

Eyes that Open to the Frailty of People
Philippians 4:5

We've been asking the question, "What does grace look like?" We've seen that grace is better described than it is defined. And because God is "the God of all grace who calls you" (1 Peter 5:10), when you figure out what grace looks like, you have an idea of who God is. Jesus is a person "full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). Word order is important. Jesus is full of grace. Truth without grace is mean; grace without truth is meaningless. To be full of grace is to one whose eyes are opened to the frailty and fragileness of people. You will often read of "meekness" or being "meek" in the Bible. This is the same as gentleness. The Apostle Paul says "Let your gentleness be known to all" (Philippians 4:5). Jesus said, "Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth" (Matthew 5:5). Jesus says, "I am gentle (meek) at heart" (Matthew 11:28).

I. Meekness does not mean weakness.

The meek person is neither weak or cowardly. Meekness is "strength under control." It is the ability to be strong, but to contain that strength for someone else's good. Jesus was no wimp. He took a whip and drove out the money changers from the Temple, but He patiently spoke with a Samaritan woman.

- A. To be meek is to know your heavenly Papa (your value).
- B. To be meek is to know your earthly purpose (your vocation).

Howard Hendricks tells about being on a grounded passenger plane whose takeoff had been delayed for quite some time. As the passengers became more and more irritated, he noticed how particularly gracious one of the stewardesses was as she spoke with them. After the plane finally took off, he told the stewardess how amazed he was at her poise and self-control, and said he wanted to write a letter of commendation for her to the airline company. The stewardess replied that she didn't work for the airline company, but for Jesus Christ. She said that before going to work she prays she would be a good representative of Christ on her job for the airline.

II. Meekness means a lack of meanness.

"There's wasn't a mean bone in his body" is a phrase I hear about various Christians who die. That is actually a wonderful compliment. "Let your gentleness be known to all" (Phil. 4:5). Show it. Share it. The Greek word *epiekes* is translated "reasonableness" in the ESV (able to reason; gentle, or patient). The word is used in 1 Tim. 3:3 to describe the character of a pastor. James says the evidence that a Person has "wisdom from above" is the ability to be gentle with it (James 3:17). Paul wrote to Titus, a young pastor planting churches on the island of Crete, and tells him to "instruct all to speak evil of no person, but to be gentle (epikes) with all" (Titus 3:2). Meekness is the character of Christians.

- A. Uncontrolled strength (pride, anger, control, assertiveness) is actually personal insecurity.
- B. A Christian is able to practice old patterns of behavior, but it's contrary to internal character.
- C. When a Christian acts "according to the flesh" it's time to 'confess' to and reconcile with others.

III. Meekness does not mean speechless.

To be meek doesn't mean you always agree. You can be meek and express yourself in disagreement. But a meek person values *the person with whom he disagrees* more than the opinion he expresses. Our culture values assertiveness and the "smack down" of others. We like to see assertive, strong people getting things from other people, sometimes even taking advantage of others. When is the last time you saw a movie that celebrated the virtue of gentleness? We don't want to go to a movie like that. We want to see a payback movie in which the good guys smacks it to the bad guy in the end. This isn't Christ's Kingdom. "Do not take revenge; leave room for God's just wrath" (Romans 12:19).