



WEEKLY DEVOTIONALS FROM PASTOR LYLE WAHL

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Gentleness

Gentleness is as much misunderstood as it rare in our culture, as it has been down through the ages.

Part of the misunderstanding is that it is seen as a natural trait, you're born with it, or not. As one writer tells us, "when the Lord was handing out the gentleness gene I was apparently in another line." That may be true of natural gentleness, but even so that cannot, does not excuse any

Christian from having this very valuable part of the fruit of the character of Christ which the Holy Spirit produces in believers.



Another misunderstanding is that gentleness is a weakness. Biblical gentleness, godly gentleness, the gentleness the Holy Spirit produces, grows in believers, is not a weakness. The word means to have your strength under control. In Greek writings this word was used to describe a horse that was broken, that you could ride. The horse was no less powerful than previously, but its strength now was under control.

Matthew records Jesus saying

"Come to Me, all who are weary and burdened, 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 will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is comfortable, and My burden is light" (11:28-30).

Jesus Christ certainly was not, is not weak! He is God the Son!

Isaiah prophesied and Matthew recorded the fulfillment that Jesus,

"will not quarrel, nor cry out; nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets. A bent reed He will not break off, and a dimly burning wick He will not extinguish until He leads justice to victory" (12:19-20).

The *dimly burning wick*, wick about to go out, pictures people who are weak, discouraged, lowly.

As Paul confronted the believers in Corinth about some of their issues, he prefaced that by saying "Now I, Paul, myself urge you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ."

Let's note some of the importance and evidence of gentleness.

- It is required to live worthy of God's calling. Paul urges us in Ephesians chapter 4 "to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience ..."
- Gentleness is to be a part of our relationship with everyone. Paul told Titus in chapter 3 of his letter to him to remind believers "...to be gentle, showing every consideration for all people."
- It is to be our spirit or attitude when we correct and restore others, as Paul wrote to Timothy, "with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition", and to the Galatian churches, to restore people caught in wrongdoing "in a spirit of gentleness."
- James chapter 3 tells us our good behavior is to be displayed "in the gentleness of wisdom."
- Gentleness is to characterize our witness. In chapter 3 of his first letter Peter tells us even if we suffer for righteousness we are to be a witness "with gentleness and respect."

Question: What do you want to be known for?

Paul wrote in Philippians chapter 4, "Let your gentle spirit be known to all people. The Lord is near." We are to be gentle and be known as gentle in part because "the Lord is near." What's the connection? Another version gives us a picture as it renders the phrase "the Lord is coming soon." Jesus may return at any time. A focus on His return and our destiny with Him will lead us to extend gentleness to others. After all, with all that we have now and will have forever with Him why should we try to get all we think is due us now? It also refers to the reality that God is always near to you. He is always available to give you wisdom, patience and the strength to be gentle.

Walk with the Spirit, be led by Him, cooperate with Him. The Holy Spirit is able to grow a bumper crop of gentleness in you.

Pastor Lyle