

## THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT “Meekness”

*When discussing something at length, it is always advisable to define one's terms. The NIV translates meekness as gentleness which is the KJV rendering of kindness. Once again, this tells us how closely intertwined the fruit are, seeing that some seem to be synonymous! We are going to stick with meekness because meekness speaks primarily to the attitude of heart, while gentleness speaks more to action or demeanor.*

*What is meekness? Well, after a careful study and consideration, I have settled upon the following operational definition:*

**Meekness:** an attitude of serene confidence springing from the knowledge that my will is subject to God's will and that my actions are in accordance with His direction.

*I think that after we go through this, you will see why I decided on this operational definition. The best synonym for meek is humble. One who is humble has subjected himself to the will of God.*

*In our examination of the fruit of the Spirit called meekness, we are going to look at the meekness in the Godhead, the meekness of Moses as a type of Christ, and the Messenger Principle.*

### **Meekness in the Godhead-**

*We are studying the fruit of the Spirit to understand the Holy Spirit and how He deals with us. By now, it should not surprise us that the Spirit is meek (there is even a phrase “spirit of meekness” in the Bible!). The truth is that the entire Godhead is meek.*

#### 1. The Father- John 14:16-17

16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever-  
17 the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him.  
But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. NIV

*Whenever we fulfill the wish of another, we are being submitted to their will. Being submitted to another's will is to be meek. You may not be used to thinking of the Father this way, but that He answers the request of the Son (and of us) shows His meekness.*

#### Matt 26:50-53

50 Jesus replied, "Friend, do what you came for." Then the men stepped forward, seized Jesus and arrested him.  
51 With that, one of Jesus' companions reached for his sword, drew it out and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear.  
52 "Put your sword back in its place," Jesus said to him, "for all who draw the sword will die by the sword.

53 Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? NIV

*What was the Father's will in this situation? For the Son to offer himself up as a sacrifice. And yet Jesus said he could have called out to the Father and the Father would have committed to Him 72,000 angels to get out of the garden intact. Consider that! The Father would have submitted His will to the Son if the Son had requested it. But what does Jesus say?*

Matt 26:54

But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?" NIV

*Jesus knew that if He had requested the celestial army, Scripture would not have been fulfilled.*

2. The Son-

Matt 11:28-30

28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

29 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.

30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. KJV

*Jesus describes himself as being meek and humble of heart.*

Matt 26:39

Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will." NIV

*The garden and the cross are the ultimate examples of the meekness of Jesus. He was subservient unto death.*

3. The Holy Spirit-

Matt 3:16-4:1

16 As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him.

17 And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

1 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. NIV

*In His earthly ministry, Jesus was subservient to the leading of the Spirit. But look at what He promises His disciples regarding a time after His ascension.*

John 16:12-15

12 "I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear.

13 But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. **He will not speak on his own**; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.

14 He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you.

15 All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you. NIV

*Now the Spirit does not speak on His own. He takes His lead from the Lord Jesus Christ. Where once He led Jesus to the wilderness, now Jesus pours Him out.*

Acts 2:32-33

32 God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact.

33 Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. NIV

*Each member of the Godhead operates in perfect unity and submission to one another, which is why they are One. He expects no less of us.*

Eph 4:1-6

1 I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,

2 With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;

3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;

5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. KJV

Eph 5:21 **Submitting yourselves one to another** in the fear of God. KJV

*Since the Spirit follows the leading of Jesus and is meek toward Him, He can lead us into meekness as we follow His direction*

### **The Meekness of Moses as a Type of Christ**

Num 12:1-3 KJV

1 And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married: for he had married an Ethiopian woman.

2 And they said, Hath the LORD indeed spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us? And the LORD heard it.

3 (Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.)

*The Lord's comment of the meekness of Moses is in the context of his leadership being opposed by his own family (sound familiar?). How did Moses exhibit meekness in the face of opposition?*

1. He would cry out to God.

Ex 15:24-25

24 **And the people murmured against Moses**, saying, What shall we drink?

25 **And he cried unto the LORD**; and the LORD shewed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them, KJV

Ex 17:3-4

- 3 And the people thirsted there for water; **and the people murmured against Moses**, and said, Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?
- 4 **And Moses cried unto the LORD**, saying, What shall I do unto this people? they be almost ready to stone me. KJV

*Moses did not try to defend his own cause, but entrusted himself to the One who judges justly.*

1 Peter 2:21-24

- 21 To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.
- 22 "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth."
- 23 When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.
- 24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. NIV

*When opposed, Moses didn't cry out to those afflicting him. He cried out to the one who could deliver him.*

Heb 5:7

During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. NIV

2. He considered an attack on him as an attack on God.

Ex 16:2, 8 NIV

- 2 In the desert **the whole community grumbled against Moses and Aaron**.
- 8 Moses also said, "You will know that it was the LORD when he gives you meat to eat in the evening and all the bread you want in the morning, because he has heard your grumbling against him. **Who are we? You are not grumbling against us, but against the LORD.**"

Num 16:3

- 3 **They came as a group to oppose Moses and Aaron** and said to them, "You have gone too far! The whole community is holy, every one of them, and the LORD is with them. Why then do you set yourselves above the LORD's assembly?"
- 11 **It is against the LORD that you and all your followers have banded together**. Who is Aaron that you should grumble against him?" NIV

*Since Moses was faithfully following the direction of the Lord (Heb 3:5-6), he understood that the people's resistance to him was really a resistance to God. Thus he did not pridefully take it personally but informed them that they were truly grumbling against God. To accept the messenger is to accept the one who sent him.*

*When one views their position as a possession and a right to be defended, then pride manifests itself and war breaks out between people seeking their own interests. But when one holds their position as an assignment from God and faithfully represents Him, then all threats to or questions of their authority can be confidently referred to the One who delegated it. If we let God fight our fights, victory is sure.*

John 5:23b He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him. NIV

3. He was willing to suffer personally for the failure of others to obey the commandment.

Ex 32:30-32 NIV

30 The next day Moses said to the people, "You have committed a great sin. But now I will go up to the LORD; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin."

31 So Moses went back to the LORD and said, "Oh, what a great sin these people have committed! They have made themselves gods of gold.

32 But now, please forgive their sin--but if not, then blot me out of the book you have written."

*Moses was willing to take the reproach of God for the sin of the people. Even when the Lord promised to start over and make Moses like another Abraham or Jacob (Ex 32:9-14), Moses prayed for the people that they would be forgiven. He meekly laid aside even his eternal well being for the sake of others. Of course, God let him know that those who sinned would actually be punished. Moses' intercession was typical of what Jesus would actually do, suffering separation from God for the sin of others.*

Isa 53:4-6

4 Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted.

5 But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.

6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. NIV

4. He interceded for those who opposed him.

*This can be clearly seen in Scriptures like Numbers 16:3-4; 14:2-5; 21:5-7. One of the most dramatic is in Numbers 16:41-50.*

Num 16:41-50

41 The next day the whole Israelite community grumbled against Moses and Aaron. "You have killed the LORD's people," they said.

42 But when the assembly gathered in opposition to Moses and Aaron and turned toward the Tent of Meeting, suddenly the cloud covered it and the glory of the LORD appeared.

43 Then Moses and Aaron went to the front of the Tent of Meeting,

44 and the LORD said to Moses,

45 "Get away from this assembly so I can put an end to them at once." And they fell facedown.

46 Then Moses said to Aaron, "Take your censer and put incense in it, along with fire from the altar, and hurry to the assembly to make atonement for them. Wrath has come out from the LORD; the plague has started."

47 So Aaron did as Moses said, and ran into the midst of the assembly. The plague had already started among the people, but Aaron offered the incense and made atonement for them.  
48 He stood between the living and the dead, and the plague stopped.  
49 But 14,700 people died from the plague, in addition to those who had died because of Korah.  
50 Then Aaron returned to Moses at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting, for the plague had stopped. NIV

*How often do we stand up against accusation instead of laying down in intercession? If we are not meek, we seek our own cause in the face of opposition instead of recognizing the danger those opposing us face when we are representing God. When we are in His will and we are being opposed, meekness mandates mediation for the madness of mutiny. We should pray for the Lord's mercy on those who oppose Him.*

Heb 7:25

Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them. NIV

Rom 8:34

Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. NIV

*Much of meekness has to do with yielding our rights. Moses yielded his right to react against the people and instead cried out to God and entrusted himself to His justice. He yielded his right to take their rebellion personally and placed their offense on the One they were truly rebelling against. He yielded his right to revenge and instead offered to suffer the consequence of the sin of others. He yielded his right to defend himself and instead interceded for those who opposed him. It would do us well to remember that Moses was dealing with his own people in these troubles, not the enemies of other nations. This should tell us much how we are supposed to behave toward others in the church!*

### **The Messenger Principle-**

*The messenger principle states that it is the message and the sender that are important, not the messenger. The messenger's responsibility is to faithfully represent the sender not only in content, but demeanor as well. Jesus did this perfectly, which is why He is called the "faithful and true witness."*

*If we understand the messenger principle, then we will not react as if personally attacked when people do not receive the message. Rejection of the message is a rejection primarily of the sender, not the messenger. And though they may shoot the messenger, their quarrel is ultimately with the sender and they must answer to Him.*

John 12:44-45, 49-50

44 Then Jesus cried out, "When a man believes in me, he does not believe in me only, but in the one who sent me.

45 When he looks at me, he sees the one who sent me.

49 For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it.

50 I know that his command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say." NIV

*Since our message comes from Him, we can be meek in evangelism, exhortation, and exercise of authority.*

### 1. Evangelism

1 Peter 3:15

But sanctify the Lord God [*set apart Christ as Lord*]in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you **with meekness** and fear: KJV

*Not only are we to give the message with meekness, only the meek will receive it.*

Isa 61:1

The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; **because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek**; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; KJV

### 2. Exhortation

2 Tim 2:24-26

24 And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient,  
25 In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;

26 And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will. KJV

*Jesus said to learn of Him because He was meek. If we are not meek, it will be hard for us to be skilled in teaching.*

### 3. Exercise of Authority (metron and meekness)

2 Cor 10:1

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: KJV

*He beseeches them in meekness and then goes on to say that all they had done had been done within the boundaries of their commission, within their metron.*

*I cite the whole passage because exercising one's full authority within the sphere that the Lord has given him is a function of meekness. When I do not boast of things outside my measure, then I am comfortably confident in the confines of my commission. Other people's railings need not deter or swerve me from my purpose because I am sure of my authority in Him. If I do not fill up the measure of my commission, then I am being timid, not meek. If I go beyond my measure into somebody else's, then I am usurping authority. I am not being bold, I am being belligerent.*

## The Promise-

Matt 5:5 Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. NIV

*This is a quotation of Psalm 37:11. If we take the Lord's statement to be in the style of rabbinical teaching, then we can assume that His citation refers us to the whole section. Who are the meek?*

Ps 37:1-11

- 1 Do not fret because of evil men or be envious of those who do wrong;
- 2 for like the grass they will soon wither, like green plants they will soon die away.
- 3 **Trust in the LORD and do good;** dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture.
- 4 **Delight yourself in the LORD** and he will give you the desires of your heart.
- 5 **Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him** and he will do this:
- 6 He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun.
- 7 **Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him; do not fret when men succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes.**
- 8 Refrain from anger and turn from wrath; do not fret--it leads only to evil.
- 9 For evil men will be cut off, **but those who hope in the LORD will inherit the land.**
- 10 A little while, and the wicked will be no more; though you look for them, they will not be found.
- 11 But **the meek<sup>1</sup> will inherit the land** and enjoy great peace. NIV

*This psalm lists a number of things that the meek are to do and a number of things they are not to do.*

## To Do List-

- Trust in the Lord – verses 3 and 5.
- Delight yourself in the Lord – verse 4.
- Commit your way to the Lord – verse 5.
- Be still before the Lord – verse 7.
- Wait patiently for the Lord – verse 7.

*All of these actions move us away from self and toward Him. Trusting in the Lord leads us away from trusting ourselves or the arm of men. Delighting ourselves in the Lord puts our affections on Him and what He desires instead of us and what we desire. Committing our way to the Lord means that we have left our course to His direction. Being still before the Lord and waiting patiently for Him means that we are not agitated in presumption but respectfully wait for our Sovereign to speak. All of these speak of a meek spirit, for we have humbled ourselves before the Lord.*

*All the above actions are encapsulated in the phrase “those who hope in the Lord.” They, like the meek, are promised the inheritance of the land. In other words, those who hope in the Lord are meek.*

### **The Do Not List-**

- ❑ Do not fret because of evil men – verse 1. To fret means to glow or grow warm, to blaze up.
- ❑ Do not be envious of those who do wrong – verse 1.
- ❑ Do not fret when men seem to succeed while doing evil – verse 7.
- ❑ Refrain from anger – verse 8. Anger here is heavy breathing.
- ❑ Turn from wrath – verse 8. Wrath is a burning anger, also called venom or poison because of the fever that the poison causes.
- ❑ Do not fret – verse 8.

*Anger is the warning smoke that pride is beginning to take hold in our life. When we are prideful, we are not meek. Following are some questions for self-examination:*

1. Have you dedicated yourself to God and yielded all your rights to Him?
2. Do people ask you why you are so peaceful when serious adversities come into your life?
3. Do people resist your instruction, counsel, or advice?
4. Do you speak evil of those in positions of leadership?
5. Have you exchanged your burdens for the yoke of Christ?<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from *The Power for True Success*, p. 133, the IBLP.