



New Mount Zion M.B. Church
Bible Class
July 13, 2020

“Understanding The Fruit of The Spirit”
5th Fruit

What is gentleness?

It is the humble and meek attitude of wanting to help other people instead of wanting to be superior to them. This attitude flows from a spirit of real love for the individual—having true, outgoing concern for their well-being. Such an attitude is shown in how we think about and treat others and what we say to them.

Why does God want us to demonstrate gentleness?

Read (Philippians 4:5) .Why does God want those He is working with to be concerned with how gently they think, act or talk? God has all the power in the universe, yet He is gentle with us, and He wants us to learn to be like Him. Then, when He gives us power, He will know that we will not use it cruelly or rashly.

As we have seen, humility is closely connected with gentleness, so we need to also consider how God views humility. Read (James 4:6 and 1 Peter 5:5). God resists pride, including our prideful justifications for not being gentle to those who have offended us, who have been harsh to us or who we don't feel deserve gentleness. These attitudes are prideful and lead to rationalizing away the need to be gentle.

God wants us to show the same gentleness that Christ showed to the woman caught in adultery (John 8:1-11). Instead of being full of pride and self-righteously casting the first stone at a sinner, we are to follow the example of Christ, gently telling someone to go and sin no more. This is an example of gentleness God wants us to learn from.

Why? There are several reasons: God is overwhelmingly gentle with us when we sin and need correction, and He expects us to be the same way with others. Also, gentleness shows the world that the way of violent encounters and situations ruled by emotion is not the better way. God wants us to demonstrate gentleness because human beings require a gentle touch in order to truly change their lives and come to Him.

This word connotes a submissive and teachable spirit toward God that manifests itself in genuine humility and consideration toward others. It is regrettable that the English word “gentleness” has come to have the popular connotation of a wimpish weakness and nonassertive lack of vigor. As an expression of the fruit of the Spirit, gentleness is strength under control, power harnessed in loving service and respectful actions.

One who is gentle in this sense will not attempt to push others around or arrogantly impose one's own will on subordinates or peers. But gentleness is not incompatible with decisive action and firm convictions. It was after all "gentle Jesus meek and mild" who expelled the mercenaries from the temple with a scourge because of their obstinate defilement of his Father's house.

An example of gentleness to follow:

A wonderful example of how clever and appealing gentleness can be is found in Acts 17. When Paul began his message to the Athenians, he clearly took into account the background and situation of the people with their many gods. He started out by noting how they were very religious, and then proceeded to comment on one altar he had seen with the inscription “TO THE UNKNOWN GOD.” “Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you” (verse 23).

This was a gentle way of easing people out of the idea of dozens of gods and into the idea of the true God. Even though some mocked, others asked to hear more, and some even joined and believed.

Imagine if Paul had not been gentle in this situation—if he had said, “Men of Athens! You have sinned greatly with your terrible gods! You are very ignorant about anything religious! Pray for mercy that you evil sinners may not be struck down as the wicked!” Would he have had any takers? Probably not. Here, Paul proved Proverbs 15:1.

An example to avoid:

Two of the disciples provide an example of a lack of gentleness. The story (found in Luke 9:51-56) involves Jesus Christ traveling to Jerusalem with His disciples. When they tried to pass through a Samaritan village, the people there did not receive Him since He was continuing on to Jerusalem.

James and John (who were also known as the “Sons of Thunder,” Mark 3:17) asked Jesus if He wanted them “to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did” (verse 54).

Christ rebuked them and answered: “You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men’s lives but to save them.”

Gentleness is one of the fruit of the Spirit that demands most from us. It means adopting a position where we effectively place ourselves third on the list – putting God and other people before ourselves. I'll be open and honest and say that this isn't something that makes most of us feel that comfortable. It requires humility and sacrifice, patience and compassion – qualities that we might feel that we lack (even on our best days). But the good news? God shows us the way.

Jesus Christ was interested in serving people, not in vengeance and prideful displays of power. He displayed what is found in Ezekiel 33:11.

James and John, to whom Jesus had given the nickname “sons of thunder (Mark 3:17), still had much to learn from Jesus’ example of gently helping these people come to repentance.

How do we demonstrate more gentleness?

Gentleness is typically regarded as something that is weak, mild or nonassertive. But when we consider that it is a result (“fruit”) of God’s Holy Spirit being active in our lives and that being gentle requires the strength of self-control, thoughtfulness, tact and concern—we see it in an entirely different way.

Modern examples of gentleness are distinctly uncommon. How do we stay above the harsh, cruel and angry world around us?

Think about what our attitude looks like. For example: When we see someone doing something wrong, is our club out ready to bash some heads? Or, instead, is our notebook out with ideas of how to help someone overcome a sin? Getting these pictures in our heads often makes us aware of our lack of gentleness and will eventually get us reaching for the notebook or Bible rather than the harsh words or the club.

Being gentle doesn't mean that we should not be strong in our beliefs, but it does imply that we should be wise and loving in expressing those beliefs to others. God shows tough love and teaches hard lessons to humans, all the while being the very definition of gentleness.