



# Melancholy

The Bible has a quite a few examples of **melancholy** personality types. Noah was definitely detail oriented. God was able to give him a detailed list and directions of what He needed for him to accomplish. He was focused on staying on schedule and finishing his project on time and to perfection. Daniel must have been melancholy. Willing to submit to the situation he was in, he dedicated himself to learning their beliefs without compromising his relationship with God. When challenged, threatened and ordered to stop praying to God he was so grounded and determined to do what he knew was right he was willing to face the consequences for his actions. Martha was a melancholy as well; she was determined to make sure everything was right when Jesus came to visit. She became frustrated when her sister, Mary, didn't see things the way she did and wasn't willing to help her. Jesus recognized their differences and made it clear that each of them was doing what she was gifted to do.

When looking for a person that is detail oriented the melancholy is your man (or woman). A perfectionist at heart, the melancholy is able to set goals and tend to even the smallest of details. The melancholy stays on schedule and will finish what he starts. A melancholy sets high standards for himself and is motivated to do things right. The melancholy is able to see the problem and come up with creative solutions to solve it. A melancholy also tends to be a more emotional person, concerned and compassionate. A melancholy person is a loyal friend who is willing to listen and offer advice and help when you need it.

My mother is an ultimate melancholy. Schedules, lists, details, and goals keep her life and the lives of her family in order. I grew up being trained that no plan is complete until every detail is outlined. Assuming that this was the normal maternal role I often dreamed of the day that I would be grown up and could assign order to my own life and eventually the lives of my children. Looking back I realize now how God specifically gifted my mother as a melancholy to help keep order in a family of other personality types. What would we have done without her guidance and structure? I shudder to think how our family of phlegmatics, sanguines, and choleric would have ever been able to set goals, work together, and accomplish anything in a peaceful matter without her.

If you struggle with the melancholy people in your life it is probably because you aren't sure how to communicate effectively with them. A melancholy person can be slow to trust and needs to know that you care about him or her before allowing accountability or input in their life. Be genuine when sharing with a melancholy acquaintance. Ask questions and truly listen to their thoughts and feelings, giving them permission to express themselves. Not until they feel they can trust you do you have much influence in their life, so be patient and value their input.

Just like the other personalities, Satan knows the weaknesses and how to distract a melancholy from doing what is good. If you are a melancholy it is important to risk letting others hold you accountable in the areas that you struggle. Prayerfully consider who God has put in your life that can be trusted. Give that person permission to encourage you in your strengths as well as hold you accountable in your weaknesses. This might be especially difficult for a person with a melancholy personality as trust is a sensitive issue. Remember that God calls us *His Body*, and in order to work effectively you must recognize that you can't do it all. Others are there

to help complete what God is doing. The lack of trust and skeptical attitude is something that can keep you from realizing and receiving all God has for you.

Another characteristic that needs to be watched carefully for a melancholy is the perfectionist tendencies. Feeling like you aren't reaching the goals that you have set for yourself or others can lead to feelings of discouragement and guilt. Taking time to appreciate the smaller accomplishments along the way will help you and others continue the momentum to reaching your goals. One more possible weakness for a melancholy is to spend too much time in the planning stages of a project. Not wanting to begin a task until all the details are in place can lead to never getting started in the first place. I received advice from a melancholy on this subject. He said it was helpful for him to break down a project in to smaller sections so that it is easier to plan, initiate and finish each task along the way. Remember to acknowledge the accomplishments before setting the next goal. Recognition is really important for your relationships when working with others, whether it is friends, family, children, or coworkers.

The Bible is filled with examples of how God has gifted and uses people with melancholy personalities. Melancholies are a blessing to others who often fail to consider the details and lack organization in their lives. A beautiful piece of the puzzle that compliments all the other personality types, the melancholy person is an essential part of revealing who Christ is and His character.