



Each of us unconsciously operates out of a certain temperament– that genetic predisposition that characterizes the way we react to other people and outside situations. Unlike personality, which evolves based upon our external situations and circumstances, temperament is fixed and internal. Now, no temperament is better than any other, but each broad category of temperament carries with it different strengths and weaknesses, and it can be tempting to live out of our temperamental weaknesses rather than our strengths. Likewise, our temperament can lead us to communicate with other people according to our own stylistic preferences and emotional needs, rather than their own. By paying closer attention to our temperament and the temperaments of others, we can communicate more effectively and lovingly with other people, which– if the writers of scripture are to be trusted– is one of the most important skills of human existence, and vital to our ability to love God by loving others.

Start Talking

1. What's the funniest instance of miscommunication you've ever witnessed or experienced?
2. When do you feel most understood? Most misunderstood?

Looking Back

1. How did you seek to understand people and political perspectives you typically ignore this past week?
2. When were you able to move past the need for agreement and start proactively seeking to serve other people out of your conscience and convictions? When did you fail to do this?
3. When were you most tempted to write other people off? How did you respond to this temptation?



What About You?

1. What is it that makes words and communication such a powerful force in human life? Why do words stick with us unlike anything else?
2. Can you think of a time when somebody used words to tear you down? What happened? How did you feel then? How do you view that situation now?
3. Can you think of a time when somebody used words to build you up? What happened? How did it make you feel? What were the outcomes?
4. Which of the four temperaments did you most identify with– Yellow (sanguine, extroverted, expressive), Red (choleric, extroverted, delegates), Blue (melancholic, introverted, analytical), or Green (phlegmatic, introverted, easygoing)– ? Why?
5. What temperamental weaknesses do you find yourself occasionally operating out of? Strengths?
6. When do you find your natural temperament coming into conflict with the temperaments and expectations of others?

Look It Up

Read the Following Passages: Ephesians 4:29, Proverbs 18:21, James 3:1 –12.

1. How do the writers of scripture seem to view words and language and human communication? How would you describe their attitude?
2. How does the biblical view of communication differ from the way our culture treats words and messages?
3. Based upon your reading of this passage, what should be our primary priorities when we communicate with other people?
4. What do you think the writer of Proverbs means by “death” and “life?”

Putting It All Together

5. What steps can you take this week to begin to more thoroughly understand your temperament, and all the strengths and weaknesses that go along with it?
6. How can this knowledge help you communicate more lovingly and effectively with other people?
7. Who in your life would benefit from your concerted effort to better understand *their* temperament and needs? How can you focus your attention on that this week?
8. Where do you anticipate your natural, temperamental needs tempting you to communicate ineffectively this week? How can you prepare for that?
9. What will it take to choose, “Life Words,” this week?

