
CBC WEEKLY RESOURCES



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COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH
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I.

SERMON RECAP

This week Pastor Gary continued our “Established” series on the fruit of the Spirit, focusing on gentleness (often translated kindness). Building on love, joy, peace, and long-suffering, he reminded us that the fruit of the Spirit is divine, not merely “nice personality traits.” These are the very essence of the Holy Spirit manifested in our everyday lives. Because they are of the Spirit, they are not dictated by circumstances. We can have joy in loss, peace in chaos, love for enemies, and patient endurance in extended suffering. In the same way, we are called to Spirit-empowered gentleness in an age of outrage.

Gentleness, he said, is “goodness in action” — not just a soft tone, but a Spirit-led way of speaking and acting that takes the context of the other person seriously. It’s how we correct, restore, and even confront. A gentle answer turns away wrath; a gentle rebuke can rescue a soul. Our culture is conditioned to dismiss truth if it is delivered without gentleness. So if our tone, posture, or anger becomes the main thing people hear, they may never hear the truth we’re trying to share. Gentleness is not weakness; it is Spirit-governed strength, calibrated to the wounded, the weary, and the resistant in a way they can receive — like God’s “still small voice” to Elijah.

We were also warned: neglecting gentleness is neglecting an aspect of the Holy Spirit Himself. The Spirit has chosen gentleness as one of His primary ways of working through us. When we refuse to be gentle, we are, in effect, refusing Him. But the good news is that Christ is not far off, shouting from a distance; He is near, even in us, whispering, guiding, and empowering us to respond with His tenderness in a harsh world. May the Lord make your love, long-suffering, and especially your gentleness evident to all this week, as you walk in the freedom of the Spirit and become a living conduit of His kindness.

Suggested “Chapters” of the Message

1. **Freedom and the Fruit of the Spirit** – Fruit as divine freedom, not circumstance-dependent.
2. **Review: Love, Joy, Peace, Long-Suffering** – Suffering as an assignment and intimacy with Christ.
3. **Not Just “What” but “How”** – Moving beyond memorizing the list to living it.
4. **Personality vs. Spiritual Fruit** – Why this is not about temperament or technique.
5. **Defining Gentleness / Kindness** – Goodness in action, calibrated to the recipient.
6. **Exposing Darkness with Gentleness** – Ephesians, Revelation, and calling back the wandering.
7. **Gentle Restoration and Witness** – Galatians 6, 1 Peter 3; how tone affects reception.
8. **Elijah and the Still Small Voice** – God’s whisper as the model of contextual gentleness.
9. **Gentle Grace and Urgency** – Philippians 4; living gently because “the Lord is near.”
10. **Warning and Accountability** – Neglecting gentleness as neglecting the Spirit’s way.

II.

STUDY GUIDE

Key Points

- The fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22–23) is divine life in us, not moral self-improvement or a personality upgrade.
- Each aspect of the fruit is not circumstance-dependent: we can experience love, joy, peace, long-suffering, and gentleness in valleys as well as on mountaintops.
- Long-suffering is not a curse; it is a special assignment and an opportunity for deep intimacy with Christ in extended trials.
- We must move beyond merely knowing what the fruit is to learning how to live and minister in step with the Spirit in our everyday interactions.
- Spiritual fruit is not personality: introverts and extroverts alike are called to love, joy, peace, patience, and gentleness. Personality must not dictate which aspects of the Spirit we “allow” in our lives.
- Gentleness is goodness in action — not just a soft tone, but concrete deeds and words shaped by compassion, tenderness, and humility.
- True gentleness takes the other person’s context seriously: their suffering, readiness, level of receptivity, and what they actually need.
- Restoration and correction, to be truly kind, must be done gently (Galatians 6:1). Harsh truth can harden hearts; gentle truth can open them.
- Apologetics and evangelism are to be done with gentleness and respect (1 Peter 3:15), drawing people to Christ, not driving them away.
- God Himself often ministers in gentleness — like His “still small voice” to Elijah — offering a delicate whisper instead of a spectacle when we are fragile.
- To neglect gentleness is to neglect an aspect of the Holy Spirit. If we refuse gentleness, we resist His way of working through us.
- Gentleness is urgent: “Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.” (Philippians 4:5)
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Key Scriptural References

1. **Galatians 5:1**
Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage
2. **Galatians 5:22–23**
But the fruit of the Spirit is love joy peace longsuffering kindness goodness faithfulness gentleness self control Against such there is no law
3. **James 1:2**
My brethren count it all joy when you fall into various trials

4. **Colossians 3:12**
Therefore as the elect of God holy and beloved put on tender mercies kindness
humility meekness longsuffering
5. **Ephesians 4:1–2**
I therefore the prisoner of the Lord beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with
which you were called with all lowliness and gentleness with longsuffering bearing with
one another in love
6. **Ephesians 5:8–11**
For you were once darkness but now you are light in the Lord Walk as children of light
for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness righteousness and truth finding out what is
acceptable to the Lord And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness but
rather expose them
7. **Proverbs 15:1**
A soft answer turns away wrath but a harsh word stirs up anger
8. **Galatians 6:1**
Brethren if a man is overtaken in any trespass you who are spiritual restore such a one
in a spirit of gentleness considering yourself lest you also be tempted
9. **1 Peter 3:15**
But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts and always be ready to give a defense to
everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you with meekness and fear
10. **1 Kings 19:11–13 (key portions)**
Then He said Go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord And behold the Lord
passed by and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in
pieces before the Lord but the Lord was not in the wind and after the wind an
earthquake but the Lord was not in the earthquake and after the earthquake a fire but
the Lord was not in the fire and after the fire a still small voice So it was when Elijah
heard it that he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the entrance
of the cave Suddenly a voice came to him and said What are you doing here Elijah
11. **Philippians 4:5**
Let your gentleness be known to all men The Lord is at hand
12. **Proverbs 11:16a**
A gracious woman retains honor

III. DEVOTIONAL MATERIAL

Day 1 – Freedom for Fruit

Question:

Where am I still living as if my circumstances control whether I can walk in the fruit of the Spirit?

Reading: Galatians 5:1, Galatians 5:22–23

Devotional:

Paul commands us to “stand fast therefore in the liberty” Christ won for us. In Galatia, believers were tempted to return to religious performance and legalism. Paul insists that the Christian life is not lived by human effort but by the Spirit. That is why the fruit of the Spirit is so different from self-improvement. It is not, “Try harder to be nice.” It is, “Stand in the freedom Christ gave you, and let His Spirit produce His own life in you.”

Notice that the fruit of the Spirit is listed without conditions. It does not say “love, if life is going well,” or “peace, unless you are grieving.” The sermon reminded us that you can have joy in trials and peace that “does not match the circumstance.” Why? Because the source is not you; it is Christ in you. That is true for gentleness as well. We often excuse our harshness with, “You don’t know what I’m going through.” But the Spirit is not bound by our emotions, fatigue, or frustrations. The same Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead lives in you and produces gentle answers even in a harsh world.

How to Apply:

- Identify one situation where you typically say, “I can’t help snapping in that moment.”
- Bring that specific situation to God in stillness. Acknowledge your patterns honestly.
- Ask the Spirit to remind you—in that exact kind of moment—that you are free not to be ruled by your flesh, but to walk in His fruit.
- Consider sharing this area with a trusted believer and invite them to ask you about it later.

Challenge:

Before the end of today, deliberately respond with gentleness in one situation where you would normally react harshly. Afterward, reflect briefly: How did it feel? Where did you sense the Spirit helping you?

Day 2 – The God Who Whispers

Question:

Am I expecting God to shout, when what I most need is His gentle whisper?

Reading: 1 Kings 19:11–13, Psalm 46:10

Devotional:

Elijah had just come from a dramatic victory on Mount Carmel, yet he found himself exhausted, afraid, and depressed. He felt alone and ready to give up. When God meets Elijah on the mountain, He sends a mighty wind, an earthquake, and a fire—dramatic displays of power Elijah would have recognized from Israel’s history. But the text insists, “the Lord was not in” those displays. Instead, God comes to him in “a still small voice.”

The phrase often translated “still small voice” carries the idea of a thin, gentle sound—a “lean-fleshed” whisper, as we heard in the sermon. It is not loaded with noise or force; it requires Elijah to quiet himself to truly hear. This is how God chose to meet a prophet who was fragile, tired, and discouraged. The whisper itself communicates something: God is not far off shouting from a distance; He is near enough to speak softly. He knows exactly what Elijah can handle and meets him at that level of receptivity.

In a noisy, angry culture, we may assume God will compete with the volume. Yet He often invites us into stillness so we can rediscover His nearness. As you learn to receive His gentle voice, you are then formed into someone who can carry gentleness to others—especially those who are, like Elijah, at the edge of giving up.

How to Apply:

- Set aside 10–15 minutes today to sit in silence before God—no phone, no music, no agenda. Simply be still.
- You might quietly say to Him, “Here I am,” and then listen. If your mind wanders, gently bring it back.
- Afterward, journal any impressions: Was there a sense of His nearness, His comfort, or a gentle reminder of truth?

Challenge:

Reach out today to someone who seems weary or discouraged. Instead of trying to “fix” them, be present and gentle—listen more than you speak, and if you speak, keep it simple and tender.

Day 3 – Gentleness in a Harsh World

Question:

Do my words and tone make it easier or harder for people to receive truth from me?

Reading: Proverbs 15:1, Colossians 4:6, Colossians 3:12

Devotional:

Proverbs 15:1 teaches a profound principle: “A soft answer turns away wrath but a harsh word stirs up anger.” The issue is not only what we say but how we say it. In our time, as the sermon noted, many people instantly dismiss our content because of our tone. Anger meets anger, and nothing changes. Yet Scripture insists that gentle speech has the power to defuse wrath and open hearts.

Paul tells the Colossians to let their speech be “always with grace” and calls believers “holy and beloved,” then instructs them to “put on... kindness... gentleness.” Our identity comes first: we are chosen, loved, and set apart by God. Because that is true, we are free to release defensiveness and hostility. We no longer need to win every argument or prove our worth. We can afford to be gentle, because Christ has already secured our value.

Gentleness is especially powerful where harshness is expected. Online discourse, political conversations, family arguments—these contexts are “primed” for anger. When a follower of Christ responds with unexpected calm, careful words, and patient listening, it creates a “puppy tilt” moment: people pause and think, “That was different.” That difference can be the open door for the gospel.

How to Apply:

- Think of someone you routinely clash with—perhaps a family member, coworker, or online acquaintance.
- Before your next interaction, pause and remember: you are “holy and beloved” in Christ.
- Choose to:
 - Lower your volume.
 - Slow your pace of speech.
 - Replace sarcasm with clarity.
 - Ask a sincere question instead of making a quick accusation.

Challenge:

Intentionally speak one gentle, honoring sentence to someone you typically oppose or disagree with. It might be a word of appreciation, an apology, or a humble question. Notice how it affects the conversation.

Day 4 – Gentle Restoration

Question:

Do I see confronting sin as an act of cruelty or as an expression of loving kindness?

Reading: Galatians 6:1, Ephesians 5:11–14, Romans 2:4

Devotional:

Galatians 6:1 commands, “restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness.” The word “restore” carries the idea of mending something broken, like setting a dislocated bone. It is careful, intentional, and loving. The person caught in sin is not the enemy; the sin is. The sermon highlighted that failing to gently correct someone heading toward destruction is not kindness—it is neglect. True kindness is willing to risk discomfort to help a brother or sister return to Christ.

Ephesians 5 calls us to “have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.” That sounds strong, and it is. Yet Romans 2:4 reminds us it is the kindness of God that leads us to repentance. How do we hold both? By exposing darkness not for the sake of shaming, but for the sake of healing. By speaking truth, but in a way that communicates, “I am for you, not against you. I am as vulnerable as you are to temptation. Let’s come back to the light together.”

This balance is rare. Our culture swings between harsh condemnation and permissive silence. The church is called to something different: gentle conviction. When believers, filled with the Spirit, lovingly name sin and offer a path back to Christ, people are convicted but not crushed. They experience that strange mix the gospel always brings—deeply exposed yet deeply loved.

How to Apply:

- Ask God to show you if there is someone in your life—perhaps a friend, child, spouse, or fellow believer—who is drifting into sin and needs gentle restoration.
- Reflect: Is your hesitation to speak rooted in fear of conflict, or in genuine wisdom about timing?
- If the Lord is prompting you, prayerfully consider when and how to approach them with humility (“considering yourself lest you also be tempted”).

Challenge:

If appropriate and Spirit-led, initiate a conversation this week with someone you believe is wandering. Go in low: admit your own need of grace, express your care for them, and name what you see. Ask questions and listen. Let gentleness shape every word.

Day 5 – Gentleness and the Nearness of the Lord

Question:

If people watched my life this week, would my gentleness convince them that the Lord is near?

Reading: Philippians 4:5, 1 Peter 3:15, Matthew 11:28–30

Devotional:

Philippians 4:5 says, “Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand.” Paul connects our visible gentleness to our awareness that Jesus is near—both in presence and in His soon return. If we truly believe the Lord is close, we do not need to be frantic, fearful, or combative. His nearness steadies us and softens us.

Peter calls believers to be ready to give an answer for the hope within them “with meekness and fear.” Evangelism and apologetics are not about rhetorical victories; they are about inviting people toward a gentle Savior. In Matthew 11, Jesus describes Himself as “gentle and lowly in heart” and invites the weary to come to Him. When we witness to others, our demeanor should resemble the One we represent. If our tone makes Jesus look harsh, impatient, or easily angered, we are misrepresenting Him.

The sermon reminded us: it is better not to evangelize at all if our method consistently alienates people from Christ. That is sobering. Yet it is also hopeful. It means our everyday gentleness—our calm in stress, our patience in conflict, our tenderness with the weak—can be a powerful, living apologetic that says, “There is a gentle King, and He is near.”

How to Apply:

- Take inventory: In the past week, where might your lack of gentleness have obscured the nearness of Christ to others?
- Ask the Lord to make you more aware of His presence throughout your day—at work, at home, in traffic, on social media.
- As you sense His nearness, deliberately slow down your responses and let that awareness shape your tone and choices.

Challenge:

Look for an opportunity today to give a reason for your hope—perhaps in a casual conversation, a text, or a social media interaction. Share a simple truth about Jesus or His work in your life, and be intentional that your delivery is marked by gentleness and respect.

IV. SMALL GROUP RESOURCES

Opening

- Welcome everyone and briefly acknowledge where we are in the Established series (Fruit of the Spirit, focusing this week on gentleness/kindness).
- Invite someone to open the group time by asking God to help everyone hear His voice and grow in the fruit of the Spirit, especially gentleness, this week.

Highlight Points:

- Fruit of the Spirit is not circumstantial; it flows from Christ in us.
- Gentleness is not weakness; it can involve exposing darkness with tenderness.
- God often meets us with a still small voice, not a shout.
- Tone matters—our harshness can shut down the very people we hope to reach.
- We are now accountable to walk in gentleness, not just know about it.
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Icebreaker Question

Share about a time when someone's gentle response made a deep impact on you—either disarming your anger, comforting you in pain, or helping you receive a hard truth.

- What do you remember most—what they said, how they said it, or how you felt afterward?

Scripture Exploration

Read the following passages from Sunday's message and discuss the following questions.

Passage 1: Galatians 5:22–23

But the fruit of the Spirit is love joy peace longsuffering kindness goodness faithfulness gentleness self-control Against such there is no law

Passage 2: Proverbs 15:1

A soft answer turns away wrath but a harsh word stirs up anger

Passage 3: 1 Kings 19:11–13

Then He said Go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord And behold the Lord passed by and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before the Lord but the Lord was not in the wind and after the wind an earthquake but the Lord was not in the earthquake and after the earthquake a fire but the Lord was not in the fire and after the fire a still small voice So it was when Elijah heard it that he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave Suddenly a voice came to him and said What are you doing here Elijah?

Discussion Prompts

1. Looking at Galatians 5, Proverbs 15, and 1 Kings 19 together, how would you summarize a biblical picture of gentleness?
2. How do these passages challenge some of the common assumptions about strength, boldness, and confrontation in our culture—and even in church culture?
3. What is one concrete change you sense the Spirit inviting you to make in your speech, your tone, or your approach to others this week?

Application: Steps for Personal and Community Practice

Personal:

- Daily Pause: Before responding in a tense conversation this week (at least once), silently ask, “Holy Spirit, how can I answer gently right now?”
- Gentle Inventory: At the end of a day, briefly review your interactions. Where did gentleness show up? Where did it not? Invite the Spirit to grow you in specific areas.
- Stillness Practice: Schedule 5–10 minutes of quiet each day simply to sit before God, acknowledging His presence and listening. This will shape your tone with others.

Community (Small Group / Church):

- Identify one way your group can intentionally practice gentleness with each other (e.g., slowing down before disagreeing, asking clarifying questions instead of assuming motives).
- Consider committing, as a group, to gently restore one another if someone is observed drifting or reacting harshly.
- Discuss how your group can model gentleness in broader church life—toward newcomers, toward those struggling with sin, and in sensitive discussions.

Closing

- Invite group members to briefly share any situation this coming week where they especially need the Spirit's help to be gentle.
- Encourage the group to pray for one another's specific needs—asking God to produce His fruit, especially gentleness, in those situations and to make His “still small voice” clear to each person.
- Close by thanking God (in your own words) for His gentleness toward you and for the promise that He is near.

Leader Notes

- **Create Safety:** Gentleness starts with the leader. Model a calm, patient tone. Listen well and avoid cutting people off. Acknowledge emotions, especially if the topic of conflict or correction stirs up past pain.
- **Guard Against Shaming:** When discussing harshness or anger, keep the focus on growth and grace, not on condemning anyone. Remind the group that we are all in process and that the Spirit convicts in order to heal.
- **Encourage Participation:** Invite quieter members to share by asking open-ended questions and giving them time. Gently manage more talkative members so others can speak.
- **Stay Scripture-Centered:** If the conversation drifts into venting about culture or politics, gently bring it back to the texts and to how we are called to live as Christ's people.
- **Pray for Sensitivity:** Before group each week, ask the Lord to help you discern who might need a “whisper” rather than strong words. Be open to pausing and simply listening if someone becomes emotional.
- **Model Vulnerability:** Consider sharing a recent example of your own struggle with harshness or impatience and how the Lord is teaching you gentleness. This invites honesty from others.
- **Follow Up:** If a group member shares about a particularly sensitive situation (e.g., ongoing conflict, struggles with anger, or spiritual burnout), consider following up with them privately later in the week to encourage them.

May the Lord cause His gentleness to be evident among you, and may His still small voice be near and clear as you walk with Him and with one another this week.