

I Said This You Heard That

*Speaking Blue*

May 15, 2022

Good morning everyone.

As Shannon said, today we're continuing in our series "I Said This You Heard That."

And the reason we're doing this series is pretty simple. We've said it every week.

As much as any other factor – and maybe even *more* than any other factor ...

And this is true whether you're a religious person or not ... whether you're a Christian or not.

And, by the way, as we say all the time around here, if you're *not* a Christian we're glad you're

here. We're glad you feel comfortable enough to hang out with us in this setting.

Anyway ... Christian or not, as much as any other factor – and maybe even *more* than any other factor ...

**The quality of your life is dependent on the quality of your relationships.**

Show me a person who doesn't have very good relationships, and regardless of ...

- How wealthy they are
- How healthy they are
- How successful or beautiful they are

Show me a person who doesn't have very good relationships, and I'll show you a person who more than likely isn't very happy with their life.

The quality of your life is dependent on the quality of your relationships.

So, obviously, getting our relationships right – learning how to do relationships better – *matters*.

And, again, that's true whether you're a Christian or not.

Of course, if you *are* a Christian – if you're someone who believes that Jesus of Nazareth was (and is) God in the flesh and you've committed yourself to following Him and obeying Him ...

Getting relationships right matters because when you stand back and look at the big picture of what He was all about and what the Apostles later went around preaching and teaching ...

You just can't miss that the greatest evidence that someone is truly a Christ-follower is *relational*.

**According to Jesus himself ...**

*"As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples ..."* John 13:34-35 (NIV)

For a Christian, getting relationships right matters even more than getting faith right.

And faith for a Christian is obviously a big deal, but it's not as big as relationships.

**That's what the Apostle Paul was getting at when he wrote ...**

*If I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love,*

*I am nothing.*

*1 Corinthians 13:2 (NIV)*

So, if you're a Christian, the quality of your life is dependent on the quality of your relationships, but it's even deeper than that.

Being a Christian is supposed to impact your relationships with others ...

... which is why the Apostle Paul spends so much time in his letters teaching and coaching first-century (and 21<sup>st</sup> century) followers of Jesus how to do relationships.

And one of the things he writes is so helpful (even for people who aren't Christians) that we've built this entire series around it. We've come back to it every week.

**It's coming up on the screen right now.**

Would you read it aloud with me?

*Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. Ephesians 4:29 (NIV)*

If you want better relationships with the people in your life, that verse is gold.

- Step 1. Anything that will destroy “wholeness” in that person, don’t say it. It might be in your head but don’t let it come out of your mouth.
- Step 2. Say only the kinds of things that will produce some benefit in them; only the kinds of things that will build them up based on *their* needs.

Now, think about this.

If you did that – just those two things – over and over again, can you imagine how it would improve your relationships, even with people who are not like you and maybe even don't like you?

I can ... because it's happened to me.

It's been a long process but, through the grace of God and people around me who love me enough to confront me when I'm a jerk, I've been able to do those two things more and more over the years.

And my relationships are better. Way better.

And I say that not to brag, but to say that if God can do that in an extremely task-oriented person like me, he can do it in you, too.

And that's what I hope will happen as a result of this series.

*Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. Ephesians 4:29 (NIV)*

## **About Temperaments**

Of course, when it comes to implementing this principle, the question is (obviously) “what are this person’s needs?”

And there might be a very specific answer based on the situation of the moment, but we’ve been talking about “needs” in a much more generalized way in this series.



**A person's needs (emotionally, relationally, even spiritually) are largely based on their *temperament* ...**

... which is a fancy word to describe their basic orientation to the world around them; the way they prefer to experience and interact with people and things and ideas and emotions.

And temperament is something that seems to be inborn. It's the way God "wired you up" (so to speak), so it doesn't change over time.

Now, *you* might change over time.

(Actually, if you're a Christian, you *should* change over time to become less like you and more like Jesus in your character).

And based on your circumstances – like your job or some stressful situation – you might *have* to change. You might have to act in ways that are

not aligned with your God-given temperament.

And you might actually get good at some of those things.

For instance, if you're naturally a disorganized person (if that's part of your temperament – you really aren't driven by “order”) ...

If you're naturally disorganized but your job requires a high degree of organization, you can learn how to do that. You can learn how to be organized.

And you can get really good at it – so much so that other people might even think it's natural to you; that you're wired up that way.

But you're not because if you were to “just be you” without any pressure, organization wouldn't be a priority.

For example, it would not stress you in the least that the clothes in your closet aren't grouped by color, like it would someone who *is* wired that way by temperament.

That's why whenever you take these "tests" it's usually best to think about what you were like as a kid and you didn't have a lot of responsibility or worries.

And it's usually best *not* to think about what you're like at your job (or at school) because those environments may or may not match your temperament. And you might really be stretching to in order to be successful ... which, of course, you can do.

But just because you *can* doesn't mean it's "you."

If you're a highly relational person having to

work 40 hours a week behind a computer screen alone in your home office – you can do it because you have to, but it just sucks the life right out of you because it's not you.

That's why the ideal job – the job at which you will excel and be most productive – is one that matches your temperament, not the other way around.

Anyway ... all that to say that your temperament is the way you prefer to interact with the world around you.

Now, over the years, some really smart people have noticed that pretty much everyone has a preference ...

**... when it comes to four significant ways that we can interact with the world.**

- We lean in the direction of being task-

oriented or people-oriented.

- And we also lean towards being an introvert or an extrovert, which doesn't describe if you're outgoing or shy but how you process your thoughts.

Extroverts tend to process out loud while introverts like to think it all through internally before they speak.

Now, everyone's preferences fall somewhere on the spectrum represented by those two arrows.

**And that combination of where you fall is what produces a temperament type.**

And, over the years, there have been various ways of describing each of those types ...

- From Hippocrates who called them "Sanguine," "Choleric," "Melancholic" and

“Phlegmatic” ...

- To the DISC profile which labels them as “Influential,” “Dominant,” “Compliant” and “Supportive.”
- To the color system ...

**... which Kathleen Edelman uses in her book *I Said This You Heard That* ...**

... which is based on that verse we read earlier.

I encourage you – if you want to dive deeper into this subject – get her book (which is actually a workbook) on Amazon or at your favorite bookstore.

There’s also a version for parents which lays out how to apply this to your children.

**Now, based their temperament, people tend to speak in different “languages.”**

- Yellows (which Shannon spoke about last week) speak the language of People & Fun.
- Reds (which I spoke about two weeks ago and which is my predominant temperament) speak the language of Power & Control.
- Greens (which we'll look at next week) speak the language of Calm & Harmony.
- Blues (which we're talking about today and which is my secondary temperament) speak the language of Perfection & Order.

## **Understanding Blues**

So, let's talk about Blues.

And let me give you a list of characteristics

which derive from the fact that Blues lean towards task and introversion which, again, doesn't mean they're shy.

It just means that they want to have it figured out in their heads before it comes out of their mouths.

So, here we go – six characteristics of a Blue temperament.

**1. Blues are very concerned with how things are supposed to be and to be done ... and are very conscientious about staying within those boundaries.**

Blues like to know where the lines are, and they like to keep it between those lines.

- Whereas a Red is driven to do things *their* way ...
- And a Yellow just wants to do things the



*fun way ...*

- A Blue is concerned about doing things the *right way*.

## **2. Blues tend to be great at researching and discovering answers.**

Because they're not people-oriented and because they're internal processors, Blues don't mind spending time alone reading and thinking things through before attempting to solve a problem.

In fact, Blues are the one personality type that will almost always read the instruction manual before starting a project.

By the way, this illustrates why there is sometimes tension between Reds and Blues.

When a decision needs to be made, a Red

believes he or she *already knows* the best answer. But the Blue wants to read books, go to seminars and find out what other people think.

For a typical Blue, part of the decision-making process usually includes asking independent sources as a way of confirming their own initial conclusions.

So, if you need research and answers ... ask a Blue.

**3. Next, Blues typically have a knack for organization and efficiency.**

They tend to be really good tacticians and really good troubleshooters.

Blues can look at almost any operation and see how it could be better organized. They can look at almost any process and know how it could be done more efficiently.

If things aren't running smoothly, a Blue will most likely be able to tell you why.

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Now, from these three characteristics, it may sound like Blues tend to be unfeeling and unemotional.

However, that's not true in the least.

In fact, Blues may be the *most* emotional of all the temperaments, but they hide their emotions for two reasons.

- First, emotions usually attract the attention of other people and, as we've seen, that's not where Blues are the most comfortable.

- Second, emotions are obstacles to efficiency which is why most Blues try to turn their emotions inward and deal with it on their own.

And that's not necessarily a bad thing, because that internalized emotion often becomes creative energy ... which leads to one more very notable characteristic of this personality type:

**4. The life and work of a Blue is often marked by excellence and even brilliance.**

Did you know that most of the great artists in the world are Blues? And that most of the geniuses down through history have been Blues?

I read somewhere that most surgeons are Blues as well ...

... which, in my book, is great because

“excellence and brilliance” are exactly what I want in someone who has a knife and is about to cut me open!

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So, that’s a very brief overview of the tendencies of the Blue temperament.

Do you know anyone who exhibits those characteristics? Do these tendencies describe you?

If so, congratulations! Some of the greatest people who’ve ever lived were (and are) Blues!

Of course, as with all the temperaments, the trouble comes when these good characteristics get taken to an extreme.

- Our conscientiousness about “the right

way” can become pickiness.

- Our “need to know” can become more than just a desire for answers. It can become a judgment of those who don’t know or care to know.
- Our knack for organization, efficiency and excellence can become unreasonable expectations that no one can live up to – including ourselves.
- And the fact that we process much of this inwardly means that we can easily develop a critical spirit and a bad attitude.

And, if you’re a Blue (or Blue is your secondary temperament like me), it’s likely that you’ve had people confront you about those very things.

And that stung because, more than any other

temperament, we Blues are aware that this world is not what it should be.

Everywhere we look, we can't help seeing that so many things are not "between the lines," or "in the box," or being done "the right way."

And that includes *our own lives*.

Those of us who are Blues are acutely aware of our own failures and shortcomings. In fact, we're ashamed of them, and it feels like piling on for someone else to point them out.

It's not, but that's what it feels like.

## **"Blue Speak"**

So, if you have a blue in your life, how do you deal with them when those positive aspects of their temperament begin to go overboard? How

do you “speak blue” in those moments?

Well, it turns out that we have a great example to follow in how Jesus once dealt with a person who displayed the good side and the not-so-good side of the Blue temperament.

In chapter 10 of Luke’s Gospel ...

And if you’re not familiar with the Bible, you should know that Luke’s Gospel was written by a guy named Luke who, in the earliest days of the Christian movement, went around interviewing the eyewitnesses to the life of Jesus and then wrote down what he had discovered.

**In chapter 10 of his Gospel, Luke writes that**

...

*As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village*



*where a woman named Martha  
opened her home to him.*

And Martha, as we'll see, is a classic Blue. She's all about perfection and order.

*She had a sister called Mary, who  
sat at the Lord's feet listening to  
what he said.*

*Luke 10:38-39 (NIV)*

And based on what we read about Mary in other parts of Luke's Gospel and in John's Gospel (John was actually one of the eyewitnesses to Jesus' life) ...

... my guess is that she is a Yellow. She's all about people and fun.

So, for her, getting to hang out with and talk to Jesus is awesome. In typical Yellow fashion, she is fully into the moment. Time stops. Nothing else matters.

But for Martha it's a completely different story.

**In typical Blue fashion ...**

*But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. Luke 10:40 (NIV)*

She's looking around the house and she can't help but see all the mess and the dirt.

Furthermore, it's not just a neighbor who stopped over for a cup of coffee, it's *him* – *Jesus!*

And it's not just Jesus – it's his whole entourage!

And as a good hostess (which, as a Blue, is what she wants to be) ... the right thing to do is to ...

- Clean up the place as fast as possible
- Then run to the store as fast as possible

- And get whatever you can cook as fast as possible ...

So that all your guests feel like they have been treated well.

Because that's what good hostesses do, right?

And if there's anything Martha wants to be it's an excellent hostess.

And she is so distracted by that that it's all she can think about.

Well, it's not *all* she can think about. There is *one other thing* she's thinking about.

**Luke writes that ...**

*She came to him and asked,  
"Lord, don't you care that my*

*sister has left me to do the work  
by myself? Tell her to help me!”  
Luke 10:40 (NIV)*

Wow, now that's pretty bold.

“God, let me tell you how this ought to go down.  
Let me tell you the right way to do things. You  
need to tell my sister to get off her ...”

Well, you know.

I'm making light of it but when a Blue gets really  
wound up about how things ought to be, they  
don't mind telling everyone – including God!

And that's OK because God can take it.

And Jesus does. He's not offended by Martha.

Listen to what He says in response. It's amazing  
and very instructive.

*“Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered, “you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one.” Luke 10:41-42 (NIV)*

“All we need is some water. We’ve just walked down a dry and dusty road and we’re thirsty.”

Now, I don’t know that that is exactly what Jesus meant but it seems logical given the situation.

And then, in direct response to Martha’s request that He tell Mary she needs to be more Blue like her ...

**Jesus says, “no, I’m not going to do that because ...”**

*“Mary has chosen what is better,  
and it will not be taken away*

*from her.” Luke 10:43 (NIV)*

In other words, “in this moment, in this situation, Mary *is* doing the right thing. So, I’m not telling her to change it.”

Now, in this little story I think there are three things Jesus does with Martha that are very helpful in dealing with Blues when they – we – let our strengths go to an extreme.

And these aren’t complex. They just require you to be calm and not get sucked into the emotional vortex that a Blue can create.

### **1. Lower the bar for them.**

Martha was concerned about many things. Jesus said he only needed one.

“Your definition of perfection isn’t mine.”

## **2. Help them prioritize.**

Interesting: in that situation, there were two choices – task or people.

Sometimes task matters more and sometimes people matter more.

Martha couldn't see it in that moment, so Jesus helped her.

“Mary has chosen what is better.”

A Blue can get so caught up in an excellence loop that they begin to think that everything matters equally.

So help them prioritize.

## **3. Be gentle. Blues are already hard enough**

**on themselves.**

When Jesus encounters Martha's perfectionistic stress, he doesn't berate her.

"You idiot. Who do you think you are, telling me what to do?"

Instead, he says, ""Martha Martha."

I don't think he says it snappy. I think he says it compassionately in a loving way.

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So, lower the bar ... help them prioritize ... be gentle.

Now, obviously, many more things could be said about "speaking blue" – how to communicate with those of this particular temperament *in general*.



And if you want to know what that more is, I encourage you to check out the *I Said This You Heard That* workbook and videos.

## **Blue Advice**

Now, in the time that remains, I want to say a few things to my Blue brothers and sisters about how *we* communicate with others.

And this is so important because more than any other temperament, you and I have the ability to tear other people down with our words.

And you know what I'm talking about because you've done it. I've done it.

For a Blue, when we're in a bad place or we're hurting, our creativity comes out as brilliant sarcasm and insults. We're masters of it.

Our words become like a knife – but not a surgical knife which is used to benefit others. Instead, this knife only brings wounding and pain.

So, more than all the temperaments, we have to be very disciplined about saying “only what builds others up and benefits them according to their needs.”

*And that's an inside job.*

Here's what I mean by that.

Whereas a Red has to think about the actual words they say and choose them wisely (which I talked about two weeks ago) ...

For a Blue, the issue isn't really the words we use. It's the heart behind the words.

So, very quickly I want to share three things that deal with the heart.

And these obviously apply to everyone but, especially to those who are Blues.

**1. Give up the right to be right.**

Because you're a Blue, you almost always know the right answer to everything and anything because you've studied it and thought about it and analyzed it.

And you come into almost every situation with that mindset.

But that mindset is not helpful or welcome in every situation.

You know that old saying, "People don't care how much you know until" ... when?

“They know how much you care.”

It really is true.

**I think that’s why Paul once wrote ...**

*Knowledge puffs up but love  
builds up. 1 Corinthians 8:1  
(NIV)*

If you’re going to communicate in ways that build others up, sometimes you’ve got to let go of what you know.

Because evaluating everyone and everything by what you know only puffs *you* up. And eventually people turn you off and tune you out.

So, the first inside job is to give up the right to be right.

Now, that doesn't mean you need to be *wrong*. It just means you need to *allow others* to be wrong ... which is the second inside job.

**2. Allow others to be wrong (at least, according to your definition of "right.")**

In most cases and most situations, for other people to mess up or fail in some way will not bring about the end of the world for them or for you.

Now, sometimes it will. And in those cases, you need to go after it.

But most of the time, it won't.

In fact, most of the time, the only way other temperaments really learn something is *when* are wrong or mess up or fail!

You – being analytical – don't learn that way, but

they do.

*So let them.*

Let them be wrong and fail.

And after they do, you come alongside and ask, “would you be open to an observation? Can I share something with you that I’ve noticed?”

People like that. And most will say yes.

And then you can apply your Blue genius and brilliance and help them avoid messing up in the future.

Ok one more “inside job.” And this one is so crucial for a Blue – especially a Blue who is a Christian.

**3. Trust that God is still God (and still good) even when things go wrong or aren’t perfect.**

Jesus once said ...

*In this world you will have  
trouble. John 16:33 (NIV)*

Even for people who love God and try to follow the ways of God, it won't always be lollipops and roses.

Things aren't going to be perfect. Things are going to go wrong.

That's just how it is in a sinful and fallen world.

And you can focus on that so much that it drags your heart and mind into the darkness which then comes out as verbal knives to the people around you.

**But there's another option.**

*In this world you will have trouble.*

*But take heart! I have overcome the world.” John 16:33 (NIV)*

In other words, “I am still God even when there is trouble. Nothing is happening that is beyond My control. And nothing will happen to you that is not allowed by Me.”

That’s thought is the heart of the inside job that needs to happen in the life of a Christ-follower because

- Not everything will go as we hoped and planned
- And not everything will happen as it should



- And not all of our expectations will be met.

But God is still God and God is still good.

And that's not just wishful thinking. That's the lesson of the death and resurrection of Jesus.

He overcame not just "the world" and all of its mess. He even overcame death.

So, as we close this message, I asked the band to lead us in a song that I think might be particularly helpful to those of us who are Blues.

So, let's stand together and sing and then I'll come back with a few closing comments.

Endnotes