



World Christian Fellowship

www.wcflondon.com
wcflondon@gmail.com

Galatians

Lesson 58 – Fruit of the Spirit

Gentleness/ Meekness

Galatians 5:22-23, *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,²³ gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.*

Sometimes a word may seem to overlap with other similar words or ideas. It seems to be true of the word "meekness!"

For this reason, it is helpful to see how different versions of the Bible translate this word. The King James Version uses the word "meekness" but other words are used by different translators.

"Tolerance"

"Humble spirit"

"Humble modesty"

"Wise gentleness"

"Humility"

"Modesty"

"Gentle"

"Gently"

"Courteously"

From the above, we can see that translators are struggling to find a proper synonym for meekness. It seems to closely resemble gentleness, humility, and moderation.

One writer defines the word "meekness" as: "Humility born of trustful submission to God and results in gentle, forgiving unselfishness towards others."

Meekness in the Word of God

One writer suggests that meekness in the Old Testament is generally associated with oppression or the trial of one's faith.

The "poor" and the "meek" seem to be used interchangeable in some instances in the Old Testament.

Jesus quotes **Isaiah 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 broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;*

(which uses the word "meek" in the KJV) but the New Testament words of Jesus (**Luke 4:18**) are: "and the poor have the gospel preached to them."

This could possibly indicate that the "poor" are the ones that would more likely possess the spirit of meekness.

The meek also had the special attention of God and blessings were pronounced upon them.

Psalms 22:26, *The poor shall eat and be satisfied; Those who seek Him will praise the Lord. Let your heart live forever!*

Psalms 25:9, *The humble He guides in justice, And the humble He teaches His way.*

Psalms 37:11, *But the meek shall inherit the earth, And shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.*

Psalms 147:6, *The Lord lifts up the humble; He casts the wicked down to the ground.*

Psalms 149:4, *For the Lord takes pleasure in His people; He will beautify the humble with salvation.*

In the New Testament, the Greek word for "meekness" is translated by several other words in the above translations that were shown above.

This word is often quoted in passages from the Old Testament which helps to some extent to define the word.

Notice the following usages in the New Testament:

Ephesians 4:2, *with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love,*

Colossians 3:12, *Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering;*

1 Timothy 6:11, *But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness.*

2 Timothy 2:25, *in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth,*

Titus 3:2, *to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men.*

James 1:21, *Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.*

James 3:13, *Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom.*

1 Peter 3:15, *But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defence to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;*

The following passages are identifying those who are meek, or those who should show a spirit of being meek:

Matthew 11:29, *Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.*

Galatians 6:1, *Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.*

1 Peter 3:4, *rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.*

Example

Two examples of meekness stand out in the Scriptures that can give us some insight as to the meaning of this word—Moses and Christ!

It is said of Moses:

Numbers 12:3, *(Now the man Moses was very humble, more than all men who were on the face of the earth.)*

Moses was a great man, especially extolled by God, Himself, in both the Old and New Testaments. Some of the characteristics of Moses may help to show why he was called a very meek man.

1. He was unassuming—he was not arrogant.
2. His ego did not demand that others constantly flatter him.
3. With God's help, he was able to face a Pharaoh and make demands of this powerful man.
4. He did not seem to possess any selfish ambitions.
5. He was a helper, a servant, a leader—but one of great power and authority.
6. He did not use his position to persecute his people, but rather to pray and plead for them.
7. He was gentle, kind, and tolerant and faithful to God.

The following passages talk about the meekness of Christ.

Matthew 11:29, *Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.*

Matthew 21:5, *“Tell the daughter of Zion, ‘Behold, your King is coming to you, Lowly, and sitting on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey.’”*

2 Corinthians 10:1, *Now I, Paul, myself am pleading with you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ—who in*

presence am lowly among you, but being absent am bold toward you.

When we look at the life of Christ, as betrayed in the Gospels, we can also see what this meekness was not!

1. It was not characterized by a lack of conviction!
Jesus was fully convinced of who He was and why He came, and He did not compromise one inch from either. Some people may appear kind, gentle, and tolerant of others, but do not have a conviction that they hold to—they are what we call "wishy-washy." Jesus was certain not this. (Matthew 23).

2. It was not characterized by cowardice!
Jesus was certainly not a coward in any sense of the word. Jesus was meek, but He was also firm and militant at the same time. Christians are not only commanded to be meek, but also to defend the truth (1 Peter 3:15); so, we can defend the truth meekly. We can bravely and forcefully defend what is right and true without stooping to bitter and ugliness on our part.

3. It was not characterized by an unwillingness to expose error!
Jesus certainly exposed the errors of the religious leader's time and again (Matthew 23; Matthew 15:7-9)
The meek do not sit back and refuse to fight for truth and expose falsehood and let such run on unassailed or to allow wickedness to run rampant without a word being said against

such. Both Jesus and Moses were willing to uphold the truth and expose the false, commend the right and oppose the wrong. And they did so in meekness!

Conclusion

One of the best definitions of meekness:

"Strength under control!"

A person may be strong, but he controls that strength to do only good, not evil!

A meek person would seem to be one of forbearance and kindness, one that is devoid of harsh intolerance and bitterness. Christians are encouraged to seek to be meek!