

9. The Fruit of the Spirit is Meekness (1Q 2010—The Fruit of the Spirit)

Biblical material: Gen. 50:20; Matt. 5:5; 11:29; Rom. 12:3; Gal. 6:1; Phil. 2:2, 3; 1 Pet. 3:4.

Quotes

- God has two dwellings: one in heaven, and the other in a meek and thankful heart. *Izaak Walton*
- To be meek, patient, tactful, modest, honorable, brave, is not to be either manly or womanly; it is to be human. *Jane Harrison*
- Humility is not cowardice. Meekness is not weakness. Humility and meekness are indeed spiritual powers. *Swami Sivananda*
- Let the professors of Christianity recommend their religion by deeds of benevolence - by Christian meekness - by lives of temperance and holiness. *Richard Mentor Johnson*
- The salvation of this human world lies nowhere else than in the human heart, in the human power to reflect, in human meekness and human responsibility. *Vaclav Havel*
- The Saviour reigned in all their hearts, and they successfully copied the pattern of meekness and gentleness, which he had left them. *John Strachan*
- It ain't the heat; it's the humility. *Yogi Berra*

Questions

What do we think of when we use the word meekness? How does the Spirit bring meekness into our lives? What is powerful in being meek? How is meekness involved in our relationship with God? If God is meek, how is the great controversy ended? Why should we strive for meekness, and what happens when we are truly meek?

Bible discussion

Joseph's reaction to his brothers' confession reveals a spirit of true meekness, not using his power and the opportunity to take revenge, but being willing to reassure them that he truly cared for them (Gen. 50:20). The meek will inherit the earth, says Jesus (Matt. 5:5)—which means there would need to be many changes—for how long would the meek retain the earth in the present situation?! The meekness, humility, and gentleness of God is revealed by Jesus (Matt. 11:29) which is why his yoke is not a burden to us. Meekness leads us to evaluate ourselves objectively (Rom. 12:3) which cuts at the heart of the sin of pride. We are to humbly and meekly help each other, realizing that we too can easily fall (Gal. 6:1, see also Phil. 2:2, 3). Our focus needs to be on inner beauty demonstrated by meekness, not outward appearance (1 Pet. 3:4)

Comment 1

As is so often said, meekness is not weakness. In fact it requires a great deal of strength to be meek! The provocation of Jesus, especially his mocking tormentors at the cross, required a superhuman effort of will to not respond. To be truly humble and meek means a denial of selfishness, a recognition that it is the other who is loved, and not to become self-loving. God of all the thinking beings in the universe is wholly other-loving,

and the life of Jesus reveals the lengths to which he is prepared to go to love us, the unlovable. This is the heart of meekness, and the gift of the Spirit we so often ignore or fail to ask for. It is not “exciting” or “powerful” or “spectacular.” Yet it is the heart of the kind of persons we are to become...

Comment 2

“You may remember I said that the first step toward humility was to realize that one is proud. I want to add now that the next step is to make some serious attempt to practice the Christian virtues. A week is not enough. Things often go swimmingly for the first week. Try six weeks. By that time, having, as far as one can see, fallen back completely or even fallen lower than the point one began from, one will have discovered some truths about oneself. No man knows how bad he is till he has tried very hard to be good. A silly idea is current that good people do not know what temptation means. This is an obvious lie. Only those who try to resist temptation know how strong it is. After all, you find out the strength of the German army by fighting against it, not by giving in. You find out the strength of a wind by trying to walk against it, not by lying down. A man who gives in to temptation after five minutes simply does not know what it would have been like an hour later. That is why bad people, in one sense, know very little about badness. They have lived a sheltered life by always giving in. We never find out the strength of the evil impulse inside us until we try to fight it: and Christ, because He was the only man who never yielded to temptation, is also the only man who knows to the full what temptation means - the only complete realist. Very well, then. The main thing we learn from a serious attempt to practice the Christian virtues is that we fail. If there was any idea that God had set us a sort of exam and that we might get good marks by deserving them, that has to be wiped out. If there was any idea of a sort of bargain - any idea that we could perform our side of the contract and thus put God in our debt so that it was up to Him, in mere justice, to perform His side-that has to be wiped out. I think everyone who has some vague belief in God, until he becomes a Christian, has the idea of an exam or of a bargain in his mind. The first result of real Christianity is to blow that idea into bits. When they find it blown into bits, some people think this means that Christianity is a failure and give up. They seem to imagine that God is very simpleminded. In fact, of course, He knows all about this. One of the very things Christianity was designed to do was to blow this idea to bits. God has been waiting for the moment at which you discover that...” C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*

Ellen White Comments

Some of the precious seed may find a place in the heart, but in order to have spiritual discernment to distinguish the thorns from the pure grain, the soul must receive the word with meekness... Their preconceived opinions are as thorns that choke the word of God, and when truth is sown, and it becomes necessary to root up the thorns to give it place, they feel that everything is going from them, and they are in trouble. There are many who have but an imperfect understanding of the character of God. They think of him as stern and arbitrary, and when the fact is presented that God is love, it is a difficult matter for these souls to lay aside their false conceptions of God. But if they do not let the word of truth in, rooting out the thorns, the briars will start up afresh, and choke out the good word of God... {RH, June 21, 1892}

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