

Sanctifying Temperament: The Role of the Holy Spirit in the Transformation of Personality in Christian Counseling

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Abstract

The human temperament, while divinely designed, carries both beauty and brokenness. In Christian counseling, understanding temperament is not merely about identifying patterns of behavior but discerning how the Holy Spirit works through those patterns to bring transformation. This study explores the intersection between pneumatology and psychology — showing that sanctification is not the suppression of personality but its redemption.

Drawing from both Scripture and counseling experience in Ghana, I have often witnessed believers who sincerely love God yet struggle with recurring emotional patterns — fear, anger, guilt, or withdrawal. In one case, a melancholic client who battled perfectionism and self-criticism learned, through guided prayer and counseling, to experience the Spirit's grace as healing rather than judgment. From such encounters, one can see that true change does not arise from willpower alone but from divine renewal at the level of temperament.

The study integrates theological reflection with practical counseling insights, proposing that the Holy Spirit functions as the ultimate Counselor who sanctifies temperament — turning weakness into witness. Within the Ghanaian context, where spirituality and emotional life are deeply

intertwined, this approach offers a holistic model for Christian therapy that honors both human psychology and divine agency.

Keywords

Sanctification; Temperament theory; Holy Spirit; Personality transformation; Christian counseling; Spiritual formation; Creation Therapy; Pneumatology and psychology; Inner healing; Faith-based therapy; Biblical anthropology; Emotional renewal; Spirit-led counseling; Integration of theology and psychology; Ghanaian Christian context.

Section One: Introduction and Background

1.1 Understanding the Human Temperament

Every human being carries within a distinctive rhythm of thought, emotion, and behavior — what we often call temperament. It is the inner framework through which we perceive life and respond to it. Scripture acknowledges this individuality in God’s creative design: “For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb” (Psalm 139:13). Temperament is thus not an accident of birth; it is a divine fingerprint. Yet, like all of creation, it bears the marks of fallenness. The same temperament that enables empathy can also breed oversensitivity; the one that inspires leadership can also nurture pride.

In counseling practice, I have often met clients whose struggles were not with faith itself but with the emotional patterns that seem to resist spiritual growth. A choleric husband with deep faith may still wrestle with anger. A melancholic wife who loves the Lord may battle guilt and emotional

withdrawal. It is in this space between faith and feeling that counseling meets theology — and where psychology must give room to the work of the Holy Spirit.

1.2 The Tension Between Nature and Grace

Modern psychology has made remarkable progress in explaining human personality, motivation, and behavior. Yet psychology alone cannot fully capture the mystery of transformation. A person may learn coping skills and modify behavior, but genuine inner change — the kind that purifies motives and renews the heart — remains elusive without the intervention of divine grace.

The Apostle Paul expressed this tension when he wrote, “The good I want to do, I do not do; but the evil I do not want to do, I keep on doing” (Romans 7:19). This was not a failure of knowledge but of nature. Human willpower, no matter how disciplined, cannot sanctify the soul. It can manage impulses but not transform them. This realization has significant implications for Christian counseling, particularly in contexts like Ghana, where spirituality and psychology are often treated as separate domains — the pastor addressing sin and the counselor addressing emotion. Yet both concern the same person, body and spirit intertwined.

1.3 Ghanaian Realities: The Emotional Struggles of the Spirit-Filled

In Ghanaian Christian communities, one often encounters believers who have been taught to suppress emotion in the name of spirituality. Anger is seen as sin, sadness as a lack of faith, and fear as demonic oppression. Such interpretations can deepen guilt and prevent emotional honesty before God. In my counseling experience, I recall a young worship leader who sought help after a moral failure. He had prayed, fasted, and cried for deliverance, yet he felt trapped in cycles of

shame. His temperament profile revealed a strong Sanguine–Melancholic blend — passionate, expressive, but prone to guilt and instability under pressure.

When we began exploring his emotional patterns through the lens of temperament, he came to recognize that his struggle was not merely moral but temperamental. As he learned to invite the Holy Spirit into his weaknesses — not just his public worship but his private wounds — a gradual peace replaced the constant self-condemnation. From this observation, one can see that sanctification is not an instantaneous event but a Spirit-led journey through the landscape of personality.

1.4 The Problem of Unintegrated Counseling

One challenge within African Christian counseling is the dominance of imported models that separate psychological technique from spiritual discernment. Western counseling frameworks tend to approach the self as an autonomous agent, while African spirituality views the self as relational — bound to family, community, and God. Many counselors trained in purely secular models therefore find it difficult to address issues of faith, prayer, or spiritual conflict, even when these form the core of the client’s worldview.

In one pastoral case, a middle-aged woman came to therapy exhausted by her husband’s indifference. Her temperament type — Phlegmatic–Supine — made her loyal and calm, yet inwardly hurt by emotional neglect. A purely psychological approach would have focused on communication skills and boundaries. But as we prayed and reflected on the Scriptures, she realized that her bitterness had grown into quiet resentment. The Holy Spirit began to reveal not

just the pain but her need for grace. Over time, forgiveness became her therapy. She did not only learn to speak up but to love with wisdom, free from the compulsion to please.

These cases remind us that Christian counseling in Ghana cannot ignore the spiritual dimension of change. The counselor is not merely a technician of the mind but a vessel through whom the Spirit can restore wholeness.

1.5 The Role of the Holy Spirit in Transforming Temperament

The central thesis of this work is that the Holy Spirit is not external to the process of emotional transformation but actively indwells it. The Spirit's sanctifying power does not erase personality; it redeems it. The impulsive becomes intentional, the fearful becomes faithful, and the proud becomes purposeful. Temperament is the clay; sanctification is the fire.

From my years in counseling, I have observed that true growth happens when clients begin to see their natural tendencies as places where grace must dwell, not as traits to be condemned. The Spirit does not replace temperament but reorders it — aligning thought, emotion, and action with divine truth. In this way, psychological theory provides the map, but the Holy Spirit provides the movement.

1.6 Purpose and Direction of the Study

This study seeks to explore how the doctrine of the Holy Spirit (pneumatology) can inform and transform the practice of temperament-based Christian counseling. It examines how the Spirit's work of sanctification interacts with the human psyche, producing enduring change that neither repression nor moral effort alone can achieve. By weaving together theological reflection,

counseling theory, and Ghanaian pastoral practice, the study proposes a model of counseling that honors both divine agency and human responsibility.

In essence, this work affirms that the counselor's task is not simply to help clients "manage" their temperament but to guide them toward Spirit-led transformation. When psychology meets pneumatology, counseling becomes more than therapy — it becomes ministry.

Chapter Two: Theological and Theoretical Foundations

2.1 Theological Anthropology: Understanding the Human Person

At the center of Christian counseling lies the question: What is man? Psalm 8:4 asks, "What is man that You are mindful of him, the son of man that You care for him?" This question is not merely philosophical — it is pastoral. To counsel effectively, one must know what it means to be human in the eyes of God.

Biblical anthropology presents the human being as a trichotomous unity of **spirit, soul, and body** (1 Thessalonians 5:23). Each dimension plays a unique role in personality formation and behavior. The **body** provides physical expression; the **soul (pseuche)** houses thought, emotion, and will; and the **spirit** connects humanity to God. When the soul is wounded, the body reacts; when the spirit is neglected, the soul becomes restless. Healing, therefore, cannot occur unless the entire person is engaged.

In Ghanaian Christian contexts, many clients approach counseling not merely as a search for emotional relief but as a quest for spiritual realignment. They perceive anxiety, anger, or guilt not simply as psychological issues but as signs of spiritual imbalance. This worldview, though often

misunderstood by secular practitioners, aligns remarkably well with biblical anthropology. It affirms that the person is not a self-contained organism but a spiritual being in need of divine restoration.

2.2 Temperament as Divine Design

The concept of temperament — the inborn aspect of personality that influences how we perceive life and relate to others — has long been recognized in both classical psychology and Christian theology. Early thinkers like Hippocrates and Galen described human behavior in terms of bodily humors, but Christian thought reframed temperament as part of God’s creative design rather than biological determinism.

In the context of Christian counseling, particularly through the **Arno Profile System (APS)** developed by Drs. Richard and Phyllis Arno, temperament is seen as the “spiritual DNA” of the soul. It defines how individuals include others (Inclusion), make decisions (Control), and express love (Affection). When sin and wounding distort these needs, people experience emotional dysfunction and relational conflict.

For instance, a **Melancholic** client may possess deep empathy but also battle perfectionism; a **Choleric** may lead with passion but struggle with pride; a **Supine** may love sacrificially yet fear rejection. In counseling practice at ODUCCP’s faith-based clinic, I have often observed that when individuals begin to understand their temperament not as a flaw but as a calling — a structure through which God’s grace operates — self-condemnation gives way to self-acceptance, and growth begins.

Temperament, then, is not a barrier to holiness but the very ground on which sanctification occurs. The Holy Spirit does not override temperament; He transforms it.

2.3 Pneumatology and Personality Transformation

The Holy Spirit is the divine Counselor who operates within the human personality to restore God's image. In John 14:26, Jesus called Him the *Paraklētos* — the Comforter, Advocate, and Helper. This description reveals more than comfort; it describes active participation in human healing.

The Spirit convicts (John 16:8), teaches (John 14:26), renews (Titus 3:5), and empowers (Acts 1:8). Each of these actions corresponds to processes recognized in psychology. Conviction brings insight — the awareness of inner distortion; teaching parallels cognitive restructuring; renewal relates to emotional healing; and empowerment reflects behavioral change. Thus, the Spirit's sanctifying work harmonizes with, rather than contradicts, the psychological process of transformation.

In my counseling practice, I once met a businessman whose choleric–sanguine temperament made him dynamic yet domineering. His leadership gift was overshadowed by pride and impulsive anger, which strained his marriage and spiritual life. Through weeks of counseling and prayer, he began to experience conviction not as guilt but as divine guidance. The Spirit gently revealed that his “strength” had become his idol. As he submitted his will to God, his temperament was not erased but refined — energy became discipline, authority became servanthood. From this observation, one can see that sanctification is not about changing one's temperament but about bringing it under the lordship of Christ.

2.4 The Interplay Between Grace and Growth

Humanistic psychology emphasizes self-actualization — the pursuit of one’s potential through personal effort and awareness. While valuable, this model often neglects the role of divine grace. In Christian counseling, growth is not self-generated; it is grace-enabled. Paul’s declaration, “By the grace of God I am what I am” (1 Corinthians 15:10), captures this mystery: personality becomes redemptive when infused with grace.

Grace does not destroy natural tendencies but redeems them. A melancholic learns that their tendency to overthink can become deep reflection under the Spirit’s guidance. A sanguine’s emotional energy, once scattered, becomes an instrument of joy. A phlegmatic’s passivity transforms into patience; a choleric’s dominance becomes leadership under discipline.

This process can be seen vividly in the life of Peter — impulsive, outspoken, and at times unstable. Yet after Pentecost, when filled with the Holy Spirit, Peter’s boldness was sanctified into courage for the gospel. The same man who once denied Christ became the rock on which the Church stood. In the language of temperament theory, the Spirit had transformed Peter’s impulsive choleric energy into steadfast faith.

This dynamic operates in counseling when spiritual and psychological insight converge. A client learns not only how to understand their temperament but how to invite the Holy Spirit into it. That is where real healing begins.

2.5 Theoretical Integration: Temperament, Sanctification, and Counseling

To build a theological-psychological foundation for sanctifying temperament, three levels of integration emerge:

1. **Cognitive Alignment (Mind)**

The Holy Spirit brings truth to thought. This aligns with **Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT)**, which teaches that thoughts shape emotions and actions. In Christian terms, this mirrors Romans 12:2 — “Be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”

2. **Emotional Renewal (Heart)**

Emotional renewal is the sanctification of the heart—the transformation of our inner responses, affections, and desires by the power of the Holy Spirit. In Scripture, the “heart” is more than the seat of feeling; it is the center of personality where thought, emotion, and will converge. Proverbs 4:23 reminds us, “Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.” Healing, therefore, begins not merely with the mind but with the renewal of the heart.

3. Emotional wounds distort perception. The Spirit heals these through conviction and comfort. This reflects **Emotion-Focused Therapy (EFT)** principles, yet goes deeper by rooting emotion in spiritual reconciliation — not just catharsis but forgiveness.

4. **Behavioral Transformation (Will)**

The Spirit empowers behavioral change through new motivation and purpose. This resembles **Behavioral Activation models**, but within sanctification, obedience replaces self-determination as the driver of change.

In practice, these levels converge. A melancholic wife learning to forgive a neglectful husband experiences renewed cognition (“I am not unloved”), emotional release (tears and prayer), and behavioral peace (choosing compassion over withdrawal). What psychology calls integration, the Church calls sanctification.

2.6 The African Context of the Spirit’s Work

In African spirituality, transformation is understood communally rather than individually. Healing is never complete until relationships are restored — with God, family, and society. This view enriches Christian counseling by reminding us that sanctification is both personal and social. The Spirit who renews the heart also reconciles communities.

Ghanaian believers often testify to the Spirit’s work not in abstract terms but in daily life — the strength to forgive a rival, the patience to endure, the wisdom to lead with gentleness. The Holy Spirit is not a distant theological concept but a living presence shaping human temperament in the realities of market life, family pressure, and ministry conflict.

Counselors in Africa must therefore view sanctification not as a Western psychological achievement but as a Spirit-driven process unfolding in culturally grounded ways. The Spirit transforms both the person and the environment, harmonizing the inner and outer worlds of the believer.

2.7 Summary

This chapter has established that temperament, while natural, is sacred material in the hands of the Holy Spirit. Theologically, transformation is sanctification — the Spirit’s ongoing work to restore

the imago Dei within each person. Theoretically, counseling provides the structure through which that transformation can be guided, understood, and sustained.

When theology and psychology meet under the anointing of the Spirit, counseling transcends technique. It becomes a ministry of renewal — a partnership between divine power and human participation. From this foundation, the next chapter will review the literature that has shaped this emerging dialogue between pneumatology, psychology, and the sanctification of temperament, particularly within the African context.

Chapter Three: Review of Related Literature

3.1 Introduction

The dialogue between psychology and theology has long been marked by tension and promise. While psychology seeks to understand human behavior through empirical study, theology interprets human experience through divine revelation. Yet the intersection of the two — particularly in the work of the Holy Spirit — remains a largely underdeveloped area of study. In both Western and African scholarship, researchers have explored aspects of personality, emotion, and sanctification, but few have deeply examined how the Spirit transforms temperament within counseling practice. This chapter reviews key literature from three domains: (1) pneumatology and transformation, (2) temperament theory in Christian counseling, and (3) African perspectives on spiritual and emotional healing.

3.2 Pneumatology and Personal Transformation

In Western theology, pneumatology — the study of the Holy Spirit — often focuses on the Spirit's work in regeneration, sanctification, and empowerment for ministry. Classical theologians such as Augustine (1955) and Aquinas (1947) described sanctification as the Spirit's internal work of perfecting love within the human heart. For Augustine, transformation began with grace and ended with reordered desire — the love of self-yielding to the love of God. This theme resonates profoundly with counseling, where healing involves a redirection of emotional attachment and motivation.

Modern writers such as Louw (2000, 2015) expand this concept into pastoral care, arguing that the Spirit's presence infuses meaning into suffering. Healing, for Louw, is not merely emotional relief but the restoration of hope — the reawakening of the soul's capacity to trust God again. Similarly, McMinn (2011) and Tan (2011) demonstrate that the Spirit works through psychological processes such as conviction, insight, forgiveness, and behavioral renewal, making the counseling process a sacred partnership between divine and human agency.

From a biblical standpoint, the Spirit's transformative role is unmistakable. Paul's teaching in Galatians 5:22–23 on the fruit of the Spirit reflects not just moral character but emotional regulation: love replaces resentment, peace replaces anxiety, and self-control replaces impulsivity. This is temperament sanctified — personality aligned with divine virtue. Worthington (2005), in his work on forgiveness, shows that Spirit-led forgiveness releases both spiritual and psychological healing. The counselor's task, therefore, is not to impose change but to facilitate awareness of what the Spirit is already doing within the client's inner life.

3.3 Temperament Theory and Christian Counseling

The understanding of temperament as a foundation for counseling has evolved from ancient philosophy through contemporary psychological research. Hippocrates' theory of the four humors provided an early attempt to explain personality differences — sanguine, melancholic, choleric, and phlegmatic — but it was limited to biological observation. Christian psychology reframed this through the lens of creation: temperament was not random but designed by God for relational and functional purpose.

The **Arno Profile System (APS)**, developed by Drs. Richard and Phyllis Arno (1990), represents a significant advancement in Christian temperament counseling. The Arnos proposed that every individual is uniquely created by God with specific temperament needs in three areas: Inclusion, Control, and Affection. These needs, when unmet or distorted by sin, produce emotional conflict and behavioral dysfunction. The counselor's role, guided by the Holy Spirit, is to help clients meet those needs in godly, balanced ways.

Beck's (1976) cognitive theory introduced the concept that thoughts shape emotions and behavior, a principle that parallels Romans 12:2 — “Be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” Integrating this with the APS model, Christian counselors recognize that cognitive renewal occurs when the Spirit reframes self-perception according to divine truth. Crabb (1977) similarly emphasized biblical counseling as “helping people meet their deepest needs in Christ rather than through human control.” His model aligns with the sanctification process — where personality is restructured by truth and grace.

In Ghanaian counseling contexts, temperament theory has proven especially relevant because it aligns with communal and spiritual understandings of identity. Oheneba-Dornyo (2024) observes that Ghanaian Christians often interpret temperament traits through moral or spiritual language —

for example, labeling a melancholic as “too serious” or a choleric as “too proud.” Counseling becomes transformative when clients learn to see these tendencies as areas for grace rather than condemnation. From this observation, one can see that temperament is not destiny; it is the material through which sanctification takes shape.

3.4 The Holy Spirit and Emotional Healing

The literature on the Holy Spirit’s role in emotional healing reflects an increasing awareness of the Spirit as the inner counselor. Collins (2007) views Christian counseling as a cooperation between biblical truth, psychological method, and the Spirit’s guidance. He insists that without dependence on the Spirit, counseling risks becoming a mere human technique. Pargament (2007), though writing from a more clinical perspective, affirms that spirituality offers meaning, connection, and transcendence — crucial elements for holistic healing.

Frankl’s (1946) logotherapy also echoes this spiritual dimension by proposing that human beings are motivated not by pleasure but by meaning. The search for meaning becomes a spiritual pursuit, and when integrated with pneumatology, it reflects the Spirit’s role as the giver of purpose and identity. This synergy between theology and psychology suggests that sanctification is not only about holiness but about wholeness — a healed sense of self that glorifies God through emotional stability and relational integrity.

In Ghanaian counseling settings, this understanding resonates deeply. Many clients describe their healing experiences in spiritual language: “The burden lifted,” “I felt peace in my heart,” or “The Spirit spoke to me.” Such expressions affirm that the African Christian worldview naturally

integrates psychological and spiritual healing. The challenge for counselors is not to separate these dimensions but to interpret them wisely within theological and psychological frameworks.

3.5 African Perspectives on Spirit and Personhood

African scholars such as Mbiti (1969) and Bediako (1995) emphasize the relational and spiritual nature of the African concept of personhood. The individual is seen not as an isolated being but as part of a web of relationships — with God, ancestors, family, and community. Emotional and spiritual health, therefore, depends on harmony within these relationships. When disconnection occurs, both psychological distress and spiritual imbalance follow.

This view complements biblical anthropology, which portrays humanity as created for relationship — “It is not good for man to be alone” (Genesis 2:18). In counseling, the African worldview reminds practitioners that healing must engage community and spirituality, not merely individual cognition. Lartey (2006) calls this “intercultural pastoral care,” where theology, psychology, and culture meet in the sacred task of restoration.

Within this framework, the work of the Holy Spirit takes on communal dimensions. The Spirit not only heals individuals but restores relationships and communities. Forgiveness, reconciliation, and shared lament become communal acts of grace. As seen in Ghanaian churches, deliverance, prayer groups, and family counseling sessions often intertwine psychological support with collective spiritual renewal. The Spirit thus operates both in the counselor’s office and in the fellowship of believers, demonstrating that sanctification transcends the private soul — it renews the body of Christ.

3.6 The Gap in Existing Literature

While numerous works address the integration of psychology and theology, few specifically explore how the Holy Spirit transforms temperament in the sanctification process. Western counseling models emphasize self-development, and even Christian psychology often stops short of pneumatological explanation. In African scholarship, the emphasis on spirituality and community provides fertile ground for developing a uniquely Spirit-centered counseling model. However, systematic frameworks for integrating temperament, pneumatology, and counseling practice remain limited.

This study seeks to fill that gap by presenting a pneumatological counseling framework that interprets temperament through the lens of sanctification — a process where the Holy Spirit renews thought, emotion, and behavior according to God’s redemptive design. It builds upon both theological and psychological traditions, reframing them within an African context that honors the Spirit’s active role in human change.

3.7 Summary of Key Insights

From the reviewed literature, three main insights emerge:

1. The Holy Spirit is central to genuine transformation. Psychological insight may expose dysfunction, but only the Spirit renews the heart.
2. Temperament provides the framework for sanctification. Understanding one’s natural design allows for targeted spiritual and emotional growth.
3. African theology enriches Christian counseling. By affirming the holistic nature of the person, it integrates community, spirituality, and emotional healing in ways that Western models often overlook.

From these insights, one can see that sanctifying temperament is not an abstract theory but a lived experience of grace. It is theology meeting humanity, psychology meeting prayer, and the Spirit meeting the wounded soul. The next chapter will build on these foundations to construct the Faith–Temperament Integration Model (FTIM) — a conceptual and practical framework for Spirit-led transformation in counseling.

Chapter Four: The Faith–Temperament Integration Model (FTIM): Conceptual Framework and Application

4.1 Introduction: The Need for Integration

In the practice of Christian counseling, one often encounters two extremes: psychological models that ignore faith, and spiritual interventions that overlook human psychology. The result is partial healing — clients who learn coping skills but remain spiritually restless, or those who receive prayer but remain emotionally wounded. The Faith–Temperament Integration Model (FTIM) arises from the conviction that the Holy Spirit works not outside human temperament but through it, transforming natural tendencies into channels of grace.

FTIM offers a framework where theology, psychology, and temperament theory converge in a holistic process of sanctification. It views counseling as both science and sacrament — a sacred encounter where divine truth renews human personality. The model assumes that every individual carries a temperament structure that both reveals God’s design and reflects human fallenness; through Spirit-led integration, the soul is progressively healed, balanced, and empowered to function according to divine purpose.

4.2 The Conceptual Framework of FTIM

The Faith–Temperament Integration Model rests on three pillars: Revelation, Reflection, and Renewal. These represent a dynamic process where spiritual awareness, self-understanding, and behavioral transformation interact under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

1. Revelation (The Work of Divine Illumination)

Transformation begins when truth is revealed. In counseling, this is the moment of spiritual insight — when the Holy Spirit exposes hidden wounds, distorted perceptions, or unhealed memories. The counselor facilitates a space where clients can encounter truth, both psychological and biblical.

For instance, a melancholic client struggling with guilt may come to realize, through prayer and reflection on Romans 8:1 — “There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” — that her self-blame is not humility but bondage. The Spirit reveals not only her pain but the grace available to heal it. Revelation is not mere cognitive awareness; it is spiritual awakening.

2. Reflection (The Work of Psychological Integration)

After revelation, the client enters a reflective phase — where insight meets interpretation. This corresponds to cognitive restructuring in psychology but extends beyond it. Reflection in FTIM involves guided examination of thoughts, emotions, and behavioral patterns through the light of Scripture.

The counselor helps the client explore:

- “How does my temperament influence how I see God, myself, and others?”
- “Which parts of my personality reflect grace, and which resist it?”

In Ghanaian counseling settings, clients often respond to biblical stories that mirror their own struggles. For example, a choleric husband who battles anger may be invited to reflect on Moses — a leader whose passion needed sanctification. By seeing his temperament reflected in Scripture, he learns not condemnation but calling.

3. Renewal (The Work of Behavioral and Spiritual Transformation)

The third stage of FTIM is the practical outworking of change. Renewal occurs when clients begin to act, feel, and think under the influence of the Holy Spirit rather than their wounded impulses. This phase integrates prayer, behavioral change, and spiritual disciplines such as forgiveness, confession, journaling, and service.

For example, a supine wife who once served out of fear of rejection may begin serving out of joy and freedom. A sanguine youth who once sought affirmation from others learns to find identity in God's acceptance. Renewal manifests in lifestyle and relationships — where old reactions give way to new responses empowered by grace.

4.3 The Fivefold Process of Transformation in FTIM

While the three core pillars describe the conceptual foundation, the Faith–Temperament Integration Model unfolds practically in five interdependent stages that mirror both psychological and spiritual growth:

1. Self-Awareness (Discovery)

The client discovers their temperament strengths and weaknesses through tools like the APS. They begin to understand emotional triggers, needs, and fears. This aligns with the

biblical call to self-examination: “Let us test and examine our ways, and return to the Lord” (Lamentations 3:40).

2. Conviction (Recognition of Distortion)

Under the Spirit’s conviction, the client recognizes where temperament has been corrupted by sin or pain. Guilt becomes grace-filled awareness rather than self-hate. This stage mirrors the therapeutic confrontation of defense mechanisms but within a redemptive frame.

3. Confession and Release (Healing of the Soul)

Emotional and spiritual wounds are acknowledged before God. Tears often flow here — what African theologians might call “holy lament.” In one Ghanaian case, a phlegmatic man who had avoided conflict for years wept openly as he forgave his estranged brother. The act was not weakness but release.

4. Renewal of Mind and Emotion (Reconstruction)

The client learns to replace distorted thoughts with truth, integrating Scripture with cognitive insight. This corresponds with Romans 12:2 and Philippians 4:8 — the renewal of mind and redirection of thought.

5. Empowerment (Sanctified Personality in Action)

The final stage is empowerment — the client lives out a sanctified temperament. The choleric becomes a servant-leader, the melancholic a compassionate thinker, the sanguine

a joyful encourager, the phlegmatic a stable reconciler, and the supine a self-giving intercessor. This is not behavioral conformity but Spirit-led authenticity.

4.4 The Counselor's Role in FTIM

In the Faith–Temperament Integration Model, the counselor is not merely a professional but a co-laborer with the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:9). The counselor's task involves discernment, presence, and prayerful listening. Skills such as active listening, empathy, and interpretation are guided by spiritual sensitivity — knowing when to remain silent and when to speak truth in love.

Counselor Posture

1. **Prayerful Preparation:** The counselor prays before sessions, seeking divine wisdom.
2. **Discernment in Dialogue:** During sessions, the counselor listens for emotional patterns and spiritual undertones.
3. **Integration of Scripture:** Scriptures are introduced naturally, not as proof-texts, but as mirrors of meaning.
4. **Faith and Professional Ethics:** The counselor balances confidentiality and professionalism with prayer and faith.

In one counseling case, a melancholic woman struggling with depression was guided through journaling and Psalm meditation. Each week, she identified emotions, wrote prayers, and reflected on one verse. Over months, she testified, “The Word is now talking back to me.” Such outcomes affirm that FTIM's strength lies in Spirit-empowered process, not technique.

4.5 Application in Ghanaian Counseling Practice

In Ghana, emotional and spiritual challenges are often intertwined — illness linked to witchcraft beliefs, depression explained as demonic oppression, or marital conflict interpreted through spiritual warfare. FTIM provides a culturally grounded approach that validates spiritual realities while applying psychological wisdom.

For example:

- A **Supine wife** enduring an emotionally distant husband learns that her service, though godly, must not enable abuse; the Spirit teaches her to balance compassion with boundaries.
- A **Choleric pastor** overwhelmed by leadership stress learns that authority must flow from submission to God, not control over others.
- A **Phlegmatic youth** paralyzed by indecision finds courage through the Spirit's assurance that peace is not avoidance but faith in motion.

FTIM equips counselors to interpret such dynamics through both Scripture and temperament insight. It honors Ghana's communal worldview — integrating family counseling, group prayer, and community support — while emphasizing individual transformation through the Spirit's sanctifying work.

4.6 Theological and Clinical Outcomes

The Faith–Temperament Integration Model produces outcomes on both theological and psychological levels:

Dimension	Outcome	Illustration
Spiritual	Renewed intimacy with God	Client rediscovers prayer as communion, not duty
Cognitive	Reframed self-concept	“I am not rejected; I am redeemed” replaces negative self-talk
Emotional	Release of resentment, fear, and guilt	Forgiveness replaces bitterness
Behavioral	Healthier relationships and decisions	Assertiveness replaces withdrawal
Communal	Reconciliation and restored family unity	Healing expands to the home and church community

The ultimate goal of FTIM is not adjustment but transformation — a sanctified personality aligned with the Holy Spirit’s character.

4.7 Summary

The Faith–Temperament Integration Model represents a Spirit-led bridge between psychology and theology. It respects human temperament as a divine design while affirming that only the Holy Spirit can bring true transformation. Through revelation, reflection, and renewal, the client journeys from self-awareness to sanctified authenticity.

From this understanding, one can see that the goal of counseling is not to escape one’s temperament but to embody it redemptively. The melancholic’s depth becomes intercession; the sanguine’s energy becomes evangelism; the choleric’s drive becomes leadership in humility; the

phlegmatic's calm becomes peacemaking; and the supine's sensitivity becomes compassion in service.

In the Ghanaian context, where faith and emotion intertwine, FTIM offers a pathway toward holistic healing — a model where psychology meets pneumatology, and counseling becomes worship in practice.

Chapter Five: Training, Supervision, and Institutionalization of the Faith–Temperament Integration Model (FTIM) in Africa

5.1 Introduction: From Model to Movement

Every counseling model must find a home — a context where its principles are taught, practiced, and reproduced. The **Faith–Temperament Integration Model (FTIM)** was not designed as an abstract theory but as a living framework for forming Spirit-led counselors who can minister to Africa's wounded souls. Its full impact will only be realized when it is embedded within training programs, supervision systems, and institutional cultures that honor both psychology and theology.

In the African setting — and particularly in Ghana — the growth of Christian counseling demands models that are biblically sound, psychologically robust, and culturally rooted. The Oheneba-Dornyo University College of Counselling Psychology (ODUCCP) stands at this intersection: a pioneering institution where Christian faith, academic rigor, and practical ministry meet. Institutionalizing FTIM within such a setting transforms it from an individual approach into a sustainable framework for counselor formation and community renewal.

5.2 Training Faith-Based Counselors: Forming the Spiritually Grounded Practitioner

Counselor training in Africa has historically mirrored Western paradigms — focusing heavily on clinical skill and theoretical knowledge but often neglecting spiritual formation. FTIM calls for a new pedagogy, one that unites the head, heart, and hands of the counselor.

a. Curriculum Integration

At ODUCCP and similar seminaries, FTIM can be embedded within foundational and advanced courses.

- **Core Courses:**

- Faith and Psychology Integration — introducing students to FTIM’s theological and psychological principles.
- Temperament and the Human Spirit — exploring APS theory, biblical anthropology, and sanctification dynamics.
- Spiritual Formation and Clinical Practice — guiding students through personal application of FTIM before using it with clients.

- **Practicum Seminars:** Students engage in supervised counseling using FTIM assessment and intervention processes. Reflection journals track both professional and spiritual growth.

In one cohort at ODUCCP, trainees who applied FTIM during practicum sessions reported a deeper awareness of their own emotional patterns and how prayer, temperament awareness, and Scripture reflection shaped their therapeutic presence. This confirms that training is not just about methodology; it is about forming character.

b. Formation through Self-Discovery

A key principle of FTIM training is **“the counselor must first be counseled.”** Before applying the model to clients, trainees undergo temperament profiling, spiritual assessment, and personal reflection. This parallels Jesus’ instruction: “First take the log out of your own eye” (Matthew 7:5). Counselors learn to surrender their temperament to the Spirit before attempting to guide others.

Workshops, retreats, and mentorship sessions are structured around themes like:

- “The Spirit and My Temperament”
- “Dealing with Emotional Triggers in Ministry”
- “When the Counselor Needs Healing.”

Such experiential learning ensures that graduates of ODUCCP are not only intellectually equipped but spiritually mature — ministers of healing whose authority flows from transformation, not information.

5.3 Supervision: The Heartbeat of Quality Practice

Supervision is to counseling what discipleship is to ministry — the structure through which competence and character are refined. Institutionalizing FTIM requires a Spirit-led supervision model that blends accountability, reflection, and mentorship.

a. The Reflective–Spiritual Supervision Framework

The FTIM supervision process operates on two levels:

1. **Clinical Reflection:** The supervisor helps the counselor analyze session dynamics, client responses, and ethical decisions using both psychological and theological insight.
2. **Spiritual Reflection:** Supervisors encourage prayerful discernment — “What is the Spirit teaching you through this client?”

This approach transforms supervision into spiritual formation. It allows trainees to integrate empathy with discernment, professional technique with pastoral care.

b. Supervisor Preparation

Supervisors must themselves embody the FTIM principles. At ODUCCP, this could involve annual Faith–Temperament Supervisors’ Clinics — intensive training sessions where experienced practitioners review case studies, receive updates on research, and renew their spiritual grounding through guided retreats.

Each supervisor serves not only as evaluator but as mentor, modeling Christ-like balance between competence and compassion. As one Ghanaian senior counselor reflected, “Supervision became a mirror of my soul. I realized that I was not just training counselors — I was discipling them.”

5.4 Institutionalization within ODUCCP and African Seminaries

a. Academic Structures

Embedding FTIM into ODUCCP’s institutional framework involves three academic strategies:

1. **Curricular Adoption:** Integrate FTIM concepts across diploma, bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral programs.

2. **Research Integration:** Encourage student dissertations and faculty publications exploring the model's impact across cultural and clinical contexts.
3. **Continuing Professional Development (CPD):** Offer annual workshops and short courses for clergy, educators, and practitioners under themes such as “Spirit-Led Counseling,” “Temperament and Leadership,” and “Healing the African Soul.”

Such programs create a ripple effect, equipping church counselors, chaplains, and psychologists across Ghana and beyond with a model that bridges faith and science.

b. Institutional Partnerships

To sustain implementation, ODUCCP can establish collaborative partnerships with:

- **Trinity Theological Seminary (Legon):** Joint modules on theology and mental health.
- **Ghana Psychology Council (GPC):** FTIM-based CPD accreditation for counselors and pastors.
- **Faith-based Hospitals and NGOs:** Piloting FTIM in chaplaincy and trauma recovery programs.
- **Church Councils (e.g., Assemblies of God, Pentecost, Methodist):** Integrating FTIM principles in clergy care and marriage counseling ministries.

These partnerships will demonstrate that FTIM is not confined to academia but actively shapes Ghana's spiritual and mental health ecosystem.

5.5 Research and Evaluation Framework

Institutionalization demands ongoing evaluation. ODUCCP can establish a **Centre for Faith–Psychology Research** dedicated to documenting outcomes of FTIM-based interventions.

Research areas may include:

- The impact of FTIM on marital satisfaction and conflict resolution.
- The role of pneumatology in emotional resilience among clergy.
- Comparative studies between FTIM and secular cognitive-behavioral interventions in African contexts.

Quantitative and qualitative methods should be used side by side, respecting both measurable outcomes and experiential narratives. The African voice — the testimonies, prayers, and communal expressions of healing — becomes data that reveals transformation beyond numbers.

By fostering such scholarship, ODUCCP would not only train practitioners but shape continental thought leadership in Christian counseling.

5.6 Ministry and Community Application

Beyond academia, FTIM finds expression in the everyday life of the Church and community.

- **In Churches:** FTIM can guide pastoral counseling, small group discipleship, and couples' ministries. Pastors trained in temperament awareness can tailor sermons and interventions to the emotional needs of congregants.
- **In Schools:** Chaplains can apply FTIM in mentoring students, teaching emotional literacy alongside spiritual growth.

- **In Hospitals and Prisons:** FTIM-trained chaplains can minister to patients and inmates by addressing both psychological distress and spiritual alienation.
- **In NGOs and Counseling Centres:** Programs for addiction recovery, grief counseling, and trauma care can use FTIM principles to integrate faith with therapy.

A remarkable case emerged from a church in Tema where FTIM-trained lay counselors facilitated healing among young adults struggling with identity crises. Through group reflections on Scripture and temperament awareness, participants began to speak openly about fear, shame, and anger. Within months, the ministry recorded visible reconciliation between parents and children. This demonstrates FTIM's potential to renew not only individuals but communities.

5.7 Toward a Spirit-Led African Counseling Identity

Institutionalizing FTIM is not merely about curriculum design; it is about reclaiming Africa's own theological and cultural identity in counseling. African spirituality already affirms that healing is holistic — involving the spirit, soul, body, and community. FTIM gives this wisdom a structured expression, grounding it in Scripture and psychological science.

At ODUCCP and across Africa, the counselor of the future must be both scientifically informed and spiritually anointed. They must be comfortable in a counseling room and confident at the altar. The Spirit is raising a new generation of African counselors — Spirit-filled, temperament-aware, and culturally attuned — who can guide clients from brokenness to sanctified wholeness.

5.8 Summary

The institutionalization of the Faith–Temperament Integration Model represents a decisive step toward the decolonization and spiritual renewal of counseling education in Africa. Through structured training, reflective supervision, and cross-institutional collaboration, FTIM can reshape how counselors are formed and how healing is understood.

From this vision, one can see that ODUCCP is not just building a university — it is birthing a movement. A movement where psychology bows to the Spirit, theology embraces science, and the African soul rediscovers its God-given harmony.

The next chapter draws these threads together, offering theological reflection and prophetic vision for the future of Spirit-led counseling in Africa.

Chapter Six: Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

6.1 Summary of the Study

This book began with a simple yet profound conviction: that the Holy Spirit is not an abstract doctrine but an active participant in the healing and transformation of human personality. Drawing from both Scripture and psychology, it has explored how temperament — that intricate blend of inherited emotional and behavioral tendencies — becomes the raw material through which sanctification unfolds.

The journey through the previous chapters revealed that temperament, though divinely designed, carries both strength and weakness. The sanguine’s warmth can degenerate into instability, the melancholic’s depth into despair, the choleric’s drive into domination, the phlegmatic’s peace into passivity, and the supine’s service into self-neglect. Yet within these frailties lies the possibility of

redemption. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, temperament is not erased but refined — made to reflect the image of Christ.

The **Faith–Temperament Integration Model (FTIM)** emerged as a central framework in this vision — integrating theological, psychological, and cultural perspectives to show how sanctification operates at the emotional, cognitive, and behavioral levels. It is a model that acknowledges the counselor as a co-laborer with the Spirit, guiding individuals toward spiritual and psychological wholeness.

From the reflections across Ghanaian counseling practice, one sees that emotional healing cannot be divorced from spirituality. The African believer lives in a world where the sacred and the psychological coexist; therefore, counseling must engage both realms. The Spirit does not work in opposition to psychology but through it — breathing divine life into human understanding.

6.2 Theological Reflections: The Spirit as the Counselor’s Counselor

Throughout Scripture, the Holy Spirit is portrayed as Comforter, Advocate, and Guide. In the counseling room, these roles translate into a divine partnership where the Spirit brings conviction, revelation, and renewal. The counselor listens not only to words but to the whispers of the Spirit; they discern not only symptoms but the soul’s cry for restoration.

Theologically, sanctifying temperament is the continuation of the Incarnation — God entering human personality to redeem it from within. Just as Christ assumed human flesh, the Spirit indwells human emotion, thought, and will. When a client experiences inner peace, forgiveness, or self-awareness through counseling, it is not merely a psychological process but an encounter with grace.

The Spirit thus sanctifies not only the client but the counselor. In every session, the counselor's humility, patience, and empathy become sacraments of divine presence. As one Ghanaian counselor once reflected, "I discovered that the real healing happens when I stop trying to fix the client and start listening with the Spirit." This insight captures the essence of pneumatological counseling: transformation is divine, yet it requires human participation.

6.3 Implications for Christian Counseling in Africa

The African continent stands at a critical juncture in the evolution of mental health care. While secular psychology has advanced, it often neglects the spiritual dimensions that define African identity. Conversely, many churches address spiritual issues but lack psychological depth, leaving emotional wounds untreated. The Faith–Temperament Integration Model provides a bridge between these worlds, inviting both pastors and psychologists to collaborate under the Spirit's guidance.

a. Redefining Healing in African Christian Thought

In African culture, healing is communal, spiritual, and symbolic. FTIM honors this worldview while offering a structured framework that avoids superstition and fear. It reframes deliverance not as a spectacle but as a process — a journey of cognitive and spiritual renewal.

In one case at ODUCCP's counseling clinic, a pastor's wife struggling with resentment toward her husband found freedom not through exorcism but through reflective prayer, forgiveness exercises, and temperament awareness. Her testimony — "The Spirit healed my heart, not just my mind" — echoes what many African Christians intuitively know: emotional healing is a spiritual event.

b. Transforming the Church's Role

The local church in Ghana can become a center for emotional and spiritual formation. FTIM-trained counselors and pastors can teach congregations about temperament, emotional maturity, and Spirit-led living. Marriage seminars, youth ministries, and leadership training programs can use FTIM to help believers understand themselves and others through the lens of grace.

The church's new role is not to replace therapy with prayer, nor to replace prayer with therapy, but to hold both in creative tension. The Spirit, after all, is Lord of both.

c. Reforming Counselor Education

For Africa's counseling institutions, the future lies in integration. Training programs must produce spiritually attuned, scientifically competent practitioners who understand their cultural roots. ODUCCP's emphasis on **faith-informed counseling** positions it as a beacon in this transformation. When future generations of counselors are trained under the FTIM framework, they will not only treat disorders — they will disciple souls toward sanctified identity.

6.4 Toward a Theology of Sanctified Personality

A theology of personality must begin with the recognition that God's image in humanity includes emotional and relational life. The Spirit's indwelling presence transforms the self not by suppressing personality but by redeeming it. Sanctification, therefore, is not personality replacement but restoration.

This understanding liberates Christians from the false dichotomy between spirituality and psychology. A choleric does not need to pray away assertiveness, nor a melancholic repent of deep

thought. Instead, these traits become instruments of divine purpose when aligned with the Spirit's character.

From this theological vision, one perceives counseling as a continuation of discipleship — not merely problem-solving but soul formation. The counseling room becomes a sacred classroom where clients learn what it means to be human in Christ.

6.5 Recommendations

1. For Theological and Counseling Institutions

- Incorporate the FTIM framework into curricula at ODUCCP, Trinity Theological Seminary, and partner universities.
- Establish Centers for Faith–Psychology Research dedicated to exploring Spirit-led approaches to therapy in African contexts.
- Encourage doctoral research on pneumatological anthropology, African emotional life, and the integration of psychology with theology.

2. For Churches and Ministry Networks

- Train pastors and lay leaders in temperament-based counseling, emphasizing Spirit-led empathy and discernment.
- Introduce FTIM workshops within denominational conferences to bridge the gap between pastoral care and clinical counseling.
- Develop church counseling centers that integrate prayer, Scripture reflection, and professional therapy.

3. For Counselors and Psychologists

- Pursue personal spiritual formation alongside professional competence.
- Engage in supervision that includes both clinical evaluation and spiritual accountability.
- Approach every client as an image-bearer in process — a soul being shaped by the Spirit toward wholeness.

4. For African Policy and Practice

- Encourage national psychology councils and health ministries to recognize the value of faith-based models in community mental health.
- Develop collaborative frameworks between churches, hospitals, and NGOs for holistic care.
- Promote local research on culturally sensitive therapeutic interventions that integrate spirituality without superstition.

6.6 A Prophetic Call for Spirit-Led Renewal

Africa's future in counseling lies not in imitation but in inspiration — not in importing Western paradigms but in incarnating truth within its own cultural and theological soil. The Spirit is stirring a movement where the African soul, long fragmented by colonial legacies and psychological dualism, is rediscovering its sacred harmony.

In the counselor's quiet room, one can hear echoes of Pentecost — not in tongues of fire but in tears of healing. A client weeps, not out of despair but release; a counselor listens, not out of technique but compassion; and the Spirit hovers, restoring order where chaos once ruled. This is

not therapy as transaction but transformation — the divine making His dwelling among human temperament.

The Faith–Temperament Integration Model is more than a theory; it is a testimony. It declares that the Spirit of God still works in the human psyche, sanctifying personalities, redeeming emotions, and renewing minds. The African Church must now rise to embody this truth — building counseling ministries that are as Spirit-filled as they are scientifically sound.

As we look ahead, may every counselor trained under this vision echo the words of Isaiah 61:1 — “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to bind up the brokenhearted.” That is the sacred calling of the Christian counselor in Africa — not merely to analyze behavior but to sanctify temperament, not merely to manage pain but to midwife wholeness.

And when that vision becomes reality, counseling will cease to be just a profession. It will become worship — the meeting of human need and divine grace at the altar of transformation.

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