

INTRODUCTION

1. Today we are beginning our 22nd message in our series on “Bad and Good Habits.”
2. When we began, we talked about the works of the flesh and now we’re talking about the fruit of the Spirit.
3. Galatians 5:22-23 (NASB) says, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”
4. We are looking today at verse 23, “gentleness.”

5. And as we have said up to this point with each characteristic of this fruit, they are true about God.
6. But this one and the next is different than the rest.
7. I will tell you how in a moment.
8. But what is important to note is, if you want to have the fruit of the Spirit in your life, then you must yield yourself to God.
9. In the words of Galatians 5:16 (NASB), Paul says, “But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.”
10. To keep from carrying out the “desire of the flesh,” you have to “walk” by the

means of “the Spirit.”

11. And you and I know that’s not always easy because, as Galatians 5:17 (NASB) says, “For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.”

12. In other words, “The Spirit-led life is a life of conflict, because it is in constant combat with the old ways of the flesh that continue to tempt and seduce the believer.”¹

13. John Gill says they are “in opposition to one another” “as light and darkness, fire and water, or any two opposites can be thought to be; they are contrary in their

¹ MacArthur, John F., Jr. Galatians. Chicago: Moody Press, 1983. Print. MacArthur New Testament Commentary.

nature, actings, and effects; there is not only a repugnancy to each other, but a continued war, conflict, and combat, is maintained between them; the flesh is the law in the members or force of sin, which wars against the spirit, the law in the mind, or the force and power of the principle of grace.”²

14. So we must realize and recognize the battle and not lose heart.
15. As we begin this morning, we need to ask...

LESSON

I. What is Gentleness in Galatians 5:23?

² John Gill, John Gill's Exposition of the Bible

- A. This is the Greek word *Prautēs* which “includes the idea of gentleness, but is usually better translated meekness”³ as it is translated in the KJV.
- B. *Prautes* comes from the Greek word *praús* which when referring to things it means “mild,” when it is used of animals it refers to being “tamed,” when it’s used of persons it means to be “gentle or pleasant,” and when it is used of activities or punishments, it means to be “kindly” or “lenient.” The adverb *práōs* denotes quiet and friendly composure.”
- C. Aristotle defined *prautes* as the mean between excessive anger and excessive angerlessness, the quality of the man who is always angry at the right time

³ MacArthur, John F., Jr. Galatians. Chicago: Moody Press, 1983. Print. MacArthur New Testament Commentary.

and never at the wrong time.⁴

D. That means he has a “humble and gentle attitude that is patiently submissive in every offense, while having no desire for revenge or retribution.”⁵

E. He understands Romans 12:17-19 (NASB) when it says, “Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. 18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. 19 Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine, I will

⁴ Barclay, William, ed. [The Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians](#). Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster John Knox Press, 1976. Print. The Daily Study Bible Series.

⁵ MacArthur, John, Jr., ed. [The MacArthur Study Bible](#). electronic ed. Nashville, TN: Word Pub., 1997. Print.

repay,” says the Lord.”

- F. So we could say then that “Gentleness is taking the lowly place as Jesus did when He washed His disciples’ feet (John 13:1–17).”⁶

He did what they should have done but couldn’t because they did not see themselves as servants. They saw themselves as something more and what they did was for themselves.

- G. Gentleness is the opposite of “selfish ambition.” Gentle people are not “conceited, provoking and envying each other” (v. 26).

⁶ MacDonald, William. *Believer’s Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*. Ed. Arthur Farstad. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995. Print.

- H. Gentleness is an expression of humility, considering the needs and hurts of others before one's personal goals."⁷
- I. Moses was πραῦς σφόδρα, 'very gentle' (Nu. 12:3), in the sense that, in face of undeserved criticism, he did not give way to rage but rather interceded with God for the offenders.
- J. Jesus was 'gentle (πραῦς) and lowly in heart' (Mt. 11:29) but was perfectly capable of indignation (Mk. 3:5).
- K. Paul entreats the Corinthians 'by the meekness (πραῦτης) and gentleness (ἐπιείκεια) of Christ' (2 Cor. 10:1).⁸

⁷ Hansen, G. Walter. Galatians. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994. Print. The IVP New Testament Commentary Series.

⁸ Bruce, F. F. The Epistle to the Galatians: A Commentary on the Greek Text. Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1982. Print. New International Greek Testament Commentary.

- L. Now I said earlier that this characteristic is different than the others when referring to God.
- M. It is different in that it is “never used for God.”⁹
- N. That’s because when it is used in the LXX, it “relates primarily to the social position of a servant or inferior...In the Pentateuch (it) is used only in Numbers 12:3 for Moses.”¹⁰
- O. So, “The Old Testament never refers to God as being meek.”¹¹
- P. He does treat us gently.

⁹ Ibid., Kittel.

¹⁰ Ibid., Kittel.

¹¹ MacArthur, John F., Jr. Galatians. Chicago: Moody Press, 1983. Print. MacArthur

Q. Matthew 5:5 (NASB) says He blesses those who are gentle. “Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth.”

R. What about in the NT?

In the New Testament only Jesus is spoken of as meek, and that only in His incarnation.”¹²

S. In the NT, prautes is used in three ways:

1. It means being submissive to the will of God - Matthew 11:29-30 (NASB)
Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”

¹² Ibid., MacArthur

2. It means being teachable, being not too proud to learn - James 1:21 (NASB) Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls.

3. Most often of all it means being considerate - 2 Corinthians 10:1 (NASB) Now I, Paul, myself urge you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ—I who am meek when face to face with you, but bold toward you when absent!

Are you submissive, teachable and considerate? Do you, as one writer put it, have “power under control?” Let’s find out.

II. Believers Are to Be Meek or Gentle

A. In Answering Others - Proverbs 15:1 (NASB) A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.

B. In Dealing with Others

1. 1 Thessalonians 2:7 (NASB) But we proved to be gentle among you, as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children.

2. Titus 3:1-2 (NASB) Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed, 2 to malign no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing every consideration for all men.

3. 1 Peter 2:17-20 (NASB) Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king. 18 Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable. 19 For this finds favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a person bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly. 20 For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God.

4. 2 Timothy 2:24-26 (NASB) The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able

to teach, patient when wronged, 25 with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, 26 and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.

C. In Personal Character

1. Philippians 4:5 (NASB) Let your gentle spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near.
2. 1 Peter 3:1-6 (NASB) In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the

word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, 2 as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior. 3 Your adornment must not be merely external—braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; 4 but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God. 5 For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands; 6 just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, and you have become her children if you do what is right without being

frightened by any fear.

CONCLUSION

1. Are you mild or gentle?
2. Have you taken the lowly place with Jesus and are washing everyone's feet?
3. In other words, are you serving and meeting needs other than your own?
4. Are you submissive, teachable and considerate?
5. You can and will be when you walk by the means of the Spirit and to do that you have to be a follower of Jesus Christ.

6. Are you a follower of Jesus Christ?
7. If not, the Bible says in John 1:12-13 (NASB) But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.
8. You can receive Him now as we pray.
9. Let's pray.