Lesson 18 Opening Thoughts on Gentleness:

Meekness is roughly equivalent in common usage to humility. It is one of the Seven virtues in Christian tradition.

MEEKNESS

The virtue that moderates anger and its disorderly effects. It is a form of temperance that controls every inordinate movement of resentment at another person's character or behavior.

MILDNESS

Gentleness in disposition and behavior. As a fruit of the Holy Spirit, it is a perfection of love which tempers justice by avoiding any unnecessary action that might provoke anger or resentment.

MERCY

The disposition to be kind and forgiving. Founded on compassion, mercy differs from compassion or the feeling of sympathy in putting this feeling into practice with a readiness to assist. It is therefore the ready willingness to help anyone in need, especially in need of pardon or reconciliation.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Within our contemporary understandings of meekness, we usually associate it with being weak, soft, or cowardly. In contrast, the Judeo-Christian tradition considers meekness to be our submissiveness to God. Building on the first beatitude regarding poverty of spirit, being meek is the recognition of our vulnerability and powerlessness without God in our lives. When we are meek, we are humble before God, and we receive the patience and strength not to sin against God and our neighbors. According to St. Augustine, the Holy Spirit gives us the gift of piety that helps us to be open to God's will and commandments in the face of our trials and problems. This beatitude counters the sin of wrath. Anger can become a sin when we decide and will to be angry or when our anger becomes irrational. Meekness can steer us away from destructive and hateful anger that can destroy our relationship with God and others.

Meekness therefore is a type of patience and selflessness that avoids harming others. In terms of our relationships with others, to be meek requires strength and courage to fight our inclinations to anger, violence, hatred or envy. In addition, meekness makes us sensitive to the sufferings of others, enables us to be forgiving, and leads to a world that is calmer and more peaceful. It even helps us to love those around us and see Christ in them, even those who bother us. When Christ says that the meek will inherit the earth, it is counter-intuitive. While our culture thinks of inheritance in the terms of material possessions and wealth, our Christian faith sees an inheritance based on our faith, love and obedience to God. Because the meek have God as the center of their lives, they will not make the pursuit of material possessions, power or influence their focus. Therefore, as disciples of Christ we will inherit the earth and all that God has promised to us.

Also in 1Peter 2:23, concerning Jesus Christ's behavior in general and submission to unjust torture and execution in particular: "Who, when he was reviled, did not revile: when he suffered, he threatened not: but delivered himself to him that judged him justly."
Lesson 18 Closing Thoughts on Gentleness:

DIVINE MERCY

The love of God beyond what humankind deserves. In one sense, every manifestation of God’s love is an expression of mercy, since, absolutely speaking, God is not obligated even to create. But more properly, mercy is the exercise of divine charity toward those who have sinned. Mercy, then, is God’s continued love of humans although they have sinned, his forgiving love that invites them to be reconciled with the God against whom they have sinned, his condoning love that mitigates and is even willing to remove all the punishment due to sin, and his superabundant love that mysteriously blesses the repentant sinners beyond what they might have received from God had they not sinned.

Humility is defined as, "A quality by which a person considering his own defects has a humble opinion of himself and willingly submits himself to God and to others for God's sake." St. Bernard defines it as, "A virtue by which a man knowing himself as he truly is, abases himself. Jesus Christ is the ultimate definition of Humility.

St. Thomas Aquinas, defines humility similarly as that "which consists in keeping onesel within one's own bounds, not reaching out to things above one, but submitting to one's superior"

"True humility" is distinctly different from "false humility" which consists of deprecat ing one's own sanctity, gifts, talents, and accomplishments for the sake of receiving praise or adulation from others. True humility comprises the following behaviors and attitudes:

1. Submitting to God and legitimate authority.
2. Recognizing virtues and talents that others possess, particularly those that surpass one's own, and giving due honor and, when required, obedience.
3. Recognizing the limits of one's talents, ability, or authority; and, not reaching for what is beyond one's grasp.

As illustrated in the person of Moses, who leads the nation of Hebrews out of slavery in Egypt and to the “Promised Land”, humility is a sign of Godly strength and purpose, not weakness. “For Moses was a man exceeding meek above all men that dwelt upon earth" (Numbers 12:3).

As we prepare to celebrate Mother’s day, meditate on how we can exhibit gentleness towards all, especially the women in our lives.

Gentleness - Posted by Dave Armstrong
*Gentleness is a very godly trait (Gal 5:22).
*Jesus was "meek and lowly of heart" and gentle with the woman at the well, and the woman caught in adultery (cf. 2 Cor 10:1).
*A gentle (or "soft") answer turns away wrath (Prov 15:1).
*Gentleness is mercy: the kind treatment of the penitent or even the still-sinning sinner.
*Gentleness is understanding and forbearance: a listening ear, a hand on the shoulder, the empathetic smile, a shoulder to cry on, compassionate, sympathetic tears, a bear hug for the hurting......
*Gentleness is the macho he-man's caressing and cuddling of a frightened young infant in the middle of the night.
*Gentleness is timing, sensitivity, perceptiveness of another's mood, fragility, or vulnerability.
*Gentleness is kindness and the befriending of a person considered by society as of "lower status."
*Gentleness is humility and meekness, the silent, selfless accepting of indignities and injustice, knowing from Whom we derive our self-worth.
*Gentleness is refraining from lecturing, rebuking, or talking down to the hurting confidant.
*Gentleness is a soft word of assurance or hope to a fearful child, friend, or other loved one.
*Gentleness is (for men) always cherishing and treating women with respect; chivalry, and with a delicate, soft, tender touch (figuratively and literally).
*Gentleness is moderation in response to extremity, meekness in response to condescension, humility in response to compliments, calmness in response to anger.
*Gentleness is the opposite of quarrelsome (2 Tim 2:24, Titus 3:2).
*Gentleness is the opposite of harsh (1 Pet 2:18).
*Gentleness is to be the characteristic of our defense of Christianity and our own hope (1 Pet 3:15-16).
*Gentleness comes from the heart of God, and must be in our hearts if we are to follow and imitate Him.
*Gentleness is patience and longsuffering with our stumbling fellow human beings, so much like us.
*Gentleness is, in a word, LOVE!

Yes, our gentle Lord has given us a mind to call our own and He lets us go our own way while all the time, like the father in the parable of the prodigal son, He watches for our return. That is the way of gentleness. No forcing, no violence, no harshness, no threats: only patience, love and kindness. When a culture has been shaped by God for 2000 years, it imitates His ways, and transmits His presence.

The consequences of gentleness are incalculable, for such a spirit can ripple out to touch the lives of those far removed from the original act. Gentleness/Meekness sows the seeds that can only bear good fruit.

We must go out and replace the anger and violence of life with our gentleness.

Remember, it is impossible to produce genuine Christ like Gentleness by ourselves. A new converted and transformed heart is required. Then a growth process follows which can only take place as we submit to and obey the Holy Spirit. He nurtures those positive character changes that are reflected in our relationships. So let the Holy Spirit put off our old selves and put on the new and virtuous heart of love by growing in gentleness.

GO MAD - Go Out and Make A Difference by being Gentle and Meek with all our brothers and sisters.
Lesson 18 Questions and Answers


Jesus accepted the scourging, crow of thorns, mockery and beating as the King of the Jews. Although he had ultimate power, he did not let his anger flare or use it for revenge. In humility he accepted his mission and submitted to the Father’s will. Jesus, in gentleness, used silence in the face of Pilate’s power, to show that his love and mercy was greater than the people’s anger.

2. Read Matthew 5:5. ’What promises are made to the person who is meek? Why do you think this is so?

Christ is meek and humble of heart. Those who follow his example will inherit salvation and eternal life. Those who walk in love and humility will walk in the way of Christ. We will not use our power for selfish gain. Christ came in meekness and obedience to God’s plan of salvation. He came to win salvation in spite of man’s sinfulness. God’s mercy is the source of his gentleness. His justice is restrained by his overwhelming love for us. If we only ask forgiveness, like the good thief, he will grant it in his meekness. He came not to punish but to save.

3. Colossians 3:12-17 encourages us to clothe ourselves with meekness, compassion, kindness, humility, and patience. How does God want us to put on meekness and these other characteristics?

God wants us to bear one another’s faults and forgive the wrongs done to us by others just as we ask God to forgive us our sins. Love is the bonding force that leads to our perfection. We must be in peace with Christ and our brothers. We must let God’s word and Spirit dwell within us and be thankful and grateful for His help. We must to everything in the name of Jesus Christ and for His glory and not seek any credit for ourselves, for we are sinners saved by His love and mercy.

What does it mean to be Gentle/Meek?
See opening and closing.

How can we come to a clear understanding of how strong the meek person truly is?
See question 1

What three Christ like attributes are directly interwoven with gentleness?
Humility, Justice, and Mercy

What vices are the opposite of gentleness?
Pride and wrath