

Some Characteristics of the Four Temperaments as Given in *Spiritual Theology* by Jordan Aumann, O.P. (pp. 140-145)

A. Sanguine Temperament

a. Description

- i. quick and strong reactions, short in duration, easily forgotten
- ii. Extraverts

b. Assets

- i. friendly and cheerful
- ii. generous
- iii. sincere
- iv. sensitivity to others' suffering
- v. spontaneity
- vi. optimistic
- vii. practical approach to life
- viii. make friends easily
- ix. active and creative imagination
- x. quick learner, though often superficial

c. liabilities

- i. superficiality
- ii. risk of hasty judgments
- iii. more interested in breath of knowledge than depth
- iv. inconstancy
- v. easily gives in to temptation because of the impression of the moment
- vi. often abandons efforts requiring a long duration
- vii. easily distracted in prayer
- viii. sensuality
- ix. often victim of gluttony and lust
- x. lack energy and perseverance to fight temptations of the flesh

d. helps to advance

- i. foster reflection
- ii. strengthen the will
- iii. foster a constancy in spiritual exercises despite aridity
- iv. practice custody of the senses
- v. mortification
- vi. practice of meditation

B. Melancholic Temperament

a. Description

- i. weak regarding response to stimuli
- ii. difficult to arouse

iii. don't forget easily after repeated stimuli

b. Assets

- i. inclined to reflection and the interior life
- ii. long suffering
- iii. sensitive and compassionate toward those who suffer
- iv. sharp and profound intellect
- v. drawn usually more to speculative sciences
- vi. normally don't experience the vehemence of passions as the other temperaments

c. Liabilities

- i. difficult to detach from the object of their love
- ii. will is influenced much by their health
- iii. suffer greatly
- iv. exaggerated tendency to sadness
- v. inclination to magnify difficulties
- vi. danger of scruples
- vii. find it difficult to show their feelings

d. Helps to advance

- i. inculcate strong confidence in God and themselves
- ii. help them to understand their strength of intellect in order to gain confidence and see the irrationality of their fears
- iii. help and hold them to being decisive
- iv. a spiritual regimen may be necessary to temper their excessive piety and spiritual exercises to which they tend

C. Choleric Temperament

a. Description

- i. easily and strongly aroused
- ii. long and lasting impressions
- iii. great saints or great sinners

b. Assets

- i. great energy
- ii. constancy
- iii. strong wills
- iv. practical
- v. produces strong leaders and administrators
- vi. not procrastinators
- vii. face difficulties head-on

c. Liabilities

- i. sometimes do today what should be left for tomorrow

- ii. can become hard and obstinate
- iii. strong movements of anger
- iv. arrogance
- v. vanity
- vi. can be insensitive to others less talented
- vii. often lacking in tact
- viii. sometimes cold and often appear as egoists

d. Helps to advance

- i. they need to control and direct their energies
- ii. need to cultivate true humility of heart
- iii. foster in themselves compassion toward others
- iv. practice treating others with tenderness and compassion
- v. they need a detachment from themselves

D. Phlegmatic Temperament

a. Description

- i. rarely aroused and, if they are, it is weak
- ii. impressions last only briefly and leave no lasting trace
- iii. slow in movement and activity
- iv. they are often robust and possess an amiable face

b. Assets

- i. work steadily
- ii. not usually irritated by insults
- iii. good common sense and sober in mind
- iv. good articulators
- v. excel in science due to slow and assiduous work
- vi. work quietly without fanfare

c. Liabilities

- i. slow to make decisions
- ii. they lose many opportunities of grace due to sluggishness
- iii. they can “live in their own world” oblivious to the happenings around them
- iv. not prone to mortification and penance

d. Helps to Advance

- i. need to inculcate in them some deep convictions toward sanctity and seeking perfection
- ii. they need to be guarded from apathy
- iii. they need self-mastery to spur their dormant powers to be put into action