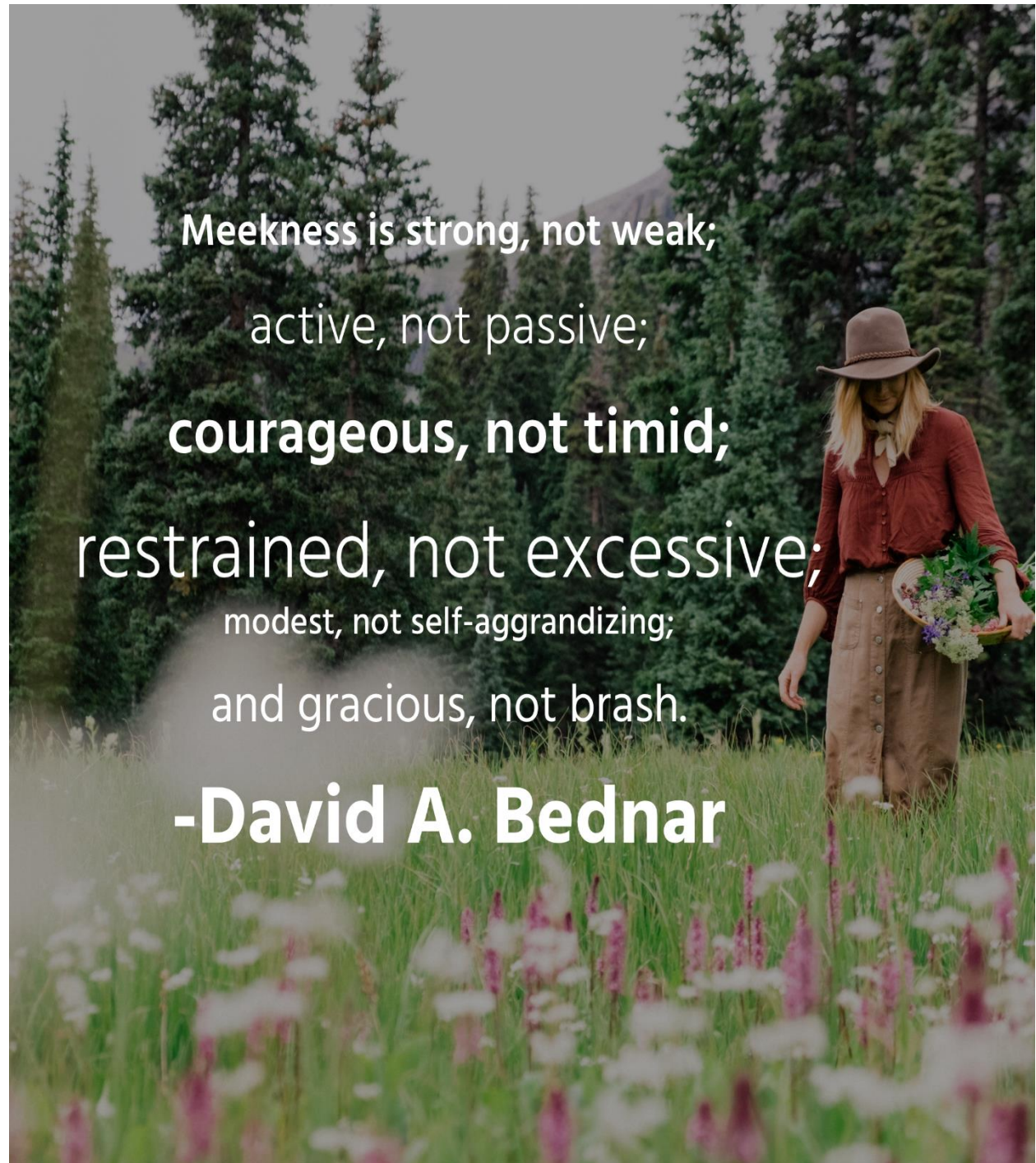


# **MEEKNESS ISN'T WEAKNESS!**

**By David Lee Burris**



Meekness is strong, not weak;  
active, not passive;

**courageous, not timid;**

restrained, not excessive;

modest, not self-aggrandizing;

and gracious, not brash.

**-David A. Bednar**

## Misconceptions of Meekness

- **Correct definition is essential:**  
*Meekness is the character of Christ*  
(Col 3:12) Matt 11:29; 12:19 (2 Cor 10:1); Eph 4:1-2
  - Meekness is not weakness
  - Meekness is not cowardice
  - Meekness is not indecisiveness

Part 5 (2)

## Meekness toward God

- **“Disposition of spirit in which we accept His dealings with us as good, and therefore without disputing or resisting.”**  
(Thayer)
  - Of great value to God, 1 Pet 3:4
    - Paul’s meekness, 2 Cor 12:7-9
  - In OT, those who wholly rely on God, Num 12:1-3, 6-8 (cf. Rom 12:18-19)

Part 5 (5)

## Meekness toward People

- **“Be gentle, showing all humility to all men”, Titus 3:2**
  - As a spouse, Col 3:18-19 (1 Pet 3:3-4)
  - As a parent, Col 3:21
  - As an employee, Col 3:22-25
  - As an employer, Col 4:1

Part 5 (6)

**Synonyms –**

**patient, gentle, humble, modest, mild**

**Antonyms –**

**arrogant, proud, and haughty**

➔ **Expresses how one reacts to another**



➔ **Ancient Greeks used “meekness” to explain “anger.” Aristotle defined “meekness” as being between excessive anger and non-anger.**

➔ **The meek person is not passive; it is not apathetic.**



**“Meekness is the sanctification of anger...You can tell how close a person is to the Lord, and to what extent the Lord lives in him and self is dead, by noticing what he gets angry at and when. Anger betrays a great deal ... How blessed is the person who always gets angry at the right time, at the right things he should be angry at and never angry at the wrong time”**



## **“The Beatitudes” by James M. Tolle** **Chapter Excerpt: “Meek Indeed Earth Inherit”**



- ❖ **In meekness only are we the inheritors of the earth. Meekness only makes the spiritual retina pure to receive God’s things as they are, mingling with them neither imperfection nor impurity of its own. To inherit the earth is to grow more alive to the presence in it and in all its parts, of Him who is the life of men.**

## **“The Beatitudes” by James M. Tolle** **Chapter Excerpt: “Meek Indeed Earth Inherit”**



- ❖ Which is more possessor of the world- he who has a thousand homes, or he who, without one house to call his own, has ten in which his knock at the door would rouse instant jubilation?
- ❖ **Which is the richer, the man who, his large money spent, would have no refuge; or he for whose necessity a hundred would sacrifice comfort?**

# Pulpit Commentary

Verse 5. - **Blessed are the meek.** In this Beatitude our Lord still quotes Old Testament expressions. The phrase, "shall inherit the earth," comes even in [Isaiah 60:21](#), only two verses before Isaiah 61:1, 2, to which he has already referred. It occurs also in [Psalm 37:9, 11, 22, 29, 34](#); and since in the eleventh verse of the psalm it is directly said of the meek: "But the meek shall inherit the land (LXX., οἱ δὲ πραεῖς κληρονομήσουσιν γῆν)," it is, doubtless, from this latter passage that our Lord borrows the phrase. The meaning attributed by our Lord to the word **meek** is not clear. The ordinary use of the words *πραυ'ς, πραυ'της*, in the New Testament refers solely to the relation of men to men, and this is the sense in which οἱ πραεῖς is taken by most commentators here. But with this sense, taken barely and solely, there seems to be no satisfactory explanation of the position of the Beatitude. Vers. 3 and 4 refer to men in their relation to God; ver. 6, to say the least, includes the relation of men to God; what has ver. 5 to do here if it refers solely to the relation of men to men? It would have come very naturally either before or after ver. 9 ("the peacemakers"); but why here? The reason, however, for the position of the Beatitude lies in the true conception of meekness. While the thought is here primarily that of meekness exhibited towards men (as is evident from the implied contrast **in they shall inherit the earth**), yet meekness towards men is closely connected with meekness towards God. This is not exactly humility (ταπεινοφροσύνη, which, as regards God, is equivalent to a sense of creatureliness or dependence; cf. Trench, 'Syn.,' § 42.). Meekness is rather the attitude of the soul towards another when that other is in a state of activity towards it. It is the attitude of the disciple to the teacher when teaching;

of the son to the father when exercising his paternal authority; of the servant to the master when giving him orders. It is therefore essentially as applicable to the relation of man to God as to that of man to man. It is for this reason that we find ענוה every frequently used of man's relation to God, in fact, more often than of man's relation to man; and this common meaning of ענו must be specially remembered here, where the phrase is taken directly from the Old Testament. Weiss objects to Tholuck adducing the evidence of the Hebrew words, on the ground that the Greek terms are used solely of the relation to man, and that this usage is kept to throughout the New Testament. But the latter statement is hardly true. For, not to mention [Matthew 11:29](#), in which the reference is doubtful, [James 1:21](#) certainly refers to meekness shown towards God in receiving his word. "The Scriptural πραότης," says Trench, "is not in a man's outward behavior only; nor yet in his relations to his fellow-men; as little in his mere natural disposition. Rather is it an inwrought grace of the soul; and the exercises of it are first and chiefly towards God ([Matthew 11:29](#); [James 1:21](#)). It is that temper of spirit in which we accept his dealings with us as good, and therefore without disputing or resisting; and it is closely linked with the ταπεινοφροσύνη, and follows directly upon it ([Eph. 4:2](#); [Colossians 3:12](#); cf. [Zephaniah 3:12](#)), because it is only the humble heart which is also the meek; and which, as such, does not fight against God, and more or less struggle and contend with him." Yet, as this meekness must be felt towards God not only in his **direct** dealings with the soul, but also in his **indirect** dealings (by secondary means and agents), it must also be exhibited towards men. **Meekness towards God necessarily issues in meekness towards men.** Our Lord's concise teaching seizes on this furthest expression of meekness.

Thus, it is not meekness in the relation of man to man barely stated, of which Christ here speaks, but meekness in the relation of man to man, with its prior and presupposed fact of meekness in the relation of man to God. **Shall inherit the earth.** In the Psalm this is equivalent to the land of Palestine, and the psalmist means that, though the wicked may have temporary power, yet God's true servants shall really and finally have dominion in the land. But what is intended here? Probably our Lord's audience understood the phrase on his lips as a Messianic adaptation of the original meaning, and therefore implying that those who manifested a meek reception of his will would obtain that full possession of the land of Palestine which was now denied to the Israelites through the conquest of the Romans. **But to our Lord, and to the evangelist who, years after, recorded them, the meaning of the words must have been much fuller, corresponding, in fact, to the true meaning of the "kingdom of heaven."**

## The Beatitudes

### 3. "Blessed Are The Meek"

David E. Koltenbah  
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It has been stated previously that the Beatitudes comprise part of the introduction to the Heavenly King's Inaugural Address and describe the state, or character, of the citizens of His kingdom. It is unfortunate that in the popular concept the manly characteristic commended by Jesus in the third Beatitude is so sadly shorn of its strength. "Meekness" is associated by many people with "weakness." Is this concept accurate? We must ask, therefore,

#### *I - What Is Meekness?*

The original word (praus, praos) was used by many pre-Christian writers and primarily meant "mild, gentle." Thus they applied it to inanimate things, such as the wind - a "meek (mild) wind." They applied it also to the conduct of men, but the "meekness" so described was only an outward characteristic, not an inward, spiritual quality. Furthermore, the word contemplated relations of men only to men, never toward God (Vincent, *Word Studies*, in loc.) The word took on a vastly richer meaning, however, under the Spirit-guided pen of the writers of Holy Scripture. Thus the Biblical use of the word is perhaps best defined by looking at some Scriptural examples of meekness.

Jesus was "meek and lowly in heart" (Matt. 11:29; cf. 2 Cor. 10.1), as were also His apostles Paul, John, and Peter. Moses was a supreme example of meekness ('anavah) in the Old Testament: "Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men that were upon the face of the earth." (Num. 12:3) From our knowledge of the lives of the Savior and these His servants, we may make certain observations concerning "meekness."

Thus note (I) meekness is not mere shyness or timidity, for true meekness may be discovered in persons whose natural tendency is the opposite of this.



The first epistle of John was the work of a meek man, but the author was - at least earlier in life - naturally a fiery and stormy "son of thunder." (Mk. 3:17; Lk. 9:54) One as impetuous and forward as Peter could advocate the peaceable reception of ill treatment (1 Pet. 2:18; cf. Matt. 16:22) Moses was meek, but it is seriously doubted that he was the timid sort. His meekness is supposed by some to be in his alleged timidity in Exod. chaps. 3, 4. Note that while Jehovah became angry with Moses (Exod. 4:14) for the man's four fold objection to returning to Egypt to lead forth the people, yet with the objections of the youthful and truly timid Jeremiah Jehovah did not become angry, but only tenderly encouraged the prophet. (Jer. 1:4-10 & ff.) Undoubtedly Jehovah's anger toward Moses may be accounted for by the fact that this behavior was not natural to Moses, a man who on various occasions both prior to his call and afterwards exhibited a rare courage and fortitude, not to mention a lightning anger. (Exod. 1:12; 32:19 ff; Num. 20:10). Surely Moses unwillingness to return to Egypt must be explained on grounds other than mere natural shyness. Nevertheless, he was a very meek man, but that meekness was not a mere natural reticence.

Again, we would certainly misunderstand Scripture were we to believe meekness is (2) the attitude that surrenders our rights without objection. Jesus objected to the illegal brutality of His trial (John 18:23), although rightly indignant when his rights as a Roman citizen were violated at Philippi (Acts 16:37 ), and again on more than one occasion insisted his civil rights be recognized, objecting to unjust and illegal treatment at the hands of both Romans and Jews. (Acts 22:25; 25:11 ) Meekness is not that pusillanimous and unnecessary submission to persecution which some think. Needless to say, neither is it the unnecessary provocation of persecution which in some religious folk seems to be almost a pathological condition.

It is superfluous to point out further that it is not (3) pessimistic surrender. It is not meekness that leads the condemned criminal occasionally to submit without resistance to his execution, for this is only a fatalistic resignation to that which he considers irresistible. Jesus went to the cross meekly, but not with this attitude. The discouraged Christian who has given up the struggle against his wicked oppressors merely because he considers further resistance futile is not truly meek, though he may outwardly appear to be.

From the above examples, as well as the following, we know that meekness is certainly not (4) cowardice or weakness of character.

What then is the quality of meekness? It is an inward spiritual quality unknown to the early Greek writers who, when using the word to describe men, attached to it a somewhat mean sense. With them it denoted condescension - a kindness to be sure, but a self-asserting and sometimes merely self-interested kindness, such as that of a king (or a modern preacher!) who finds it very much to his political advantage to show kind favors to his subjects. But the New Testament writers denoted by the word a submissiveness - a self-abasement, rather than self-assertion - which springs from a sense of inferiority to the holy God. (see Vincent, loc. cit.) Meekness in the Bible is a saintly courage which musters all one's spiritual resources, not in order to throw them into a violent struggle for revenge or dominance nor yet again to muster them for selfish purposes less turbulent in nature, but in order to consolidate them under the overruling grasp of self-control, in order that the soul, with complete mastery of self, may be utterly devoid of self-assertiveness and self-interest, and thus submit unto the prevailing wisdom of God. (See Trench's Synonyms, art. xlii.)

The expression "meek as a lamb" is apt to be misleading. It is not in its weakness the lamb is characterized as meek, but in its submissiveness. Weakness is never a virtue. When considering that Christ was "led as a lamb to the slaughter" (Isa. 53:7) we must recognize that His meekness (Matt. 21:5) lay not in helplessness, but in his great strength, for He could command armies of angels to His aid. (Matt. 26:53.) Because His kingdom was not of earth, His strength did not lie in the exercise of physical power-His kingdom was of heaven and His power was exercised in His very meekness. (Cf. Jn. 19:36.) This quality of Jesus was not interpreted by Pilate as cowardice, for the governor was completely baffled at Jesus' quiet and dignified strength--"insomuch that the governor marveled greatly" (Matt. 27:14.) The archangel -Michael was meek before the devil and "durst not bring against him a railing judgment" (Jude 9), not because he (Michael) was a weak creature, but by virtue of the fact that he was chiefest of that powerful, innumerable host who, although are "winds and a flame of fire" (Ps. 104:4; Heb. 1:7), nevertheless reverence the Lord's sole right of vengeance. (Rom. 12:19.) Moses' meekness lay not in a natural propensity for quietness, but in his ability to bear great honor with humility & bear reproach with courage, without inordinate pride & account Jehovah as His Defender and Judge.

It was by virtue of the fact that this characterized his attitude when Miriam and Aaron censured him that the statement in Numbers 12:3 was occasioned.

**Hence, meekness in the Bible is first of all (1) a submission to God which proceeds from an attitude of abject humility before Him, flowing out of a deeply spiritual appreciation of our utter weakness and His illimitable power and holiness, and gratitude for His gracious provision.** It is not difficult to see that such dependence upon God's wisdom and power may be entirely an act of faith, for the victorious issue of His provision for a suffering man may be wholly unseen by that man. Thus one does not question the Divine decrees, but meekly receives the instruction of God's will (Jas. 1:19) and His loving and fatherly discipline (Heb. 12:9), and in so doing acquires the heavenly wisdom that is characterized by meekness and peaceableness, exhibited in good works & flight from jealousy and faction. (Jas. 3:13.)

But to say that one submits meekly to Jehovah's chastening, is to say that one at the same time submits meekly to the reproaches of the uprighteous, as employed by God for the perfecting of the saints through their discipline. This is not to say that all persecution must be viewed as Divine punishment for sin. God forbid, for the book of Job, Paul and Peter all teach that discipline may be merely instructive, rather than punitive, and that the all-wise God overrules even the evils of persecution to bring out of it something profitable for His child. Thus David forbid the slaying of Shimei, who cursed and threw stones at the exiled king: ". . . Let him alone, and let him curse; for Jehovah hath hidden him. It may be that Jehovah will look on the wrong done unto me, and that Jehovah will requite me good for his cursing of me this day." (2 Sam. 16:11-12.)

So, we see that meekness in relation to God first in His direct actions leads us then to submission to Him in his indirect actions. (Pulpit Comm. on Matt. 5:5.) **That is, meekness is also (2) a submission to man.** As suggested above, the consciousness of our weakness before God behooves us to stoop before the opposition of sinners and receive our purifying suffering, even though we may have the physical power to take personal vengeance. Not only so, but such submission to God leads us willingly to take upon ourselves the load which the sins of others place upon us.

While we may be tempted in unholy indignation to resist and refuse the sinner, we are instructed to restore him or correct him in a spirit of meekness. (Gal. 6:1; 1 Tim. 6:11.) Meekness one to another is the *sine qua non* [without which, not] or the essential condition of unity among Christians. This is not the spirit of compromise which would seek peace at any cost. (Instead of "peace," perhaps we could say more correctly "truce," for there is no real peace in compromise.) To the contrary, it is the spirit of submission that endures what is endurable, that gives way to another when so doing involves sacrifice of no principle, that serves the interest of God and the church at large before one's own. We are taught "with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love" to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." (Eph. 4:2-3; cf. Phil. 2:1-4.) One may be sure that when division is rampant among brethren, the quality of loving submission is lacking somewhere.

Very briefly now, for space is lacking, we must consider

## *II - What Is the Reward For Meekness?*

What does it mean, "they shall inherit the earth"? He who would force some premillennial construction upon the expression forgets the nature of the Messianic dominion foreseen in the Old Testament. To really understand Jesus' expression here, one must understand what it meant in the Old Testament texts to which He alluded. The ancient Jewish concept of blessing was of material prosperity. Indeed, the Patriarchal Promise, which was to have its highest, ultimate fulfillment in the coming of the Messiah, had promise of immediate temporal blessings for ancient Israel, viz. the inheritance of the Land of Promise. (Genesis 15:7-8; etc.) To be sure, permanent dwelling in the land was conditioned upon Israel's obedience.

"That which is altogether just shalt thou follow, that thou mayest live, and inherit the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee." (Deut. 16:20)

Because possession of land, and of the Land of Promise particularly, was the most tangible of material blessings, **"to inherit the earth" or "land" evidently became a proverbial expression to denote possession of any great blessing, or the sum of all blessings.** Thus, David employs the figure:

"For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: Yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and he shall not be. But the meek shall inherit the land, And shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace." (Ps. 37:10-11)

It is probable that from this Scripture the Master derived His figure.

Thus, the expression became figurative of all the blessings the Jews would receive under the Messiah. So Isaiah says,

"Thy people also shall be all righteous; they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified." Isa. 60:21.

And who are these people? These are the ones to whom the Anointed (Messiah) would preach good tidings, viz. the meek! (Ibid. 61:1) The Anointed was to be "the shoot out of the stock of Jesse," who would "with righteousness judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth." (Ibid. 11:1-4.) The prophecies referred to Christ and the blessings of His reign.

**The expression to "Inherit the earth," therefore, was the Old Testament figure which described the benefits to be received in Messiah's kingdom.** Indeed, under the dominion of Christ the meek do inherit wondrous blessings. There are temporal benefits from meekness as a general rule (Ps. 22:26), but (2) the spiritual benefits are vastly greater, even those to be enjoyed in this life. There is true blessedness -- peace in the soul - for the meek, for the godliness it promotes brings contented living (I Tim. 4:8; 6:6; cf. Ps. 25:9) and provides assurance through faith of ultimate salvation:

"Seek ye Jehovah, all ye meek of the earth, that have kept his ordinances; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye will be hid in the day of Jehovah's anger." (Zeph. 2:3)

Finally, most important are (3) the heavenly rewards of meekness, the **joys unimaginable in "the new heaven and new earth"** (2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1), which are promised through Jesus Christ, "in whom having also believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is an earnest of our inheritance, unto the redemption of God's own possession, unto the praise of his glory." (Eph. 1:13-14.)

## Matters of Meekness

Jesus expounded on His beatitude about meekness further in the sermon. For example, in the following passage:

*“You have heard that it was said, ‘Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.’ But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.*

*“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”*

—Matthew 5:38–48

As an aside, debate has always accompanied these verses. When to resist, when to give in. Jesus resisted at times, but never on His own behalf. Let me encourage you, for the sake of this lesson, not to get sidetracked into these discussions. Let’s just get to the heart of meekness.

In these opening verses, **Jesus is describing a situation in which someone has power over you.** We hate to feel powerless. It is very hard, in our flesh, to feel subject to another person.

The first challenge to the flesh's mastery is to submit to someone's authority, especially if that person has evil motives. But remember these words: *"You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above"* (John 19:11).

When we are in positions of powerlessness, such as Jesus described, **the way of the flesh is to do what has to be done and nothing more**, seething on the inside. "I'll show you. You just wait. You'll get yours," go the flesh's thoughts at such a time. The powerful person gains even more power over us because we are letting the poison of bitterness and hatred seep in and begin its destruction. When we respond in the pattern of our flesh, then we are really weak. We are indeed powerless.

But how would meekness meet the challenge? Imagine this scenario. You are powerless. Some evil person whose demands you must obey strikes you on the cheek, or compels you to give up your tunic, or forces you to go a mile with him. These, of course, are all cultural references. They represent the situations you encounter. The meek person is so strong that outward insults and demands that might humiliate a weak person, do not affect the meek person. The meek person does not have to chafe and boil on the inside, giving the offender more power over him. The meek person is so free from the tyranny of his outward circumstances that he is free to cheerfully perform more than duty. He performs ministry. Do you see the principle?

Love your enemy? Impossible for your flesh. Only through grace. Only by the indwelling [word] operating through you. How first to love an enemy? Pray for him. Don't pray that your enemy will change to suit you, or that your enemy will get what he deserves. Pray blessings. You'll soon find your heart following your prayers. **It takes strength to be meek.**<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Dean, J. K. (2015). [\*Set apart: a 6-week study of the beatitudes\*](#). Ashland, OH: New Hope Publishers.

## **WHO CONTROLS OUR SLEEPING GIANT?**

- ◆ **SELF LAYS DORMANT—BUT IT'S NEVER DEAD.**
- ◆ **SOMEONE RUBS US THE WRONG WAY, AND OUR SLEEPING GIANT RAISES UGLY HEAD ONCE AGAIN.**
- ◆ **SELF IS MANKIND'S ACHILLES' HEEL!**
  - ◆ **HAVEN'T WE ALL BEEN THERE?**

## **6. MEEKNESS TURNS HURDLES INTO HOPE—THERE'S HOPE BEYOND THE HEARSE**

- ◆ **HEBREWS 2:18 & 2 CORINTHIANS 12:10**
- ◆ **PAUL USED HIS MEEKNESS TO TURN OBSTACLES INTO OPPORTUNITIES (ACTS 13).**
- ◆ **ARE WE STRUGGLING WITH OUR DELILAHs?**
- ◆ **DOES OUR LIFE HAVE ANY ZIP?  
HEBREWS 2:15, 17**



“I am meek and lowly in heart.” (Matthew 11:29). He told us that we can find rest for our souls if we will come to him, take his yoke, and learn. What we must learn is meekness. It doesn’t come naturally to any of us. **Meekness is teachability.** “The meek will he teach his way” (Psalms 25:9). It is a readiness to be shown, which includes the readiness to lay down my fixed notions, my objections and “what ifs” or “but what abouts,” my certainties about the rightness of what I have always done or thought or said. It is the child’s glad “Show me! Is this the way? Please help me.” **We won’t make it into the kingdom without that sort of childlikeness, that simple willingness to be taught & corrected and helped.** “Receive with all meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls” (Jm. 1:21). Meekness is an explicitly spiritual quality, a fruit of the Spirit, learned, not inherited. It shows up in the kind of attention we pay to one another, the tone of voice we use, the facial expression. He was despised, rejected, reviled, pierced, crushed, oppressed, afflicted, yet he didn’t open his mouth. What’s this little incident of mine by comparison with my Lord’s suffering?

It brings to mind Jesus’ willingness not only to eat with Judas Iscariot, who would soon betray him, but also to kneel before him and wash his dirty feet. [It reminds of] the look the Lord gave Peter when he had three times denied him—a look of unutterable love and forgiveness,

a look of meekness overpowering Peter's cowardice and selfishness, and brought him to repentance.

Think on his meekness as he hung pinioned on the cross, praying even in his agony for his Father's forgiveness for his killers. There was no venom or bitterness there, only the final proof of a sublime and invincible love. But how shall I, not born with the smallest shred of that quality, I who love victory by argument and put-down, ever learn that holy meekness? The prophet Zephaniah tells us to seek it (Zephaniah 2:3). We must walk (live) in the Spirit, not gratifying the desires of the flesh (for example, my desire to answer back, to offer excuses and accusations, my desire to show up the other's fault instead of to be shown my own). We must "clothe" ourselves (Col. 3:12) with meekness—put it on, like a garment. This entails an explicit choice: I will be meek. I will not sulk, will not retaliate, will not carry a chip. **A steadfast look at Jesus instead of at the injury makes a great difference. Seeking to see things in his light changes the aspect altogether.**

In Pilgrim's Progress, Prudence asks Christian in the House Beautiful, "Can you remember by what means you find your 12 annoyances, at times, as if they were vanquished?" "Yes," says Christian, "when I think what I saw at the cross, that will do it." - Elisabeth Elliot

# Mastering Self: How to Apply Meekness

By Donnie V. Rader

Previously we have defined meekness and considered the passages that demand that we be meek as the Lord was meek. In this study we will list some areas wherein we need to apply meekness. Remember that meekness involves: (a) humility toward God and man, (b) submission to God's will, (c) accepting the discipline we receive, (d) gentleness and mildness, and (e) self-control or inner mastery or strength.

## Receive The Word With Meekness

James wrote, "Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls" (Jas. 1:21). This means that we will accept and do what the word says. We will not question and doubt. We will believe and do. None of us is wise enough to sit in judgment on God and question what his word says (Rom. 11:34). Therefore, with meekness (humility and submission) we accept what God says.

It is not uncommon to see people who pass what the word of God says through the process of human reasoning to see if they think it is acceptable or not. If it doesn't fit their own wisdom, they reject it. That doesn't just happen among the denominations either!

**One who is meek is teachable. He is willing to listen and be taught. He has an open mind (Acts 17:11). One who is meek never resents being shown the truth.**

## Teach With Meekness

Paul instructed the young preacher Timothy saying, “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 per–adventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth” (2 Tim. 2:24-25, Emphasis mine DVR).

As we give our defense for our faith, we are to do so with meekness. Peter said, “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear” (1 Pet. 3:15).

One who seeks to teach others must himself submit to the message that is taught (1 Tim. 4:16). The Jews didn’t have much success in trying to change the Gentiles while they were guilty of the same sins they condemned (Rom. 2).

He must not be an arrogant, know-it-all as he seeks to instruct others. Rather, **he must be open to learning himself.** We must not confuse confidence as a teacher with arrogance. We must be confident of our ability as well as the message. But that is not necessarily arrogance.

Furthermore, as we teach we may have to endure some hardness as a soldier (2 Tim. 2:3). There will be times we will take a little heat for what we have taught. Learning to bear with that is part of meekness.

## Correct Sin With Meekness

When a brother or sister is guilty of sin, those who are spiritual are instructed to “restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted” (Gal. 6:1). As we go to our fellow Christian, we cannot approach them with a “better-than-thou” (self-righteous) attitude. We cannot afford to look down our noses at them as to say, “How dare you to be guilty of sin.”

Our approach will be more successful if we: (1) are humble, (2) realize it could happen to us, (3) don't leave the impression that we think we are guiltless [1 John 1:8] and (4) show our love and compassion. This doesn't suggest that we take a soft approach to sin. It just means that we deal with it and the sinner with a spirit of meekness.

## Deal With Problems & Disagreements With Meekness

In Ephesians, Paul urges all Christians to strive toward unity. In the fourth chapter he mentions some of the attitudes that will help promote unity. He writes, “With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:2-3).

Problems and disagreements can disrupt the unity that a local church enjoys. If we all had meekness in dealing with church problems and disagreements, few if any divisions would occur. With meekness the first question will always be “What does the Lord want?” or “What is right?” The question will not be, “What do I want?” With meekness we will control our tongues (Jas. 1:19, 26). The tongue causes many, if not most, of the problems and disagreements in local churches.

With meekness we will not insist on our “rights.” Rather, we will waive those rights for the sake of the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 9). With meekness we will not easily come to blows with those we disagree with.

### **Meekness As A Characteristic Of Our Whole Life**

Meekness is not merely a “tool” that we pull out when we are teaching or being taught, etc. It is a quality that should characterize our life. All Christians, not just some should be meek. The fruit of the spirit is “love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance” (Gal. 5:22-23). All Christians are instructed to “Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering” (Col. 3:12).

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The Meek Are Teachable As To Personal Truth

## **JUDGEMENT PREPARED** **FIVE STATES FIVE STEPS**

### **Five States of the Soul:**

- **EXEMPTION:**
- Ezekiel 18: 20; Matthew 18: 1 – 3
- **CONDEMNATION:**
- Galatians 3: 22
- **JUSTIFICATION:**
- Romans 5: 1, 2; 8: 1, 2
- **DAMNATION:**
- Matthew 23: 3; Mark 16: 16
- **GLORIFICATION:**
- Romans 8: 17, 30; II Thess. 1: 7 – 12

# **JUDGEMENT PREPARED**

# **FIVE STATES FIVE STEPS**

## **Five Steps For Saving:**

- **HEARING:**
- **Romans 10: 17; Matthew 7: 24 - 27**
- **BELIEVING:**
- **Hebrews 11: 6; Mark 16: 15, 16**
- **REPENTING:**
- **Acts 2: 38; 17: 30; Luke 13: 3**
- **CONFESSING:**
- **Matthew 10: 32, 33; Acts 8: 36, 37**
- **BAPTISM:**
- **Romans 6: 3 – 5; Acts 8: 36 - 38**