

45--- The Merger of Two Temperaments

Variety is the spice of life! The body is made up of many parts! Both the secular and the spiritual worlds highlight how important it is that we are all different. Imagine how boring life would be if we were all the same. Our differences come in many packages --- ethnicity, culture, language, temperament. You are familiar with the different ethnicity, culture and languages but what about temperament? What is temperament? **Some would say temperament is your personality.** Some of us are expressive, some of us are logical, some of us love change, and some of us love stability. Whether we are task people or relationship people we need to understand our temperament and how it impacts others. Although we have a natural bent, our temperament can be modified. Our autopilot can be turned off and we can make adjustments in our nature that benefits ourselves and those close to us! Once we know more about our temperament and the temperament of those closest to us, we can be sensitive to the comfort zone of others. When we interact with different ethnic groups we assimilate their culture and language. We do this to make them comfortable with us. We must do the same for different temperaments. When we interact with people we must be aware of their temperament. Just as it is uncomfortable to impose our culture and language on a different ethnic group it is uncomfortable to impose our temperament on those who don't share it!

I tend to use temperament, nature and personality interchangeably. I see all three as describing who we all are at our deepest level. There are many resources that can help you understand your temperament. Assessments such as Myers-Briggs or DISC are a good first step in understanding your temperament. It is also important to learn how to read the temperament of those closest to you. You can look at your temperament as your nature. God uniquely made you to be who you are, but he also gave you the ability to adjust your nature to maximize your relationships with those of different temperaments. Until you understand your temperament and how to play down some of your natural tendencies that make others uncomfortable, you will have difficulty building deep loving relationships. I suggest you explore a number of these assessments in order to get a well-rounded

understanding of your temperament. You will find a number of recommendations in the appendix for temperament assessments as well as a straight forward self assessment you can use today!

Once you have a clear picture of your temperament you need to become a student of temperament. This is not an academic pursuit but one that requires your close attention to the needs of those closest to you. My temperament is the direct opposite of my wife's temperament. Left unchecked these temperaments will clearly clash. Once we both understood our temperaments two things happened. First we understood that our natures (temperaments) were not cause for concern but a reason for celebration. We complemented each other! We can learn from each other! We were stronger as a couple than either of us individually! Secondly we knew we had to learn how to adapt our nature to synchronize with each other. Although two different natures make for a strong team, they can also lead to disharmony on the team. We have learned how to be a harmonious team that uses the divergent natures to achieve the team's objective! I have become more sensitive of her emotions. My wife accepts my need to accomplish tasks. At our core we are still who we are – our nature hasn't changed. We have learned to value our differences and to accommodate each other's nature. If we had never explored our temperament we would never have overcome the natural differences that can lead two totally opposite temperaments to chaos and potentially to destroy our marriage!

Not every couple has temperaments that are as different as ours, but most couples face the challenge of how to merge two different temperaments into a successful marriage. For some reason we tend to marry people who "complete us"! Some would say this is coincidence, but I believe it is part of the design for marriage. The design is to bring two different temperaments together and merge them into a oneness that transcends just the sexual nature of marriage. A oneness of character! A oneness of spirit! A oneness of vision! A union that is stronger because two temperaments have merged into one!

Verse:

1 Corinthians 12:12 “The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body.”

Personal Reflection: What is your temperament? How does your temperament impact those closest to you? How can you manage your temperament to make others more comfortable around you?

Group Discussion: How much diversity is there in the group?

How has that diversity benefited the group?

What would happen to the group if no one had the temperament of leadership? Or compassion?