

Eight of Nine – The Fruit of Meekness

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, **meekness**, temperance: against such there is no law. (Galatians 5:22-23)

Meekness - So often when we think of a meek person or meekness the wrong image comes to mind. I am sort of a movie buff so I thought of a movie called, “*The Man Who Shot Liberty Valiance*.” It stars two of my favorite actors - John Wayne and Jimmy Stewart, and a whole host of other, well-known actors at the time, one of which is Andy Divine. Jimmy Stewart plays the part of Ransom "Ranse" Stoddard, an elderly U.S. Senator and Wayne plays the part of Tom Doniphon, a rancher. And then there is Lee Marvin who plays Liberty Valiance, the gunfighter.

Stewart (Ranse) gets beat up and nursed back to health by Vera Miles who plays Hallie. Now Ranse is not the bravest of the brave but he holds his own pretty well, but he is not Doniphon (John Wayne). Doniphon (Wayne) is the hero who backs Valiance down over his steak being thrown in the floor when Liberty trips Ranse who was waiting tables in the diner. And finally there is the cowardly local marshal played by Andy Divine. This part is how many people view **meekness**, like the cowardly marshal, who is weak in every area of his character and in order to keep the peace, hides and makes excuses for everything that Liberty Valiance does.

So what does it mean to be meek? Do we have any meek hero's? Can one be meek and strong at the same time?

According to Thayer's Definition the word *πραοῦς* which is the Greek word for meekness. It means **gentleness, mildness, meekness**. Strong's concordance adds the word **humility** to the list. Still not revving you up for the hero picture I suppose. Well I remember the story of a man who at one time led a group of men, women and children across a desert, about 3 million of them. He was responsible for getting them water and food, judging argument's between them, finding suitable places to camp and much more. He was also their spiritual leader who spoke with God face to face. If you have not already guessed it this man was Moses. When God had, had enough of the rebellion of his people Moses was the man who went and spoke boldly with God on their behalf. Yet this man was called in the word of God the meekest man that ever lived.

Be as nice as he can be yet as firm as he has to be.

You see, meekness is a fruit that develops the character of people. It is inner strength. It is the kind of strength that allows a pastor to be as nice as he can be yet as firm as he has to be. It is the kind of strength that, even when you may want to slap the person you are dealing with or become angry and seek revenge, you're able to have self-restraint.

Meekness is next to the last fruit and is one of the group that forms character development (as we looked at in a previous article). As we said it can also be defined as humility. When David was about to fight the giant and become the hero of the land of Israel, he went down to the valley, to the brook and picked five smooth stones to use in his sling. Now the valley is a picture of the lowly place of humility. That is where David found what he needed to be able to defeat the enemy. When we accepted Christ we had to humble ourselves in order to find what we needed to defeat our enemy.

The fact that a person has repented of his sins and claimed salvation in Christ does not mean that his whole character has been instantly transformed. Certainly a vitally important process of change has begun and is set in motion, but it will take many years for that change to be worked out in every area of a person's character. It has to be formed over time, and in case you didn't know it, not all Christians like each other, simply because they name the Name of Christ. This is a sad statement but a true one, none the less. But just like those stones David picked from the brook they are made smooth over time.

What made those stones smooth? Two things: one was the water that flowed over them, and the second was the continued jostling and rubbing against the other stones. My friends this is how Christian character is formed in us. We have the washing of the water of the Word - Eph. 5:26-27; John 15:3 and 1Cor.6:11 - and then we are formed by our personal relationships, we rub against each other until rough edges are smoothed out and gradually worn away.

And then we see Jesus, who said He was **meek** and lowly and his burdens were light, yet He is also the Lion of the tribe of Judah...and you don't want to mess with Him or His kids. And when He needs living stones (1 Pet 2:5) for his 'sling', He goes to the valley - a place of humility - and there He chooses stones that have been made smooth over time. These are the mature believers in Christ who have been continually washed by His Word and through personal relationships and regular fellowship (of course the scripture comes to light that reminds us to "forsake not the assembling of ourselves together") in a local community of believers called a church. You see, it is a sign or mark of spiritual maturity to love our fellow Christians. Not just for what they are in themselves but for what they mean to Jesus, who died and shed His precious blood for each and every one.

Meekness is by no means weakness! A weak person could not have gone through what Jesus did, could not have borne the weight of sin and the death on the cross for no fault of His own. He was not only strong physically but mentally and most of all spiritually. Jesus was meek, Jesus was lowly, Jesus was kind yet He is the strongest man that has ever existed.

So you see, when we see just how the Fruit of the Spirit fully developed in us can change us into the image and character of Jesus, we can be both humbled and excited. Humbled, because we can see how far we still have to go, not condemned but encouraged to run our race with patience and press toward the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. And excited because we can look into the future and see ourselves becoming more beautiful and a greater blessing to others than anything the world could ever hope to offer.

We could also describe the fruit of the Spirit as different ways in which the character of Jesus manifests itself through His followers whom He indwells. When all the different aspects of fruit are fully developed, it is as if Jesus by the Holy Spirit is incarnated in His disciple.

As I reflect on the Fruit of the Spirit and look at myself, I can hear the words of the Apostle Paul as he spoke in 1 Corinthians 1:27-31:

*But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye **in Christ Jesus**, who of God is made unto us **wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption**: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, **let him glory in the Lord.** (Bolding added by me)*

Remember...look to your future and not to the past, learn to live in the grace of God and love much, forgive always and hold no bitterness toward anyone.

Bibliography

King James Version . (1611).

Prince, D. (2008). Faith is Fruit. 1-6. Retrieved from www.dpmuk.org

Strong, J. (1996, 1997). *The New Strong's Dictionary of Hebrew and Greek Words*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.
Retrieved from <http://www.geverett.org/>

Wommack, A. (1997-2012). *The Living Commentary*. Andrew Wommack Ministries. Retrieved from <http://www.awmi.net/>