

The Fruit of Meekness/ Gentleness

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. I make use of a "27 Translations compared" that are only of the New Testament. The Old King James Version uses the word "meekness" but other words are used by different translators. The following can illustrate:

- Gal. 5:23—"Tolerance" (Phillips)
- Jas. 1:21—"Humble spirit" (TCNT) (NEB)
- Jas. 1:21—"Humble modesty" (Moffat)
- Jas. 3:13—"Wise gentleness" (Weymouth) "Courteously" (Knox)
- Jas. 3:13—"Humility" (Goodspeed) (Berkeley)
- Jas. 3:13—"Humility" (Williams)
- 1 Pet. 3:15—"Modesty"
- 1 Pet. 3:15—"Gentle" (Taylor)
- 1 Pet. 3:15—
- 1 Pet. 3:15—"Gently"

From the above, you 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." Let's study a little further to see if we can get a better hold on this word.

MEEKNESS IN BOTH OLD & NEW TESTAMENTS

One writer suggests that meekness in the Old Testament is generally associated with oppression or the trial of one's faith. If anyone would be mistreated, it would be the "meek." Also the "poor" and the "meek" seem to be used interchangeable in some instances in the Old Testament. Jesus quotes Isaiah 61:1 (which uses the word "meek" in the KJV) but the New Testament words of Jesus 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:

- Ps 22:26
- Ps 25:9
- Ps 37:11
- Ps 147:6
- Ps 149:4

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:

- Eph 4:2
- 1Tim 6:11
- Col 3:12
- 2Tim 2:25

- Titus 3:2

- 1 Pet 3:15

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

- Matt 11:29

- Gal 6:1

- 1Pet 3:4

Two examples of meekness stands 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

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:

- Matt 11:29

- Matt 21:5

- 2Cor 10:1

When we look at the life of Christ 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—see (Matt. 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 Pet.

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 (Matt. 23; 15:7-9, etc.). 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!

One of the best definitions of meekness that I have run across is: "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!

http://camphillchurch.org/study_books/FRUIT%20OF%20THE%20SPIRIT,%20Bearing%20the.pdf

My Notes and Thoughts

What was a new insight you gained as we looked at meekness?

Think of a time when you responded in meekness (controlled strength), what happened?

In your opinion, what does current culture say about meekness?

What are some areas that hinder you from growing in meekness?

How can you grow in this area of meekness?
