

1. **Introduction:** Personality has two major components (temperament and character). Of the two, temperament is inborn, morally neutral, and changes very little throughout life. Character concerns how we deal with moral matters. Character must be developed.
  - ◆ A bad character may choose to misuse temperament in morally bad ways, but temperament itself remains morally neutral. David Keirsey's Please Understand Me II tells us about “tools” that constitute temperament.
  - ◆ Toward tools, temperament preferences are either “cooperative” or “utilitarian.” Toward words and terminology, preferences are either “concrete” or “abstract.”
  - ◆ Most “things” can be considered tools. Civilization is created and maintained through the use of tools. (See Diagrams.)
2. **Utilitarian:** This is the process of finding the most effective, efficient way to accomplish a task even if it involves unorthodox or an improvised use of tools. Example: Using a wrench as a hammer, a knife as a screwdriver, a helmet to hold water.
  - ◆ Utilitarians tend to pursue goals choosing the most effective methods and tools to achieve maximum success with minimum effort. Good moral character is essential to set moral limits on the use of tools and methods.
3. **Cooperative:** This is the process of following customary socially acceptable use of tools.
  - ◆ Example: Using a hairbrush to brush hair, a knife to cut carrots, a pencil to write.
  - ◆ Cooperative people seek to achieve goals through good relationships with others, being law abiding and accommodating, working within agreed-upon rules.
4. **Concrete Word Use:** In using words, “concrete word use” means describing things and events with words signifying things that can be measured and/or observed.
  - ◆ Examples: Spoon, desk, shovel, cement, computer, cell phone, book, toy.
  - ◆ Concrete words may take a variety of forms such as – detailed, factual, elemental, empirical, indicative, literal, specific.
5. **Abstract Word Use:** In using words, “abstract word use” means descriptions using words signifying things not readily observable by the 5 senses.
  - ◆ Examples: Love, hate, concept, experience, judgement, probability, freedom, soul.
  - ◆ Abstract words may be used to convey analogy or category or used in fictional, general, schematic, symbolic, or theoretical ways.
6. **Character and Temperament:** Character directs the choice of things to think about, talk about, and do. Temperament determines the way we prefer to accomplish those things.
  - ◆ Example **ISTP** preferences incline a person to desire to try new experiences. Christian character dramatically limits the things that are morally acceptable to try.
7. **Temperament in Children:** God's gift of temperament becomes apparent soon after birth.
  - ◆ Some healthy new-born children are active, some calm, some fretful, some happy.

- ◆ From early in life, some children are outgoing around strangers, others shy and reserved.
  - ◆ Some children go straight for what they want, plunging ahead, ignoring obstacles and rules. Forced to obey rules, they are visibly & vocally frustrated, & repeatedly test limits.
  - ◆ Yet other children easily comply with rules, even happily, seeming most comfortable when they are pleasing the adults in their life.
  - ◆ As children mature, their temperament becomes more distinctive and new preferences are made manifest and become observable.
  - ◆ Most parents assume at first that their children will be pretty much the same as they are. They tend to see their children as extensions of their own personality, temperament and character, who will naturally follow in their footsteps – and sometimes it is true.
  - ◆ That boy may be just like his father, but may be different from one or both parents.
  - ◆ Those differences can be a problem for parents who strongly desire their children to have interests and behavior matching their own. But temperament is in the DNA and a person's DNA has a much longer reach than being like the parents.
  - ◆ The character of a new-born is generally unformed. Life begins totally self-centered. Regard for others must be developed through training and parental example.
  - ◆ It is difficult for parents to accept that their child has a normal temperament quite different from their own, and the child just doesn't enjoy doing things they like best.
  - ◆ Temperament preferences greatly impact the activities a person enjoys, the kind of stories they like, the music that appeals to them, whether or not they enjoy team sports, individual sports, or no sports, and the details of how they react in different situations.
  - ◆ A father who loves hunting and fishing may be bewildered and impatient with a son who shows more interest in finding out why the sky is blue and why when water freezes and becomes solid it floats to the top of a lake rather than going to the bottom.
8. **Two Different Issues:** Raising children confronts parents with two very different issues – character development and affirming/accepting temperament as it is manifested.
- ◆ Character development requires guidance, training, and discipline.
  - ◆ Temperament affirming requires discernment, understanding, patience, encouragement.
  - ◆ Unfortunately, many parents fail to recognize that there are two distinct issues, each needing a different approach.
9. **Character Development:** Developing moral character that is pleasing to God begins with recognizing the infant is self-centered. To learn to love God with all their being and others as their self is something a child cannot do alone.
- ◆ Good (or bad) character can be expressed through any temperament style. The specifics of the way in which character is manifested are determined by temperament.
  - ◆ Children must be trained to use their temperament to express good moral character and avoid bad moral choices.
  - ◆ Christian character development requires God's enabling intervention in parent & child.

10. **Good Moral Character:** Soon we will examine in detail what constitutes “good moral character.” Briefly for now, **good moral character consists of knowing what to do and not to do, feeling good about right and bad about wrong, and doing what is right and not doing what is wrong as measured by God’s perspective.**
- ◆ It is possible, because of God’s common grace, to develop good “civil” character, but it is not a natural growth. Aiding the development of good civil character is part of our covenant obligation to prepare children to know Christ.
  - ◆ Parents are responsible for guiding their children’s character development. Christian parents are to bring children up to glorify and please God in all that they do.
  - ◆ Repeated practice under the encouraging and correcting influence of parents is essential.
  - ◆ Parents must pay constant attention to details. They must be good role models. They should practice self-discipline and use discipline appropriately with their children.
  - ◆ Developing and maintaining a good character is neither simple nor easy. Good moral character is not achieved nor maintained without constant attention to knowing and doing what is right in God’s eyes.
  - ◆ Scripture amply describes good moral character. The essentials of good moral character have only one model – and that is Christ, but good character expressed through differing temperaments will be different. Temperaments differ but all are equally good.
11. **Unfolding Temperament:** Temperament is “built-into” DNA and hence is present at birth but not fully manifest.
- ◆ Character must be trained, but temperament needs to be discerned, accepted, understood, and encouraged.
  - ◆ Temperament is morally neutral. God provides a variety of temperaments to meet the needs of His purpose for His people.
  - ◆ For example, the 4 gospels are each written by men with different temperaments. Matthew – SJ, Mark – SP, Luke – NT, and John – NF.
  - ◆ A child’s God-given morally neutral temperament appears to be fixed from birth. It differentiates and manifest more attributes with maturity. It expands, unfolds, branches.
  - ◆ At birth and early childhood, many details of temperament are latent and not observable, yet some temperament characteristics can be seen even in the cradle.
  - ◆ Attempting to change a child’s temperament always ultimately fails, often with disastrous consequences.
  - ◆ A child’s temperament should be understood and nurtured.
  - ◆ Good character is based on prescribed dos and don’ts of behavior that are essentially the same for everyone. The Bible clearly spells out the elements of good behavior.
  - ◆ Understanding and nurturing temperament in a child can be a difficult challenge especially when parent and child are very different.
  - ◆ Temperament is not an acceptable excuse for bad behavior.

12. **Use of Tools:** The temperament preferences most easily observed in early childhood are those having to do with “utilitarian” or “cooperative” use of tools.
- ◆ Tools are things used to accomplish goals. Some tools young children use are car seats, toys, clothes, implements for feeding, sleeping, and bathing.
  - ◆ “Utilitarian” signifies finding the most effective and efficient way to accomplish a task even if it involves unorthodox uses of tools.
  - ◆ “Cooperative” signifies using tools in the customary socially acceptable manner.
13. **Observations:** Give an infant a bowl of food and a spoon. Start training the child the accepted or “right” way to eat food from the bowl with a spoon.
- ◆ A child with “cooperative” inclinations (**SJ’s & NF’s**) will be inclined to please you by following your example. They are not likely to test your limits or use the spoon as a hammer or projectile.
  - ◆ A child with “utilitarian” inclinations (**SP’s & NT’s**) are very likely to see what else they can do with a spoon. They will probably experiment with bowl, spoon, and fingers in unorthodox ways to see if there isn’t a better way to get food from bowl to mouth.
  - ◆ The utilitarian child seeks effectiveness. If the fingers work better than the spoon in getting food into the mouth, then they will use their fingers.
  - ◆ The cooperative child seeks to please their adults.
  - ◆ **SJ’s** and **NF’s** are alike in preferring a cooperative attitude toward adults and will use tools accordingly.
  - ◆ **SP’s** and **NT’s** are alike in preferring a “whatever works best” attitude toward tools regardless of adult preferences.
14. **Use of Words and Terminology (Technical Words and Meanings):** As children begin to use words (and eventually terminology), **SJ’s** and **SP’s** are alike in preferring concrete words and terminology, while **NT’s** and **NF’s** are alike in preferring abstract words and terminology.
- ◆ **SJ** and **SP** children prefer to talk to other children about specific real things – toys and other items. They ask many “what” and “when” questions.
  - ◆ They prefer stories about familiar factual situations and things they can identify. They like stories with lots of action and realistic details.
  - ◆ **NF** and **NT** children prefer to listen and talk to adults about imaginative and conceptual things. They ask a lot of “who” and “why” questions.
  - ◆ They enjoy stories of fantasy and imagination – fables, myths, talking animals, and strange imaginative worlds.
15. **Summary:** Temperament is determined by DNA and must be nurtured as the different attributes are made manifest. Good character requires parental modelling plus training, discipline and instilling principles of good behavior. Children with different temperaments (cooperative or utilitarian) require different approaches to character development.