

HANDOUT PART THREE: DRESSED TO SERVE GENTLENESS/MEEKNESS

READ Colossians 3:12-14 PUTTING ON THE CHARACTER/VIRTUES OF CHRIST!

The 4th Character Quality is "Gentleness," Translated "Meekness." NOT Weakness! Meekness is "Strength Under Control." {Bridled horse with a Bit in its Mouth}

QUESTION: Do We Esteem Gentleness? Have We Moved All Our Chips Onto the Gentleness Square?

- Matthew 11:29 Jesus himself said, *"I am Gentle and Lowly in heart"*.
- **KEY: It is to the Degree that We Renounce Pushiness and Embrace Gentleness, that We Will Make the Real Jesus Visible in Our World Today.**

READ 1 Thessalonians 2:7 Gentleness is a Strong Hand with a Soft Touch. *It is a Tender, Compassionate Approach Toward Others' Weaknesses and Limitations.*

Gentleness Seeks to Accomplish Two Major Things in and Through our lives. Gentleness Seeks to Fulfill the Will of God...When Jesus was arrested in Gethsemane, Peter drew a sword to defend Him but Jesus said, Being Gentle is to Leave Room for the Workings of God's Will.

- It is NOT about Fighting for what We Think is Right, But for God's Will to Be Done.
- It is NOT About Defending Ourselves...But Upholding God's Will.
- **KEY: Our Responses are Tempered with Graciousness and Gentleness, Because We Want the Purposes of God to Be Fulfilled.**

God's Desire is Always to Restore and Redeem, Never to Judge and Condemn.

- In John 8 Jesus was gentle with the woman caught in adultery not because He was unjust or unrighteous, but to give room for her to recover from her sinful ways and through His forgiving love restart her life anew. AND...She was Changed.
- In John 4 Jesus made a detour to Samaria to meet another adulterous woman, by the well. She had had 5 husbands and the man she now has is not her husband. He did not judge her, but rather led her to salvation, for Jesus came to seek & save the lost.
- In Luke 19 Jesus noticed Zacchaeus, a chief tax-collector when the world hated him and He invited himself into the sinner's house. *Jesus' Gentleness Touched Zacchaeus in a way that Nothing Else Did and Gentleness Changed his Life!*
- **KEY FOR US: Jesus Lovingly Told Them the Truth...Without Condemning Them!**

Secondly...Gentleness Shows Concern for the Needs of Others. Gentleness Restores Because it Looks after the Welfare of Others...It is Motivated by a Concern for the Well-Being of Others.

READ Timothy: 2 Tim 2:25-26, Galatians 6:1, John 13:3-5 & John 13: 14-15

- KEY: All power and authority were in His hands, yet Jesus washed His disciples' feet.
- Power Under Control is Gentleness! Jesus' Example Is To Be Our Pattern!
- Gentleness Flows from an Attitude of Selflessness and Humility.

KEY: We're NOT Walking Fully in the Spirit as Followers of Christ if We are Not Gentle.

There will be times in life when people let us down. Our children will disobey and break our hearts. There will be times when we will hurt those whom we love, maybe saying or doing something in a moment of weakness, stress, or exasperation. Yet Gentleness Impacts How Conflicts and Confrontations are Handled.

- Prov 15:1: *"A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger."*
- Romans 2:4 It is kindness that leads us to repentance.
- Such Kindness is Gentle and does Not get Provoked to give a Harsh Response.

What we Need in times of Relational Difficulties are Gentle Words of Confrontation, Rebuke, Exhortation, or Encouragement that Can Lead Us to Get Back on Track.

There will be times (or should be) when we are asked about the hope that we have in Christ. At those times 1 Peter 3:15 *But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,*

- We are Told to Give a Defense for what We Believe, Gently and Reverently.

POINT: We can say All of the Right things and Give a Godly Explanation for Faith, *But if We Don't do it in a way that Shows Others that We Love and Care about them as our Lord Does, We Will Fail to Be and Do what God Wants Us to Be and Do.*

There is a thought today that being friendly and keeping people happy by washing down the Truth of the Gospel is Best. *But Gentleness Doesn't Gloss Over Sin and the Truth for the Sake of Being "Friendly."* **Rather...Gentleness Seasons the Truth with "Salt", making is Palatable and Desirable, so that those whom We Confront or Exhort Experience the Grace of God!**

Gal 6:1, *"There will be times when a brother or sister is caught in sin, and we are to Restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness".* We go to those who've fallen into Sin Not Bringing Condemnation but as those Seeking Restoration and Reconciliation, hoping that They Will Ask for the Forgiveness that we are Prepared to Offer.

TRUE STORY: Violet Slaughter's father died in 1969. Before he died he gave her an antique pitcher and wash basin that before the turn of the century used to be found in guest bedrooms. The pitcher would be full of water and the guest would pour water into the basin to wash off at night before going to bed. It was Violet's most prized possession because it came from her parents' home. And it became even more precious to her after her father died. She kept it on display in a very special spot in her home. One day guests came to visit, and they brought with them an unruly dog that jumped around a lot. In doing so it wrapped its leash around the little table on which this pitcher and basin were displayed, causing the pitcher and basin to fall and break. It was a tragedy to Violet. Her husband says, "I Watched as Without a Word... she took the dust pan and picked up every piece of that broken basin and pitcher. She kept all the pieces. And every evening, she would bring out the ceramic glue and glue pieces back together again."

This is Gentleness in Action...Violets Care for Another Outweighed Her Own Pain and Sorrow!

Here is Why Having The Gentleness of Christ is So Important to Each Of Us: The world is lonely, lost, and hurting; consumed in darkness and despair. They desperately need to hear about Jesus' Forgiveness, Love, Mercy, and Grace. Yet, many have become Resistant and Bitter against Christians because, in their experience, "Christians" are Only Out to Unlovingly "Brow Beat" People with Scripture.

It is NOT Our Role to Condemn the Lost, But to Speak Truth to them. So if they are without Christ, they may Choose to be Released from the Condemnation they're in.

Jesus said in John 3:17-18, *"For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son".*

It is Out of a Love and Care for Others, Above Ourselves, that We will with Gentleness Share what Christ Has Done for Us...

This is where Your Testimony becomes Important...When you can Share Where You Were Before Christ and How He has Changed Your Life and they see Your Gentle Caring Spirit. It is Then that Jesus Will Become Real to Them!

"LIFE" POINT: "It's Not Strength But Gentleness that Cracks the Hardest Shells."