

Fruit of the Spirit

Gentleness/Meekness

Gal. 5:22-24 “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

24 Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.”

These are the things that we should be doing instead of practicing the works of the flesh.

These are only possible if we have salvation in Christ.

I. Definitions

(Strg. 4236) *proates*; meekness, mildness, also humility.

- Submitting your will to the will of another.
- Patience in receiving injuries.
- Not meanness or a surrender of rights, nor cowardice, it is the opposite of sudden anger, malice, and long harbored vengeance.
- Power under control.

In the New Testament, meekness expresses an attitude of humble submission to God that results in a gentle and compassionate attitude toward others.

Despite a popular misconception, nowhere in the Bible does this word have an abject, unworthy meaning.

The Nelson's Bible Dictionary defines meekness as “an attitude of humility toward God and gentleness toward men, springing from a recognition that God is in control.

Although weakness and meekness may look similar, they are not the same.

Weakness is due to negative circumstances, such as lack of strength or lack of courage.

But meekness is due to a person's conscious choice.

It is strength and courage under control, coupled with kindness.”

The Revell Bible Dictionary defines meekness as “the quality of having a patient and gentle attitude.”

In the New Testament, meekness is the opposite of arrogance.

It suggests dependence on God and a gentle, non-threatening demeanor toward others.

Far from being weakness, meekness requires great inner strength, both in faith and self-control.”

The American Heritage Dictionary defines the adjective meek as “1. Showing patience and humility; gentle. 2. Easily imposed on; submissive.”

It is of Scandinavian origin, coming from an Old Norse word meaning “soft.”

Many equate meekness with being a namby-pamby, sissified wimp.

Nothing could be further from the truth!

The meek are mighty in God's purposes.

Gentleness is certainly there, but behind it lies the strength of steel.

Moses The “Meek”

KJV, Num. 12:3 “Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth”

“Now the man Moses was very humble, more than any man who was on the face of the earth.” NASB

Yet, he was anything but a trembling coward.

Consider the great courage he manifested as the Egyptian army bore down on them at the Red Sea.

Ex. 14:13,14 “But Moses said to the people, “Do not fear! Stand by and see the salvation of the LORD which He will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians whom you have seen today, you will never see them again forever.

14 The LORD will fight for you while you keep silent.”

Or consider his firmness when he rebuked the Israelites' idolatry at Mt. Sinai.

Ex. 32:25-28 “Now when Moses saw that the people were out of control--for Aaron had let them get out of control to be a derision among their enemies--

26 then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, “Whoever is for the LORD, come to me!” And all the sons of Levi gathered together to him.

27 And he said to them, “Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, ‘Every man of you put his sword upon his thigh, and go back and forth from gate to gate in the camp, and kill every man his brother, and every man his friend, and every man his neighbor.’”

28 So the sons of Levi did as Moses instructed, and about three thousand men of the people fell that day.”

No weak-hearted, mealy-mouthed cream-puff, Moses was a great hero of faith!

I. As Jesus Was

A. Gentle

The common assumption is that when a man is meek it is because he cannot help himself; but the Lord was ‘meek’ because he had the infinite resources of God at His command.

Described negatively, meekness is the opposite to self-assertiveness and self-interest; it is equanimity of spirit that is neither elated nor cast down, simply because it is not occupied with self at all.”

Earthly kings like to demonstrate their great might and surround themselves with all the trappings of power. Yet, the Jesus Christ—the King of kings and Lord of lords, the One who will ultimately triumph over all — made his triumphal entrance into Jerusalem riding on the foal of an ass - not the big white charger we would pick.

Matt. 21:5 “SAY TO THE DAUGHTER OF ZION, ‘BEHOLD YOUR KING IS COMING TO YOU, GENTLE, AND MOUNTED ON A DONKEY, EVEN ON A COLT, THE FOAL OF A BEAST OF BURDEN.’”

He is gentle and what He asked of us is not excessive.

Our Lord manifested a spirit of true meekness

Matt. 11:28-30 “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.

29 Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and YOU SHALL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS.

30 For My yoke is easy, and My load is light.”

He showed gentleness in dealing with penitent sinners.

Isa. 42:3 “A bruised reed He will not break, And a dimly burning wick He will not extinguish; He will faithfully bring forth justice.”

B. Strong

Yet, he was unyielding when faced with defiance.

He showed resolve and backbone when he cleansed the temple

Jn. 2:14-17 “And He found in the temple those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the moneychangers seated.

15 And He made a scourge of cords, and drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen; and He poured out the coins of the moneychangers, and overturned their tables;

16 and to those who were selling the doves He said, “Take these things away; stop making My Father’s house a house of merchandise.”

17 His disciples remembered that it was written, “ZEAL FOR THY HOUSE WILL CONSUME ME.”

Matt. 23:13-15 “But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you shut off the kingdom of heaven from men; for you do not enter in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.

14 Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you devour widows’ houses, even while for a pretense you make long prayers; therefore you shall receive greater condemnation.

15 Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you travel about on sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.”

Again we see it when the Lord sternly denounced the hypocrisy of the Scribes and Pharisees

The Lord Jesus Christ was not a wimp! His meekness in no sense implied weakness.

C. In Control

Jesus' strength was again evident at his crucifixion.

His death was not something over which He had no control.

He willingly laid down his life for lost humanity

Jn. 10:17,18 "For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again.

18 No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father."

When the enemies of Jesus marched into the Garden of Gethsemane, Peter defended his master.

However, Jesus commanded him to stop.

If Christ had so desired, he could have instantly called twelve legions of angels to destroy his adversaries.

Matt. 26:52-54 "Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its place; for all those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword.

53 Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels?

54 How then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen this way?"

A legion was the principal unit of the Roman army, consisting of 3,000 to 6,000 infantry troops and 100 to 200 cavalymen. Twelve legions of angels would literally number between 36,000 and 72,000. Although Jesus was meek, he was also powerful. Meekness is strength under control. Jesus willingly endured the cross so that he might save us from our sins!

II. Our Need Of Meekness

A. Towards God

Meekness toward God is that disposition of spirit in which we accept His dealings with us as good, and therefore without disputing or resisting.

In the Old Testament, the meek are those wholly relying on God rather than their own strength to defend them against injustice.

Thus, meekness toward evil people means knowing God is permitting the injuries they inflict, that He is using them to purify His elect, and that He will deliver His elect in His time.

Gentleness or meekness is the opposite of self-assertiveness and self-interest.

It stems from trust in God's goodness and control over the situation.

The gentle person is not occupied with self at all. This is a work of the Holy Spirit, not of the human will.

Meekness is primarily directed towards God.

It is an attitude of spirit where we accept His dealings with us as being for our good, and obey his word without disputing or resisting.

Rather than contend or dispute with God, the meek person humbles himself and acknowledges his utter dependence upon Jehovah.

Meekness expresses our confidence in God's wisdom. It is, therefore, the basis of divine acceptance.

Ps. 37:11 "But the humble [meek] will inherit the land, And will delight themselves in abundant prosperity."

Matt. 5:5 "Blessed are the gentle [meek], for they shall inherit the earth."

James 1:21 "Therefore putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls."

B. Towards Faithful Brethren

Gentleness is an essential ingredient if we are to maintain Christian unity.

We must manifest meekness toward our fellow Christians.

Col 3:12,13 "And so, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience;

13 bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you."

Brethren will sometimes try our patience, but we must always strive to be meek and gentle.

C. Towards Erring Christians

We must manifest meekness when we attempt to restore erring Christians.

Gal 6:1,2 “Brethren, even if a man is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, lest you too be tempted.

2 Bear one another’s burdens, and thus fulfill the law of Christ”

The Christian teacher must gently correct those who are in opposition to the truth.

2 Tim. 2:23-26 “But refuse foolish and ignorant speculations, knowing that they produce quarrels.

24 And the Lord’s bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged,

25 with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth,

26 and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.”

Does this mean that we use such mild language that the sinner hardly knows why we came to see him?

NO! Reproof and correction must be forcefully administered when the need arises.

In confronting a wayward sinner, we must speak with the power and authority of the gospel.

However, our words and demeanor should always be marked by a spirit of meekness.

Confidence in God’s plan leads us to humbly and courageously reprove those who have gone astray.

We must deal forcefully with sinful rebellion. Yet, the one who is overtaken in a fault will be impressed by the genuine concern that is being expressed for his soul.

He will realize that love, not haughty self-righteousness, motivates those who seek his restoration

2 Cor. 10:1 “Now I, Paul, myself urge you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ...”

E. Towards All

We must manifest meekness toward mankind in general.

Tit. 3:1,2 “Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed,

2 to malign no one, to be uncontentious, gentle, showing every consideration for all men.”

Meekness is the basis of serving others.

It expresses an attitude exactly the opposite of the demanding, self-centered person who is interested in no one but himself.

Conclusion:

Those who walk before God in a spirit of meekness will be rewarded for their faithfulness.

D. Towards An Unbelieving Companion

A Christian woman may sometimes find herself married to an unbeliever.

Perhaps she has repeatedly tried to convert her spouse, but to no avail. What can she do?

The apostle Peter affirms that she must continue to demonstrate a gentle and quiet spirit.

She should be a living example of Christianity.

This is a more effective way of teaching than constantly harping on her husband to change.

Meekness can melt the heart when nothing else will

1 Pet. 3:1-4 “In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives,

2 as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior.

3 And let not your adornment be merely external--braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses;

4 but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God.”