

Meekness: Strength through Weakness

“Blessed are the gentle (‘meek’ KJV), for they shall inherit the earth,” Matt.5:5.

Man’s (worldly) view of “meekness” is neither flattering nor favorable- it is seen as *weakness* or one who is “easily imposed upon” (American Heritage Dictionary; p.782). But the *divine* view is very different. Though *praus* (*prah-ooce*) does have a general meaning of “mildness of disposition” and “gentleness of spirit,” note these further comments from the Enhanced Strong’s Lexicon: “Meekness toward God is that disposition of spirit in which we accept His dealings with us as good, and therefore without disputing or resisting. In the OT, the meek are those wholly relying on God rather than their own strength to defend them against injustice. Thus, meekness toward evil people means knowing God is permitting the injuries they inflict, that He is using them to purify His elect, and that He will deliver His elect in His time. (Is. 41:17, Lu. 18:1–8) Gentleness or meekness is the opposite to self-assertiveness and self-interest. It stems from trust in God’s goodness and control over the situation. The gentle person is not occupied with self at all.”

Think about the assertion that the *meek* are those who are “wholly relying on God rather than their own strength,” and that it is the “opposite to self-assertiveness and self-interest.” Isn’t that the exact opposite of how most people think and operate? Some might even say that such is a recipe for catastrophe rather than conquest! But the *meek* have conquered (and mastered) *themselves*- they have *their spirit* under control. It’s a difficult thing to get our minds around when we’ve been led to believe differently all our lives, but *meekness* is not *weakness* as much as *strength under control*. Consider Jesus in Gethsemane on the night of His betrayal. While Peter displayed *self-assertiveness*, Jesus refused to defend Himself **despite** having the strength and ability to do so, cf. Matt.26:51-56. The world views **meekness as weakness from inability**, but it is actually **strength (especially of one’s own spirit) under control that chooses not to defend oneself, but rely on God**. *Meekness* is then in this way, **strength through weakness** if you will.

Perhaps we can now better understand why such people “*shall inherit the earth*.”

Consider a few examples- perhaps not of meekness directly, but of the ability to “wholly rely on God” and trusting Him rather than your own strength:

- **Marching around Jericho, Josh.6.** Surely Israel’s *marching around in circles* was viewed as *lacking the strength* to attack directly, but it was actually *faith in action* that trusted and relied on God rather than military might; *meekness*.
- **Gideon’s army being reduced to 300 to conquer the innumerable Midianites, Judg.7.** Which took more *courage*- going into battle with 32,000 or with 300? And perhaps more importantly, which force was actually *stronger*- the 32,000 relying on their own strength, or the 300 relying on God?
- **David and Goliath, 1Sam.17.** David had the *courage* and *inner strength* to rely on God rather than myself.

Applications of meekness we might need to consider more carefully:

1. **Submission rather than rebellion-** Even if it leads to persecution, Matt.5:38-42. An eye for an eye mentality is not *meekness* but self-assertiveness. It takes *strength under control* to trust in God enough NOT to retaliate, but *meekly* submit. Think of a strong man being *slapped* by a woman half his size. Is it *strength under control* that keeps him from retaliating *in kind*. That is *meekness*. Consider also Luke 21:17-39, and note: the apostles were *jailed* but *trusted in God* enough *not to resist* and were *delivered*, vv.17-21a; even when *rearrested*, they *did not resist* but still *trusted God*, vv.21b-26; when they were *challenged*, they *did not retaliate*, but calmly *gave defense*, vv.27-32 (cf.1Pet.3:15); otherwise, we might find ourselves *“fighting against God,”* vv.33-39! Now note the result of their *meekness*, vv.40-42 (despite being *flogged*, they *“went on their way...rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for His name”*).
2. **Return good for evil rather than taking your own vengeance, Rom.12:17-21.** It takes true *meekness* (*strength under control* and *trust in God rather than self*) to not *“take your own revenge”* and *“leave room (give a place) for the wrath of God,”* v.19; and even more so to *“overcome evil with good”* by doing good to those that do you evil, vv.20-21.
3. **Love rather than hate, 1Cor.13:1-8a.** Consider carefully each of these attributes of love. *Patience, kindness, abstaining from jealousy, bragging, unbecoming actions, self-seeking, not being (easily) provoked, not score-keeping regarding wrongs suffered, and rejoicing with truth rather than unrighteousness* all require **meekness!** Not to mention *bearing all things, believing all things, hoping all things, and enduring all things*.
4. **Maintain faith, hope (and trust), and love rather than apostasy, doubt, and despair, 1Cor.13:12-13; 2Cor.4:5-18.** Those who rely on and trust themselves rather than God, and in so doing *assert themselves* rather than be *meek*, will lose their faith, their hope, and will descend into apostasy, doubt, and despair.

Conclusions:

- **Meekness is strength under control enough to trust and rely on God rather than self, 2Cor.12:9ff.**
- **Regardless of what men say, think, or do, those who are truly meek still “inherit the earth.”**