

Called To Be The Light Of The World In The Midst Of Darkness

Paul foretold that difficult times will lie ahead of us. (2 Timothy 3:1-3) "But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good..." Doesn't that describe much of the content on television and in movies? God is calling people out of such darkness to be "The light of the world" (Matthew 5:14) — A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. That's a tall order. But God is ever ready to help us. Remember that an important part of being that shining light is having Godly Meekness and Gentleness. And someday the whole world will be a peaceful and happy place. That someday is when Christ returns and the Meek inherit the earth!

ALL FRUIT MUST FLOW OUT OF LOVE



"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with

the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love." (1 Cor. 13:1-8, 13) The fruit of faith, hope, and love will remain long after the gifts like prophecy, tongues and word of knowledge have ceased. The gifts are primarily tools that God has given us to stimulate faith in others and to minister to them. However, in order to live your life in such a way that is pleasing to Him, you must bear fruit. The development of the inner nature of a Christ-like character must be behind any use of the spiritual gift. Without the fruit of love growing out of our hearts, everything else would be worthless. Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of My Father Who is in heaven. On that day many will say to Me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and cast out demons in Your name, and do many mighty works in Your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you workers of lawlessness.' (Matthew 7:21-23) Christ is coming back for His body, which is the Church. He's coming for those who possess His nature. "Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience." (Colossians 3:12) It doesn't matter whether or not if you have all the gifts of the Spirit "So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in Him." (1 John 4:16)



Galatians 5:22-23 says that the Holy Spirit works in us to be more like Christ (Ephesians 4:14-16), and part of the fruit, or results, of that work is Gentleness. Gentleness, also translated "Meekness," does not mean weakness. Rather, it involves humility and thankfulness toward God, and polite, restrained behavior toward others. The opposites of Gentleness are anger, a desire

for revenge, and self-aggrandizement. God wants us to give Him control of our lives. Relying on our own logic, we have no impulsion to submit to God's leadership. With the wisdom given to us by the Holy Spirit, however, we begin to see why we should completely submit to God as Lord of our lives. Human power under human control is a half-broken weapon in the hands of a child. But gentleness places our strength under God's guidance; it is a powerful tool for the children of God living in this world and for Kingdom living.



The biblical qualities of meekness and gentleness are misunderstood and undervalued in today's society of extremes—where all too often people tend to angrily overreact or passively underreact.

Yielding To The Holy Spirit - Allowing God To Train Us



Elephants are so strong they have frequently been used for logging to carry large logs and even uproot trees. But these giants are usually gentle, especially when tamed from a young age. The elephant's trunk in particular is an example of strength coupled with precise control. Its trunk, with more than 40,000 individual muscles, is strong enough to rip branches from trees but sensitive enough to pick up a

single blade of grass! The trained elephant illustrates the great value of having both strength and careful gentleness—unlike the proverbial "bull in a china shop." Compared to English, the Greek language has more precise words for describing the valuable quality of trained animals like elephants and horses. The New Testament uses those same Greek words for a virtue God wants His people to develop. When the apostle Paul lists "Meekness" as the eighth attribute among the fruit of the spirit in Galatians 5:23 "Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." We are to be meek (Yielded, Teachable, Responsive) first of all in our relationship with God, and secondly meek (Humble, Gentle, Respectful) in our relationships with people. To become this kind of person, God must tame and train us!

Meekness Produces Gentleness



Meekness is an important part of true love. "Love is patient, love is kind ... It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered" (1 Corinthians 13:4-5) "Charity suffers long, and is kind; charity envies not; charity brags not itself, is not puffed up, Does not behave itself unseemly, seeks not her own, is not easily provoked, thinks no evil;"

The Bible places great value on meekness. Jesus said, (Matthew 5:5) "Blessed are the meek: for

they shall inherit the earth." That's a mighty big reward for being meek! But since "Meek" is no longer a popular or commonly used word, modern Bible translations frequently substitute the almost-synonymous word "Gentle." Scriptures quoted mostly from the New King James Version, which uses "Meek" and "Gentle" interchangeably. However, be aware that **Gentleness refers mostly to actions, whereas Meekness refers to attitude— one's whole state of mind as well as actions. Meekness produces Gentleness.** This explains why meekness is one of the beatitudes—beautiful attitudes for which God promises blessings.

Meekness Is Not Weakness!

Many people confuse "Meek" with "Weak." It's regrettable that they rhyme because Godly meekness requires strength! For a physical comparison, if you were badly injured and needed someone to gently carry you, wouldn't you want someone who was really strong? You wouldn't want a person who might stumble or clumsily struggle with you! Adding to the confusion is the idea that hair-trigger angry reactions are "normal." As a result, some people assume that a person who



doesn't retaliate tit for tat must be afraid or mousy. But true strength is shown by a secure individual who stays cool, thinks first and then responds in the way that will best help the other person. "A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger." (Proverbs 15:10) Consider God! He is all- powerful, but He never misuses His power. He is the perfect Father Who never overreacts, is gentle with His often-unruly children and always does what is best for us. Consider also the example Jesus Christ set while on earth. Although He could call on divine power, He was approachable, sympathetic, kind and loving. He said, "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I Am gentle and lowly [humble] in heart." (Matthew 11:29) He used His power for healing rather than hurting. Remember His words: "Learn from Me."

Gentleness Constrains And Channels That Power

Every person is powerful. We can speak words that influence others; we can act in ways that help or hurt; and we can choose what influences will inform our words and actions. **Gentleness constrains and channels that power. To be gentle is to recognize that God's ways and thoughts are high above our own** (Isaiah 55:9). It is to humbly realize that our worldviews are shaped by exposure to sin and the misinterpretation of experience. It is to accept God's worldview, reflecting truth about the spiritual and the material worlds.

Gentleness- Forgive Readily



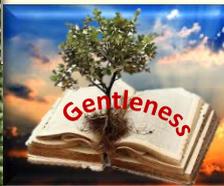
When we are filled with the Spirit's fruit of gentleness, we will correct others with easiness instead of arguing in resentment and anger, knowing that their salvation is far more important than our pride. **We will forgive readily, because any offense toward us is nothing compared to our offenses against God—offenses He's already forgiven.**

God Is The Supreme Judge



Gentleness also means giving up the right to judge what is best for ourselves and others. God is not as concerned with our comfort as He is concerned with our spiritual growth, and He knows how to grow us far better than we do. Gentleness means that we accept that the rain falls on the evil and the just and God may use methods we don't like to reach our hearts and the hearts of others. "There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the One Who is able to save and destroy. But you—who are you to judge your neighbor?" (James 4:12) To live in a Spirit of Gentleness toward God is to accept His judgment on people and issues. We tend to think it is gentle to go easy on people and try to justify actions that God has called sin. Or to let someone continue in sin without speaking the truth. But Paul says, "If anyone is caught in a trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a Spirit of Gentleness" (Galatians 6:1). This doesn't mean to be so soft that the sinner doesn't realize he's sinned. It means to confront the brother in a manner that is in line with Scripture—to be mild, loving, encouraging, and clear about the holiness that God calls us to.

Grow In Meekness And Gentleness



Make a habit of reading God's Word so it can transform your thinking and way of life. "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." (Romans 12:2) Remember that an important part of being that shining light is having Godly Meekness and

Gentleness. To keep your attitudes and actions meek and gentle, you will need to swim upstream against the culture's current of rudeness and roughness.