

Meekness: “I Am Gentle and Humble in Heart”
Numbers 12:1-15; Matthew 11:28-30

Definitions:

Meekness (n)—quality of being meek.

Meek (adj)—quiet, gentle, easily imposed on; submissive.

Robert Ringer wrote a book called *Looking Out for No. 1*, which became a best seller. This was a surprise to the author of this Bible Study because most people he met could probably have written it and hardly needed to read it. Against our culture’s emphasis on being aggressive, standing up for your rights, and speaking out, Jesus’ teaching that “the meek shall inherit the earth” looks impractical and naïve (**Matt. 5:5**).

The word *meekness* conjures up wrong images for some people. It may denote a syrupy, self-denying quality or a quality which women have but “real men” do not. On the other hand, meekness may be something we want very much. But, we feel discouraged because the whole make-up of our personality is so far from being gentle.

We all have different temperaments and personalities. Some of us are just naturally upbeat, some are easily angered, others tend toward depression, still others are laid back. How does your particular temperament affect how you express meekness?

The word *meekness* suffers because it rhymes with weakness, and the two have become synonymous in people’s minds. We’ll see from Moses’ and Jesus’ lives that being meek is not being weak, and it doesn’t usually come naturally. Like every other aspect of Spirit life, meekness—also called gentleness—is possible through obedience to and dependence upon the Spirit of Christ, who himself was gentle and humble in heart.

Some have said that meekness is “strength under control.” As adjectives, the difference between weakness and meekness is that weakness means lacking in force (usually strength) or ability, while meekness is humble, modest, meager, or self-effacing (not claiming attention to one’s self).

1. Read Numbers 12:1-15.

- It appears in this passage of Scripture, that Miriam and Aaron were upset with their brother Moses because he had married an Ethiopian woman (vs. 1).
- By their questions in verse 2, it is implied that they were upset that Moses was the leader and that God was speaking to him only.
- As we review God’s opinion of Moses stated in verses 6-9, Moses could have responded to his siblings’ criticism with pride and arrogance.
- Have you ever been in a situation like Moses where you had the upper hand? How did you respond?

The Fruit of the Spirit (Fisherman Bible Study); *Fruit of The Spirit* (Life Guide Bible Studies), *Fruit of The Spirit* (Zondervan); *New American Standard Bible*; *Amplified Holy Bible*; *Open Bible KJV*

- Moses made no attempt to explain his unique status with God. His gentleness and meekness were shown when he interceded for Miriam.

2. Read Matthew 11:28-30.

- In **Matthew 11:28-30**, Jesus invites us to do several things: 1) to come unto Him, 2) to take His yoke upon us, and 3) to learn of him. He promises rest unto our souls.
 - a. Many think this invitation is only for the unsaved to come that are burden with sin. But it is also an invitation to those who are saved and need rest.
 - b. This is both an invitation for rest and work.
- We have to have an attitude of meekness, humility, and submissiveness in our heads and hearts in coming to Jesus to find rest.
- Jesus describes himself as being meek and lowly in heart. The difference between being gentle and humble in heart verses being spinelessly submissive is that the first is a choice. Jesus had power, might, and control but He chose to be gentle and humble. **Philippians 2:8** reads, “And being found in the fashion as a man, he (Jesus) humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”
- When arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus told Peter, after he had smote off the servant’s ear, “Thinkest thou that I cannot pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?” (**Matthew 26:53**). Jesus chose to humble himself and be subject to the arrest. He chose not to be assertive.
- Meekness, being part of the nature of Christ, becomes a learning experience for his disciples as they are yoked to him. Not only does the life of Christ model meekness, but commitment to him enables disciples to develop it in their lives. In much the same way that the farmer would lay the heavy wooden yoke over the shoulder of both the old ox and the young one in order that they might walk in step, so the Lord teaches meekness one step at a time to those who walk with him.

The following verses mention areas in which we are called to live with gentleness and humility:

- **Galatians 6:1**: “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of **meekness**; considering thyself lest thou be tempted.”
- **2 Timothy 2:24-25**: “And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In **meekness** instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;”
- **James 1:21**: “Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with **meekness** the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.”

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- **1 Peter 3:1-4:** “Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a **meek** and **quiet** spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.”

Our temperament and personality affects how we express this fruit of the Spirit called meekness. Temperament is a person’s or animal’s nature, especially as it permanently affects their behavior. Some people by their make up are louder than others, or not soft spoken. Some people have a tendency to behave angrily or emotionally. Being meek and gentle doesn’t always mean being quiet and soft-spoken. Jesus, when he overthrew the moneychanger’s tables in the temple, doesn’t appear to be soft spoken.

Is there a circumstance in your life right now in which you need to show the true strength of meekness? Ask God to help you with whatever the situation is.

Now or Later

For a picture of gentleness in a strong, upfront personality, read **1 Peter 3:15-16**. Ask God to help you to be a gentle evangelist.

Homework: Read **1 Corinthians 9:19-21; 2 Peter 1:3-7**

Topic: Self-Control: “Add to Your Faith...Self-Control”