

Mom2Mom 4.3.24
The Fruit of the Spirit
Self-Control & Meekness TEACHING
TEACHER Notes

((Teacher, please prepare for this class by rereading Chapter 11 of the book “The Fruitful Life” by Jerry Bridges. This will allow you to elaborate on points of the lesson below as you are led by the Holy Spirit.))

I. ((click)) Self-Control – (10 minutes)

A. ((click)) The Meaning of Self-Control – *1 Cor. 9:27, James 1:14-16, Eph. 4:22-24, Luke 9:23*

To control one’s self -- It might be best described as

- “governing one’s desires” and
- “the ability to avoid excesses, to stay within reasonable bounds” and
- “the healthful regulation of our desires and appetites, preventing their excess.”¹

“Self- Control is the exercise of inner strength under the direction of sound judgment that enables us to do, think, and say the things that are pleasing to God.”²

These definitions imply that we tend to overindulge our desires and various appetites, and we need to learn to restrain them.

Self-Control can be broken down into two main concepts. First, it is “the moderation and temperance in the gratification of our desires and appetites” with “strength of character that enables one to control his or her passions.” The second concept is soundness of mind and judgment.³

Sound judgment helps us to see how we should respond or what we should do, and inner strength gives us the power to do what is right. This is important when seeing the difference between right and wrong but also good, better, and best. Sound judgment helps us to regulate our thoughts and keep our emotions under control.

B. ((click)) Self-Control says “yes” to the godly things and “no” to ungodly things. We are told to make our bodies be our servant; we are not to give in to all of the whims and desires of the physical body. By the grace of God, we have the power of the Holy Spirit to say NO to ungodly living.

Luke 9:23 And He was saying to them all, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.

1 Cor. 9:27 but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.

¹ The Fruitful Life, by Jerry Bridges, quote from page 154

² The Fruitful Life, by Jerry Bridges, quote from page 156

³ The Fruitful Life, by Jerry Bridges, quote from page 155

Titus 2:11-12 For **the grace of God** has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age,

C. **((click)) Self-control is hard, because we are at war with our own sinful deceitful desires.**

1. **((click)) In James’ epistle, we see our struggle to have self-control comes from within ourselves, not “out there.”**

James 4:1 What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don’t they come from your desires that battle within you? (NIV)

James 1:14-16 But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. ¹⁵ Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. ¹⁶ Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.

2. **((click)) Further, our natural desires are deceitful, and, if they are allowed to take root and grow, they will corrupt and destroy us.**

Eph. 4:22-24 that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, ²³ and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, ²⁴ and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

II. **((click)) Exercising of Self-Control** – Yes, we should exercise, like a good workout at the gym, to strengthen what you’ve been given.

A. **((click)) Honoring God with Your Body** –

1. **((click)) God created us to enjoy physical things, but under the curse of sin, we often take the good things made for our enjoyment and begin to worship the pleasure they bring.** The Scripture teaches us to enjoy God’s good gifts, but we are not to be mastered by anything.

1 Tim. 6:17 God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy.

*1 Cor. 6:12, 19-20 All things are lawful for me, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be mastered by anything. . . Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body
(refer back to Holy Spirit teaching)*

2. ((click)) Because of this tendency, we should be especially careful to watch for areas of gluttony, laziness, and sexual immorality and impurity.

1 Thess. 4:3-5 For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; ⁴that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, ⁵not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God;

1 Cor. 10:31 Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

When we recognize that our physical bodies are inherently weak, we are much more careful not to expose them to anything that could possibly master them. Second Corinthians speaks of our bodies as “earthen vessels” carrying the inherently valuable treasure of the gospel.

II Cor. 4:6-7 For God, who said, “Light shall shine out of darkness,” is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. ⁷But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves;

To keep our bodies pure, whether it’s food, drink, sex, or work, we will need to start by keeping our *thoughts* pure.

Matt. 5:28 but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

B. ((click)) Honoring God with our Thoughts – Self-control of our thoughts is essential to self-control of the rest of our person. God teaches us that we are only to think about the things that honor God and consciously to avoid thinking about the things that do not please God.

Just as the Apostle Paul compared the cultural thinking of his time (“every thought”) to the truth of the Word (2 Cor. 10:5) to see if it needed to be thrown out or held to, we must be careful to do the same in our own thinking.

2 Cor 10:5 We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ,

1. ((click)) Our thoughts direct our actions. We are instructed to be incredibly careful about what thoughts we allow to reside in our hearts, because all of our life flows from what is happening in our hearts. If we keep our thoughts controlled by purity, our actions will be controlled by purity as well.

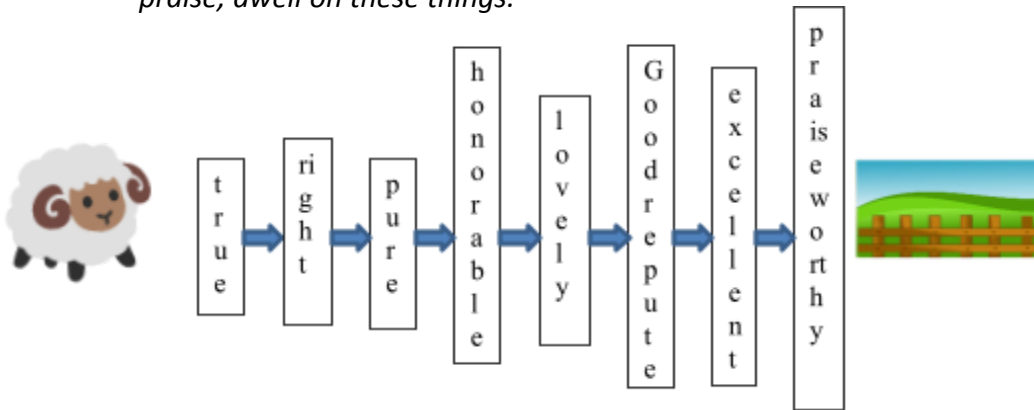
Prov. 4:23 Watch over your heart with all diligence, For from it flow the springs of life.

Matt. 12:34 You brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak what is good? For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart.

2. **((click))** God kindly has given us a grid through which to check our thinking to make sure that what we are allowing to stay or abide in our minds honors him.

(Briefly explain illustration of Phil. 4:8 as “gates” that our thoughts must pass through in order to be allowed to stay in our thinking)

Phil. 4:8 Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.



C. **((click))** Honoring God with Our Emotions

Uncontrolled emotions damage us and the people around us. We discussed this topic all of last year. While God gave us emotions to be used in the enjoyment of our relationship with him, the curse of sin on the world and in our bodies has left us with the capacity to display sinful emotions that must be submitted to the Holy Spirit’s direction.

*Prov. 16:32 He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, **And he who rules his spirit**, than he who captures a city.*

Eph 4:31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.

Prov. 12:18 There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.

D. **((click))** Knowing the Word of God is necessary for wisdom.

Honest examination of ourselves is necessary in order to see what areas need to be controlled, what weaknesses need to be shored up, and what vulnerabilities need to be strengthened. To do this, we must think of ourselves soberly and objectively.

Rom 12:3 For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.

Ruling over ourselves--our use of our bodies, the thoughts we ponder, and the emotions we express--is an expression of the Creation Mandate. Ruling and having dominion over our bodies, thoughts, and emotions and subduing chaos and evil in our own lives is the beginning of our exercising the Creation Mandate in our areas of influence.

III. **Meekness** – (10 minutes)

Now that we've covered all the facets of the fruit of the Spirit, we're going to elaborate on the concept of meekness. Meekness is a translation of the same Greek word used for "gentleness" in our key verse about the fruit of the Spirit. And it is often misunderstood.

Meek is the Greek adjective *PRAUS* (*prautēs* in noun form) used in I Peter 3:4

*I Peter 3:1-4 Wives, in the same way submit yourselves to your own husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, ² when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. ³ Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes. ⁴ Rather, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a **gentle (meek) and quiet spirit**, which is of great worth in God's sight.*

A. The meaning of meekness. "PRAUS" means accepting God's dealings with us as good and therefore offering no resistance or disputing. It has to do with a soothing disposition and is closely linked with humility and trust. It is first and foremost an attitude of the heart toward God that results in a quiet spirit. We are free to focus on loving others "in all meekness" without being easily agitated if we are growing in our trust in a loving and sovereign God. It is the same word used for gentleness in Galatians 5:23. It is a fruit of the Spirit. Without the work of the Holy Spirit we will never be meek – we can't do it on our own!

Also used in Matthew in the sermon on the Mount, when Jesus says the "meek" are blessed. And again, the word is used in Matt. 11:29 where Jesus describes his heart, translated often as "gentle."

B. Meekness describes a quietness of soul that is not anxious. It is not 'weakness' in the world's sense of an unwanted quality.

1 Timothy 2:1-2 First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, ²for kings and all who are in authority, in order that we may lead a **tranquil and quiet life** in all godliness and dignity.

Compare and contrast tranquil and quiet.

- The word, **tranquil**, is a quietness arising from **without**. For example – seeing a scene with calm water is tranquil.
- The word **quiet** refers to a state of being, arising from **within** that causes no disturbance to others; not anxious. This same word is the word translated *quiet* in 1 Peter 3:4. This gentle spirit is a result of a stabilizing trust in a good and holy God that cannot be “whipped up,” but must be cultivated by time with Him and getting to know Him. In other words, it is the result of having a meek heart!
- **Meekness is not the same thing as a personality trait of quietness.** It is possible to have a quiet demeanor without a meek heart. Author Jeremiah Burroughs states that some people are by nature of a quieter disposition than others. That is true, but it is not the result of a meek heart before God. It may be the result of apathy – outward circumstances may not make them anxious and they really may cause no disturbance to others, just because they don’t really care! On the other hand, a meek heart is very passionate about God and cares very deeply and is STILL quiet because of its overarching knowledge and trust of the God in control. THAT is SUPERNATURAL!

IV. **Developing Meekness**

A. **Meekness is an attitude of the heart and a quiet spirit is the result.**

A meek and quiet heart is free to concentrate on loving others, because it isn’t chaotically trying to manipulate things to go its way. How unnecessary that is when I am focused on God’s control and following His ways.

*Ps. 37:7, 11 **Be still** before the Lord and wait patiently for him; fret not yourself over the one who prospers in his way, over the man who carries out evil devices! ¹¹But the meek shall inherit the land and delight themselves in abundant peace.*

After listing what our thoughts should be fixed on in Phil. 4:8 (true, lovely. . .), Paul says:

*Philippians 4:9 The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, **and the God of peace will be with you.***

You can have a quiet soul while joyfully and loudly singing or laughing, and you can have a “noisy” soul while sitting and not saying a thing.

*James 1:21 Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and **receive with meekness the implanted word**, which is able to save your souls.*

In these verses, we see that right thinking and right praying leads to right action - like peace instead of worry (**quiet spirit**). I am able to have a quiet spirit when I think the way God tells me to think and trust Him humbly (**meek heart**) in the circumstances He has given me.

B. ((click)) Meekness is not bitter or resentful.

James 3:17 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.

C. ((click)) Meekness is not dependent upon our circumstances. Gen. 50:20, Rom. 8:28-29; Ps. 119:68

Meekness recognizes that even evil is permitted and employed for the good and purifying of believers! Meekness is illustrated by the way you respond to distressing circumstances based on the inner disposition of your soul. We are not victims of randomness! Think of these passages:

Genesis 50:20 As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive.

Ps. 119:68 You are good, and what you do is good; teach me your decrees.

Rom. 8:28-29 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.

Think of a situation that tends to rile or frustrate you – maybe it is truly unfair like Joseph’s treatment by his brothers. Even in this, by God’s grace, we can stop resisting if we’re meek. It is a gift with purpose from God. His dealings with us are good (Ps. 119:68) and are for our good (Rom. 8:28-29). A meek heart recognizes with humility that God lovingly oversees all aspects of her life. In this posture of humble trust, we are able to have a quiet spirit in her inner person and in her dealings with others.

((click)) Optional Memory Verse: Titus 2:11-12 *For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age,*

((click)) Homework

Assign [Worksheet #7](#). This should be read and completed this week and discussed next week.

((click)) Table Discussion Questions (** is also a Large Group Discussion Question)

Application Questions for Self-Control content

1. ** How does this definition of self-control affect you?

2. How does recognizing that you have deceitful desires help you grow in self-control?
3. How can we grow in self-control in body, thoughts, and emotion?

Application Questions for Meekness content

4. How does accepting God's dealings with us lead to meekness?
5. ** How are meekness and manipulation related?
6. How does a focus on circumstances limit our meekness?

Table Time Prayer Request Question:

In what specific ways can we ask Jesus to help you grow in Self-Control and Meekness this week?

((click)) Large Group Discussion Question

Table time discussion questions 1 and 5 will be used for large group discussion.