like the Pearl of great price planted in the middle of a field, and they would never forget it. I believe that's our goal to conform our own image to that same thing, to have the strengths of all four and the weaknesses of none when we reach the place. And we're all working at that. I'm not there.

I'm not bad in that League, but I'm practicing for it that we honestly are achieving some of the likeness of Jesus Christ. People will not be able to tell what your temperament is because there will be so many things brought into control. The mountains will be brought down and the valleys will be brought up to make a highway for God to walk on in your life. This is the balancing factor of all of this. I have a very powerful friend from South America who every time I see him, I think he's a different temperament because he can roll around on the floor and play with the kids.

And he can preach executively like you wouldn't believe like the best caller. He can cry with people in prayer, and he can fall asleep in Church if he's tired. And I keep thinking, which temperament is he? Which is the best one to have? No, it isn't like that. It isn't that one is better

than another. I believe that our temperaments are supposed to be surrendered to Christ within to discipline who we are to modify our temperament, to sanctify our personality, to bring under God's spirits control our strengths as well as our weaknesses.

Because weaknesses are just strengths out of control. There is a balancing factor here. Cultivate your strengths and please become more genuinely who you are. I believe the more you become, the real you, the real temperament and personality God created you to be, the more natural you'll feel at what you do. Chuck Swindoll tells the story about the school for Self-Improvement for animals, and he says that the rabbit checked in and he was naturally a real good runner. But they said, no, I'm sorry. Rabbits in this school, they learn to climb.

So you need to go over in this class and climb. So the poor rabbit is trying to learn how to climb. And the squirrel checked in. He was a great climber. They said, no, no, squirrels don't climb here and swim. You need to learn how to swim, to be really well balanced. So they put the squirrel in the swimming class and then the Eagle checked in. Talk about a good flyer. They said, no, you have to learn how to run if you're going to be a balanced Christian.

So just keep running up and down this aisle all semester. And that's what's happened to some of us. We are eagles who want to fly and who feel natural to fly. But we don't recognize that. That's why we're trying to swim. That's why we're trying to be track runners in these churches when we're meant to be flyers in the movie Chariots of Fire? When Eric Little said to his sister.