

**TRUE FELLOWSHIP**

**BIBLE STUDY**

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**Christian Attitude**

**GENTLENESS**

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## *Christian Attitudes*

# *Gentleness*

Gentleness or meekness is one of those valuable marks of the Christian Spirit which often goes unappreciated and misunderstood. Too often the world has made fun of the notion of gentleness. To be gentle has been seen as a sign of weakness instead of strength. The world has rejected as crazy the notion, the gentle will inherit the earth. What in the world is really involved in this word and the concepts being presented? Why has the very teaching been so hard for the world to accept?

### **THE PRINCIPLE**

The word translated "gentleness" or "meekness" means to be "under control." It was the same as having self control. Instead the control of gentleness is from the outside. The word was used of the taming of a wild animal to make it usable. For example, a wild horse can be tamed to be ridden or to be worked in other ways. When a horse has been tamed we say, "It is gentle." Even children are told not to be afraid of this huge animal, because it is gentle. Notice the gentleness of the horse doesn't lessen it's power, strength or size. It simply means it is under control. You can guide it by the reins. You can say, "Whoa," and it will stop. It is controlled by someone who is much, much smaller and weaker. But they have been tamed.

For us to be gentle means we are yielding control of our lives over to God. Instead of the concept of "I did it my way" or "I'll have my own way or I won't play," it is "Not my will, but yours

be done." Jesus best demonstrated the concept in His life on earth. He said, "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My load is light" (Matthew 11:28-30). Jesus is in nature equal to God the Father (Philippians 2:5-11). But throughout His ministry, His plea was "I didn't come to do My will, but the will of Him who sent Me" (John 6:38 [Cheryl, paraphrased]). When it came to the cross itself and the will of Jesus was to not take the road which led to the cross, His prayer was, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as Thou wilt" (Matthew 26:39).

### **THE GENTLE SUBMIT**

It is the person who has learned to be gentle of heart who is bearing the fruit of the Spirit in his life (Galatians 5:22, 23), who readily yields his will to God's will and does what He says, even when his own views are quite different. In Romans 6:16-18, God had Paul to pen, "Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness? But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness."

Will the Christian always want to do what God says for them to do? No! Sometimes, like Jesus, our will is different from the Father's will. We know what He commands but want to live a different life or even head in a different direction. We may even be able to manufacture a multitude of reasons why it is all right for us to go another way than the one given by God. But, it will all betray a lack of gentleness or meekness in our lives.

Gentleness has a simple plan.

Have Thine own way Lord,  
Have Thine own way!  
Thou art the potter;  
I am the clay.  
Mold me and make me  
After Thy will,  
While I am waiting,  
Yielded and still.

Or perhaps another song,

Take my life and let it be  
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee;  
...  
Take my hands, and let them move  
At the impulse of Thy love;  
...  
Take my will, and make it Thine:  
It shall be no longer mine;  
...

The heart set on gentleness will also be set on learning God's will in given areas of life, so they can fully submit to that will. When there are clear teachings in the Bible, they will simply be accepted as given and we will give every effort to obey. When there is no clear statement in Scripture on a given theme, we will search for the principles which apply to the question and strive to do what we believe God want us to do, always praying for His guidance and Help.

### THE BLESSING

The blessing of gentleness is "for they shall inherit the earth" (Matthew 5:5). This blessing would have been many times easier to comprehend and explain if the blessing had been, the gentle will inherit heaven. But that isn't what

Jesus said. He declared the gentle will inherit the earth. Back in Psalm 37:11 there is a background statement on this same point which may help our understanding. "But the humble will inherit the land, and will delight themselves in abundant prosperity." Earlier in verse 9 He said, "For evil-doers will be cut off, but those who wait for the Lord, they will inherit the land."

The world generally thinks the rule of the earth or land goes to the strong, the mighty. We talk of the "survival of the fittest." Whoever has the biggest guns and the most bombs shall rule.

But the teaching of God throughout Scripture has been the very opposite. The Old Testament is full of illustrations where the weaker won over the strong because God was on the side of the weak. David killed Goliath. Gideon and his band of three hundred defeated the Midianites with their thousands. The battle is not to the strong. It is to those who lean of God and find *their strength in Him*.

### HOW DO WE INHERIT THE EARTH?

But the question remains "How do we inherit the earth?" Not in the sense of ownership. Ultimately the plan of God is for the "... heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up" (2 Peter 3:10). All the deeds in the world will not give title in the end.

We inherit the earth in that it is the gentle who gain the greatest joy and fulfillment from the earth. They are under God's control and thus see His hand of love and guidance in the world. They can see His footprints on the earth and His fingerprints on creation. Because it is His, the gentle know and appreciate it all the more.

The gentle inherit the earth in that when this earth is dissolved God will give us a "... new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells" (2 Peter 3:13). The new earth will be our final dwelling place with God in Heaven. The gentle do inherit the new earth or dwelling place where they will live with Him forevermore.