

Five of Nine - Gentleness

Gentleness or Kindness

(Greek: chrestotes) – The word describes the ability to act for the welfare of those taxing your patience. (Strong's #5544)

Gentleness, in Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology, is defined as this: "***Sensitivity of disposition and kindness of behavior, founded on strength and prompted by love.***"

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)

Sometimes translated as "meekness," characterized by a submissive spirit, it was a metaphor taken from domesticated animals. **Gentleness** was not included in the Greek or Stoic lists of virtues, because the Greeks saw it as a weakness. It is uniquely Christian but we must understand that gentleness or meekness should not be viewed as weakness in any way. We can see from such examples as Moses and what the Bible says about him in the book of *Numbers 12:3* - *Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.* Yet Moses stood before God in *Exod. 32:7* and spoke very strong with the Lord God on behalf of the people and God did not do the thing He had thought to do because of the intercession of Moses.

Jesus himself was a meek man, saying, "*Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.*"—*Matthew 11:28-30*, by His own admission. But there is a time to be strong and it can be done without being in sin. Jesus went into the temple and turned the tables of the money-changers over and run them out with a homemade whip all the while telling them "do not

make my Father's house a den of thieves." Yes, Jesus was meek and lowly yet He, too, was in no wise weak in any area of his life.

Rev. Charles Spurgeon had this to say from his message titled, "The Meek and the Lowly One."

"THE FIRST QUALITY WHICH JESUS CHRIST CLAIMS is that he is "MEEK."

Christ is no egotist; he takes no praise to himself. If ever he utters a word in self-commendation, it is not with that object; it is with another design, namely that he may entice souls to come to him. Here, in order to exhibit this meekness, I shall have to speak of him in several ways.

- 1. First, Christ is meek, as opposed to the ferocity of spirit manifested by zealots and bigots.***
- 2. Look at John himself, the most lovely of all the disciples: he would call fire from heaven on a village of Samaritans, because they rejected Christ. Hark to his hot enquiry,—"Wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" Did he suffer one word of anger to leap from his burning heart? Ah! no; there were flames, but they were those of love; there were scalding drops, but they were those of grief. He beheld the city, and wept over it, and said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." And for a further proof of the absence of all uncharitableness, observe that, even when they drove the nails into his blessed hands, yet he had no curse to breathe upon them, but his dying exclamation was, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."***

Then of course we can look at the Apostle Paul and his dealing with the churches. He was strong and very direct but yet had this to say in II Tim. 2:24 - *And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all (men), apt to teach, patient....*

Paul was not advising Timothy to avoid all controversy concerning the faith. As a matter of fact Paul himself regularly reasoned and discussed the scriptures concerning the faith. *"And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three Sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures" (Ac 17:2). "And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks" (Ac 18:4).*

But he did not get into foolish discussions. He avoided foolish debates that did nothing or did not advance the Christian cause in the least way. He was saying to avoid the kinds of questions that lead only to quarrels and strife. Paul gave some very basic guidelines on Christian behavior, which can be applied to any Christian, and especially applies to Christian leaders.

1. The Lord's servant must not strive or be quarrelsome, but be gentle and kind to everyone, even those who ask the stupid questions he spoke of in 2Timothy 2:23
2. The Lord's servant must be "apt to teach."
3. Christian leaders must be patient.

Paul was contrasting "gentle" with "strife." A gentle person would be the opposite of a person who causes strife. This means a gentle person is humble or mild-tempered as the Amplified Bible puts it. A gentle person is a kind person and one who does not demand his own way or have an unforgiving spirit or attitude. *'Now I, Paul, myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who in presence (am) base among you, but being absent am bold toward you.'*

As Christians we are to be a people known for our love and for being kind one to another and to those around us. We all make mistakes and fall short from being perfect and the best we can do does not measure to the holiness of Christ. But this does not excuse us from living a life that is showing forth the fruit of the Spirit in our lives. We are a free people, not free to sin but freed from sin.

Rom. 6:7, *'For he that is dead is freed from sin.'*

There is a real difference in being free and freed. For example, President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation that "freed" the American slaves. Many of those slaves, however, continued to serve their masters in slavery because the truth was hidden from them and they were kept ignorant of the truth and the benefit that had been provided for them and in fact was theirs by law. Gal. 5:22 lists the fruit of the Spirit which is a perfect portrait of Christ. This fruit is being produced in each and every one of us who have accepted Christ's free gift. This fruit of the Spirit is not produced by keeping the Law. Discipline does help. But without the work of the Holy Spirit in a believer's life there will be no spiritual fruit. On the same wise all Christians have been "freed" from sin, but that doesn't automatically mean all Christians

experience the freedom that belongs to them. Through ignorance and deception, Satan continues to maintain mastery over believers who have not yet realized their death and resurrection with Christ or what it means to be "in Christ" (let me recommend a little book by Kenneth E. Hagin titled, "In Him". [You can get it from our store](#))

"There are two freedoms - the false, where a man is free to do what he likes; the true, where a man is free to do what he ought."

Charles Kingsley

So then, in closing, let each one of us that name the name of Christ Jesus be an example of the gospel in the earth and walk in wisdom, remembering the words of James when he said "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, **gentle**, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and **good fruits**, without partiality, and without hypocrisy" (Jas 3:17). Somebody once said "The Gospel of Christ is so simple that you have to have someone help you to misunderstand it". The sad fact is that there are more than enough people who are willing and able to do just that.

God hates sin but was gentle with us. So gentle in fact that he showed us how much he hates sin by giving his own Son to die for our sake. God is always gentle with us! Even when we deserved death He was kind and gentle and merciful. How? By providing Jesus to fulfill the law and pay the debt we could never pay.

The sinless became sin so the sinner could become righteous and be freed from sin. Jesus paid the penalty of the law, which is death, so that we, who were dead, could have life. And we, who are now believers, can see God as gentle and not as a harsh judge because of His love for His Son who has made provision for a spotless unblemished bride, His church. We now have faith in His work, and can say with Paul, the life we now live, we live by the faith of the Son of God. We have faith in the finished work of Christ. We have faith in what He did not in what we do.

'I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.'

(Galatians 2:20)

It has been said, 'Gentleness is a strong hand with a soft touch.' Paul said in Philippians 4:5, '*Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord (is) at hand.*' The word moderation was translated "gentle" three times, "patient" one time, and "moderation" one time in the King James Version. In other translations this verse is rendered:

- (NIV84) Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.
- (NKJV) Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand.
- (GNB) Show a gentle attitude toward everyone. The Lord is coming soon.
- (GW) Let everyone know how considerate you are. The Lord is near.
- (ISV) Let your gracious attitude be known to all people. The Lord is near:

We can see this word gentleness indicates a thoughtful, considerate and decent outlook. And not hotly demanding his or her rights, whatever the cost to others. I have seen this kind of attitude on display in restaurants when the server brought (or did) something wrong. I am sad to say it was by Christians and sadder yet at times it was done by this writer. This is never the way we, as believers, should be.

Why is it important to let our gentleness be evident to all? Well, Paul gave us good a reason for letting this godly trait of "moderation" or "gentleness" be displayed before mankind: Because "the Lord is at hand." Jesus is coming soon, and that means we will soon be facing our Creator. All of mankind needs to be ready, and we are God's witnesses to prepare others and get them ready.

Therefore, we need to be about our Father's business of leading people to Jesus and making disciples out of them. The way we do this is to let Christ shine through us, or let our "moderation be known unto all men."

This is Gentleness, this is Power, this is God's nature and as He is, so are we (to be) in this earth. John 4:17

Blessings!! And 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

(Wate, 2002) (Strong, 2010) (Bible) (Wommack, 2007)

