



**The Fruit of the Spirit in
 Biblical Counseling:
 Gentleness**

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The fruit of the Spirit

- ¹⁶ But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. ¹⁸ But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. ¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, ²¹ envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. ²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. ²⁴ And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵ If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. Galatians 5:16-25 (ESV)

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Observations

- We have two options:
 - Walk in the Spirit with the result that the fruit of the Spirit will form and grow in us.
 - Gratify the desires of the flesh with the resulting sinful behavior.
- Gratifying the desires of the flesh produces a chaotic and destructive array of behaviors.
- Walking in the Spirit forms a unified and ordered life portraying the character of Christ.

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**πραΰτης
prautes**

Gentleness: (also translated as humble or meek)
The strength to engage people in their brokenness in such a way as to give them opportunity to respond that they may experience the fullness of life God has for them.

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Gentleness gives balance to our approach to people.

Gentleness is neither capitulation nor weakness but will often result in those accusations leveled against one practicing true biblical gentleness.

Anger ← **Gentleness** → Indifference

The biblical counselor's unwavering commitment to the Word of God will keep him or her from these two errors.

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Gentleness reveals a life guided by God's wisdom.

- *"Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace."* (James 3:13–18, ESV)

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Jesus embodied this trait.

- *“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” (Matthew 11:28–30, ESV)*
- *This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, saying, “Say to the daughter of Zion, ‘Behold, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.’” (Matthew 21:4–5, ESV)*

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Proper understanding and application

- It is important to remember that although the fruit of the Spirit is formed within us by the Holy Spirit, we must choose to apply these traits at the appropriate times.
 - *“Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience,” (Colossians 3:12, ESV)*

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Specific settings in which we are instructed to apply gentleness.

- In applying correction
 - *“Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.” (Galatians 6:1, ESV)*
 - *“And the Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.” (2 Timothy 2:24–26, ESV)*

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Specific settings in which we are instructed to apply gentleness.

• Defending the faith

• *“Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? But even if you should suffer for righteousness’ sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.” (1 Peter 3:13–16, ESV)*

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Biblical examples of the application of gentleness.

• *“Then Jesus said to him, “Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?”” (Matthew 26:52–54, ESV)*

• Gentleness takes into consideration a bigger picture than that which is immediately in front of me. It also releases from the tyranny of self-focus and self-interest.

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Biblical examples of the application of gentleness.

• *“When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem. And he sent messengers ahead of him, who went and entered a village of the Samaritans, to make preparations for him. But the people did not receive him, because his face was set toward Jerusalem. And when his disciples James and John saw it, they said, “Lord, do you want us to tell fire to come down from heaven and consume them?” But he turned and rebuked them. And they went on to another village.” (Luke 9:51–56, ESV)*

Acting in gentleness leaves space for the mercy and grace of God and trusts God to appropriately apply punitive judgment.

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Biblical examples of the application of gentleness.

- *“Jesus stood up and said to her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” She said, “No one, Lord.” And Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more.”” (John 8:10–11, ESV)*
 - Gentleness moves from the question of what I have a right to do to or for someone and asks the question, “How may I help this person take a step toward becoming all God created him or her to become?”

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Biblical examples of the application of gentleness.

- *“The next day Moses said to the people, “You have sinned a great sin. And now I will go up to the LORD; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin.” So Moses returned to the LORD and said, “Alas, this people has sinned a great sin. They have made for themselves gods of gold. But now, if you will forgive their sin—but if not, please blot me out of your book that you have written.”” (Exodus 32:30–32, ESV)*

The application of gentleness to others reveals that we have the humility to recognize our common struggles in a broken world.

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Biblical examples of the application of gentleness.

- *“And after some days Paul said to Barnabas, “Let us return and visit the brothers in every city where we proclaimed the word of the Lord, and see how they are.” Now Barnabas wanted to take with them John called Mark. But Paul thought best not to take with them one who had withdrawn from them in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work. And there arose a sharp disagreement, so that they separated from each other. Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus,” (Acts 15:36–39, ESV)*

Gentleness can profoundly influence restoration.

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