

your dealings with others adds up to walking in a manner worthy of your calling. To walk with gentleness is to walk and be gentle with others wherever you go.

6. Be gentle after you forgive someone (Gal. 6:1). If a person sins against you, you have a right to rebuke him (Luke 17:3). That's *not* being gentle. If he comes to you and repents, forgive him (Luke 17:3-4). Then, after forgiving him, treat him in a gentle manner from then on—just as you did before (Gal. 6:1). The temptation is to hold a grudge, to continue being angry, to be insulting, rude, or harsh—the opposite of gentleness.

7. Wives should be gentle with their unbelieving husbands (1 Peter 3:4). Being married to an unbeliever can be frustrating. He makes you angry. You want to insult him, yell at him, scratch, bite, slap, and kick him. Don't. The Holy Spirit will help you be gentle at such times if He has produced some fruit in you. Such behavior is not normal; it's god-given and supernatural. Hopefully your unbelieving husband (or wife) will take note of your gentleness, think about it, and want it for himself. Gentleness is powerful: it can win your partner to the Lord.

8. Be gentle when you correct those who are doctrinally wrong (2 Tim. 2:24-25). Gentleness is a quality needed by spiritual leaders—especially pastors. When arguing with those who hold different doctrinal positions, correct them—but do it gently. Don't say, "You imbecile! You spiritual moron... don't you know anything?" Start gently. Be firm. Meet force with force.

9. Be gentle in defending your faith (1 Peter 3:15).

10. A gentle spirit is precious in God's sight (1 Peter 3:4). Why? Because it can win unbelieving husbands to the Lord (1 Peter 3:4). Because it helps produce unity in the local church (Gal. 6:1; Eph. 4:2-3). And because it makes us like Christ (Matt. 11:29; 2 Cor. 10:1).

11. Pastors should remind their sheep to be gentle (Titus 3:1-2).

12. The gentleness in your heart is applied to others by your will (Col. 3:12). Gentleness, if it's present in your soul, can be put on and put off at will—like clothing. In each case you must decide if you're going to treat a person gently or harshly.

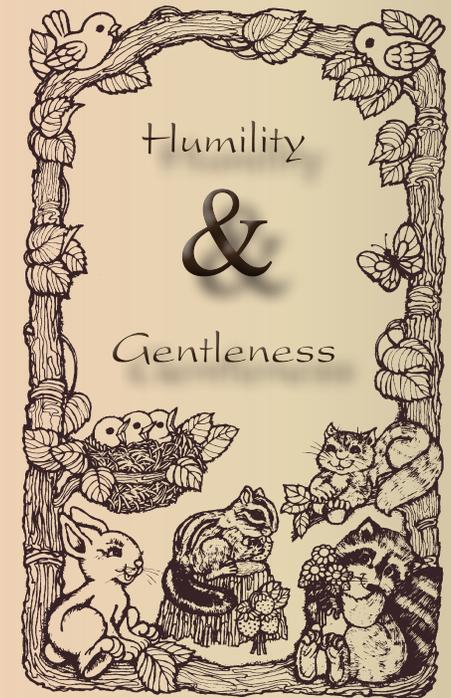
When someone irritates you, annoys you, blows it, makes a big mistake, or fails in some way, treat them gently. Don't raise your voice, get huffy or angry. Don't chew them out and don't threaten them. Be gentle! Love helps. It's easier to be gentle with

those you love than those you don't. Love, another fruit of the Spirit, will help you to be gentle with others.

Gentleness, however, doesn't mean you never get angry or violent in your dealings with others. We must keep in mind the whole counsel of God. Jesus, as we have seen, was gentle, yet with a scourge of cords He violently drove the money-changers from the temple, dumped their coins on the ground, and overturned their tables (John 2:14-16). That's righteous indignation. That's being angry but not sinning (Eph. 4:26). Later He rebuked the Pharisees—harshly—calling them insulting names like "hypocrites," "brood of vipers," and "whitewashed tombs" (Matt. 23). The apostle Paul chewed Peter out in public for his hypocrisy (Gal. 2:11-14). Pastors are instructed to rebuke those who continue in sin in the presence of all (1 Tim. 5:20). And you have a right to rebuke those who sin against you (Luke 17:3). So there were times when Jesus and the apostles were not gentle. The principle? If it's a matter of sin, be ruthless, even brutal if necessary—meeting force with force. But if it's an accident, a mistake, a hapless circumstance, be gentle in your relationships with others.



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J, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, entreat you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, by putting up with one another in love, and by making every effort to preserve the unity of the Spirit with the bond of peace.
~Ephesians 4:1-3~

HUMILITY

1. Humility exists in the mind (Phil. 2:3) and in the heart (Matt. 11:29; Col. 3:12).

Humility is a mental attitude you have toward others, especially toward fellow believers in your church (1 Peter 5:5) and toward God (5:6). This Christian virtue influences your relationship with others.

2. Humility is lowliness of mind. It's considering yourself to be lower or of lesser importance than someone else—especially God.

The etymology of the verb in Greek defines its meaning: *ta-peinophroneō* means “to be lowly in mind, humble” (LSJ). This word is composed of two smaller words: the adjective *tapeinos* “low” and the verb *phroneō* “think.” Together the compound verb means “think low.” Humility is—*think low!* If you think of yourself as being lower and of lesser importance than others, you'll be humble.

The word group denotes height, elevation, and position. The verb *phroneō* “lower, make low” (BAG) is used of leveling a mountain or a hill—the opposite of filling in a gully (Isa. 40:4 LXX; Luke 3:5). It refers to the lowering of rivers after the summer solstice (Diodorus of Sicily 1.36.7). The adjective *tapeinos* is used of low-lying sandy areas such as eastern Libya—as opposed to wooded and mountainous western Libya (Herodotus 4.191). The comparative *tapeinotera* designates the Qattara Depression in Libya (Aristotle, *Meteorologica* 352b32). It's also used of stars that are low on the horizon (Cleomedes 1.5) and of the pastern on a horse's foot being too low to the ground (Xenophon, *Art of Horsemanship* 1.4).

3. To be humble is to regard others as more important than yourself (Phil. 2:3).

4. Humility puts the needs and desires of others ahead of your own desires (Phil. 2:4).

5. Humility is the opposite of selfishness (*eritheia* in Phil. 2:3), conceit (*kenodoxia* in Phil. 2:3), and pride (*huperēphanos* in 1 Peter 5:5).

6. Jesus was humble (Matt. 11:29). Being humble is a part of being Christlike.

7. God wants us all to be humble (1 Peter 5:5).

8. Humility makes submission and obedience to God's will possible (Phil. 2:8; James 4:6–7).

9. Humility precedes obedience (Matt. 18:1–4). The child called by Jesus came in humble obedience. He thought lowly of himself and highly of Jesus.

10. You should be humble when you're serving the Lord (Acts 20:19). Humility is the proper attitude for service.

11. God comforts (2 Cor. 7:6) and gives grace to the humble (James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5).

12. Humility is the basis of earthly promotion and future rewards (Matt. 18:4; 23:12; Luke 14:11; 18:14; James 4:10; 1 Peter 5:6).

13. The humble will be the greatest in the millennial Kingdom (Matt. 18:1–4).

14. There is such a thing as pseudo-humility (Col. 2:18, 23).

GENTLENESS

What is gentleness? The word for gentleness is *prauteēs* which comes from the adjective *praus* “mild, soft, gentle” (LSJ). In Greek the word group is used of:

1. gently urging a high-spirited horse to go instead of spurring him on roughly (“then direct him to go by the most gentle aids” Xenophon, *Art of Horsemanship* 9:3). If you're rough he'll throw you off.

2. animals who are gentle toward men—tame as opposed to wild and fierce (Xenophon, *A Discussion on Estate Management* 15.4). In Plato the opposite of *praotēs* (later *prauteēs*) is *agrioteēs* (“cultivating courtesy and weeding out brutality” *Symposium* 197d). *agrioteēs* is used of “savageness, wildness, of animals, opp. *hēmeroteēs* . . . of men, in moral sense, fierceness, cruelty” (LSJ). It's used of wild animals that bite or kick in Xenophon's *Memorabilia* 2.2.7. Are you gentle or like a bear mauling others?

3. a gentle sounding voice—as opposed to a voice that terrifies people (Xenophon, *Banquet* 1.10).

4. mild words (*praesi logois*) in admonishing someone (Plato, *Laws* 888a).

5. a gentle versus violent disposition (Plato, *Laws* 930a). A marriage between two violent people ends in divorce. They have “passions . . . too high for harmony.”

6. the way a general treats those he conquers in war (Thucydides 4.108.3). Brasidas treated the people he conquered gently—not roughly. He didn't enslave, beat, or kill them. His gentleness persuaded the allies of Athens to revolt and join him.

7. a king, “gentle and mounted on a donkey” (Zech. 9:9 LXX). Jesus rode into Jerusalem the first time “gentle and mounted on a donkey” (Matt. 21:5) but at his second coming He's violent and mounted on a white charger (Rev. 19:11). John says, “His eyes are a flame of fire” (19:12) and “He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood” (19:13).

8. The opposite of gentleness is a rod—a spanking, physical discipline (1 Cor. 4:21). A father spanking his son is not being gentle. A spanking is harsh, frightening, violent behavior.

Now, from the use of this word group in Greek, we're ready to form a definition of gentleness.

1. Gentleness is being mild in your speech and behavior toward others. It's treating people gently—not roughly, harshly, or brutally. It's not making them afraid of you. Let's see what the Bible has to say about gentleness.

2. Gentleness exists (begins) in the heart (Matt. 11:29; Col. 3:12) and in the spirit (1 Peter 3:4). Gentleness is first an attitude then a way of treating others. It must be present in our hearts before we will treat others gently.

3. Jesus was gentle (Matt. 11:29; 2 Cor. 10:1). Gentleness is a part of being Christlike.

4. Gentleness is one of the fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5:23). The Holy Spirit came to produce gentleness in our hearts. He came to help us be gentle with one another. He came

to make us gentle like Christ. Gentleness is a god-given supernatural ability—beyond what unbelievers can do. If gentleness isn't present in your life, you've been quenching the Spirit. He hasn't produced this fruit in you.

5. Gentleness is part of the worthy walk (Eph. 4:2). Showing humility, gentleness, patience, forbearance, love, unity, and peace in