

Gentleness

Fruit of the Spirit--part 8

May 31, 2015

DAY 1: Secular man's versus biblical gentleness

Galatians 5:22 but the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

1. No matter how much secular man may claim to be gentle, it's usually reserved helping an elderly woman up from her chair. When someone is hurting, secular man may be gentle for a brief time, but it's usually short-lived. Can you think of a time last week when you saw *anyone* exhibit gentleness with another person?

2. Biblical gentleness is something needed, not when the situation is "sweet," like picking up a newborn. Gentleness is needed when someone is being argumentative, stubborn, harsh, or provoking an argument.

3. Paul says in Gal. 5:22 that this kind of gentleness is only possible through God's Holy Spirit at work in you! Human nature will never pull this kind of gentleness off!

4. "Gentleness" is not just the opposite of being harsh or blunt. It considers how others will hear your words and your attitude and adjusts accordingly.

Proverbs 15:1 A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.

5. When a disagreement is beginning and you respond with a harsh word, what do you "naturally" expect will happen?

6. What actually happens?

7. How should we respond instead?

8. What should the effect of a gentle answer be?

9. What strikes you most about gentleness?

DAY 2: What is gentleness?

1. What is biblical gentleness? Let's take at some verses that illustrate what gentleness is.

1 Thessalonians 2:7 But we were gentle among you, like a nurse taking care of her children.

2. Here, Paul records some of the ways his mission team treated the lost people of Thessalonica when they went there to start a church. Take the image of "a nurse taking care of her children." What ways do you imagine Paul related to these pagan adults?

3. Let's take a look at another picture of gentleness...

Galatians 6:1 (RSV) Brothers, if a man is overtaken in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Look to yourself, lest you too be tempted.

4. Here, Paul gives instruction to the churches about how to handle a situation where one of the church members makes a mess of things by his sin.

5. How are the people supposed to handle this situation? How are they to relate to the man?

6. Paul uses the word "restore." This Greek verb is used as a medical term in setting a broken arm. Paul adds "in a spirit of gentleness" to this word "restore." What kind of care is he describing? What does restoring the man look like relationally?

2 Timothy 2:24 And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kindly to everyone, an apt teacher, forbearing,

²⁵ ***correcting his opponents with gentleness.*** *God may perhaps grant that they will repent and come to know the truth,*

²⁶ *and they may escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.*

7. Here, Paul is talking about relating, not to someone caught in sin, but with an "opponent." How does Paul tell Timothy respond to his opponents?

8. Responding to opponents is usually not done with gentleness. How do people usually respond to opponents?

9. What is your biggest thought about gentleness from today's verses?

DAY 3: Gentle responses when needed most...

1. Gentleness is most often needed when someone else gets heated. Below, underline what kinds of responses will help when faced with someone who is getting angry.

Proverbs 25:15 through patience a ruler can be persuaded, and a gentle tongue can break a bone.

Prov. 12:16 A fool shows his annoyance at once, but a prudent man overlooks an insult.

Prov. 12:18 Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.

Prov. 13:3 He who guards his lips guards his soul, but he who speaks rashly will come to ruin.

Prov. 15:4 The tongue that brings healing is a tree of life, but a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit.

Proverbs 15:28 The mouth of the righteous ponders how to answer, but the mouth of wicked gushes evil.

Prov. 17:14 Starting a quarrel is like breaching a dam; so drop the matter before a dispute breaks out.

2. Which responses would you like to add to your repertoire?

DAY 4: Gentleness in the family

1. Not surprisingly, the need for gentleness is needed in all aspects of family life, both in marriage and parenting.

2. Let's start with the husband.

Colossians 3:19 Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them.

3. All of us husbands are prone to being harsh. The antidote to harshness is gentleness. The following are examples of a husband's gentleness.

___ Listen first.

___ Communicate you **understand** how she feels.

___ Communicate you **care** how she feels about a situation.

___ Remember that your wife can be easily hurt.

4. Which of these would be important for you to remember?

*Colossians 3:21 **Fathers**, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.*

5. It's easy for a father to "provoke" his children by not remembering to add gentleness to his fatherly relating. Note the effect on the kids of not using gentleness--they get discouraged. "What's the use?" they think. What strikes you about this?

6. And gentleness is important as a wife. Peter describes gentleness that comes out of a woman's spirit as something of beauty!

1 Peter 3:3 Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes.

*⁴ Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a **gentle** and quiet **spirit**, which is of great worth in God's sight. ⁵ For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to make themselves beautiful.*

Prov. 11:22 Like a gold ring in a pig's snout is a beautiful woman who shows no discretion.

Prov. 19:13 ...and a quarrelsome wife is like a constant dripping.

7. What strikes you most about the necessity of gentleness in family life?

DAY 5: Gentleness with brothers and sisters at church

Ephesians 4:1 As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.

1. How would you expect Paul to finish this thought? What would the people do to "live a life worthy of the calling?"

2. Paul answers our question...

*Ephesians 4:2 **Be completely** humble and **gentle**; be patient, bearing with one another in love.*

3. Being completely humble and gentle is usually not thought of as components of living out our calling! Great relationships at church don't just happen. It takes concerted effort and intentionality! It takes valuing these kinds of relationships as our "calling!"

4. Go back and read Eph. 4:2 again. Notice that gentleness is not a stand alone quality. It is part of a group of qualities. To emphasize how important these are, jot down each of their opposites next to the positive qualities:

a. Completely humble --

b. Completely gentle --

c. Be patient --

d. Bear with one another ...--

e. Bear with one another *in love* --

5. We could hardly finish a study on gentleness without remembering Jesus!

*Matthew 11:28 (RSV) Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.
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. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."*

6. Jesus invites us to come to Him. Underline every reason we should come to Him!