

# ***“Meekness is Not Weakness!”***

*Matthew 5:5*

**Intro.** – This beatitude is by no means popular. In our jet-set world, *meekness* is hardly fashionable. I’ll illustrate what I mean: Years ago, a newspaper wrote of a “hired hand” who assisted a disgruntled wife killing her husband. The paper called him “a meek little murderer.”

Our age believes the most fit to survive is the aggressive, heavy-handed, hard-fisted, self-asserting individual. What chance has the meek in a world where it appears the race is always to the swift and the battle to the strong? How ridiculous this principle (meekness) is in light of today’s businesses. Why, it is a “dog eat dog world” in which we live. How can one even think about meekness? We prefer to be like the little boy whose mother kept calling him, “My little lamb.” He said, “Mommy, I don’t want to be your little lamb. I want to be your little tiger.”

We like to think of ourselves as being strong, courageous, and tough. But when it comes to the subject at hand too many give it a “thumbs down.” Why? Because meekness is automatically thought of as weakness. Now-a-days the word gives the idea of spinelessness. It paints the picture of a cowering, wimpy, ineffective person. Simply speak the word “meek” and people envision Clark Kent and NOT the man of steel.

How is our pictured concept of this word? What do we think of when “meek” is used to describe a person? What significance/principle is there for you and me to seize?

*Purpose: to better understand how meekness is not weakness*

“meek” comes from a Greek word that means: “unassuming, considerate, gentle” one commentator described it as: “it is an inwrought grace of the soul; and the exercises of it are first and chiefly towards God.”

## **I ANGER in the Presence of God**

- Tim LeHaye and Bob Phillips *Anger is a Choice*: “80 to 90% of our anger is displaced.” – e.g. our anger may be about one thing or person BUT we take it out on everybody else.
- this suggests a universal abuse of this emotion... and all of this is done in God’s presence.
- what does any of this have to do with meekness?

### **A. Meekness Avoids Extremes**

- Aristotle is some help here – he defined every virtue as mid-point between two extremes e.g. one extreme would be a spendthrift, the other extreme a miser... in-between would be generous...
- 1. Aristotle defined meekness as the in-between excessive anger and complete passiveness.
- 2. Nice that Aristotle to pick up on this since the Bible defines meekness as acting with proper emotion no matter the occasion.

### **B. Meekness Knows How. When and Why**

1. It is the difference from selfish anger and selfless anger.
2. I’ll illus. what I mean: Wealthy Texan was throwing a party. Had his pool filled with alligators. “Anyone swim the length of the pool I’ll give them their choice of three fabulous gifts 1) Gold plated Cadillac 2) Ownership of the Dallas Mavericks 3) 40 acres of downtown Dallas.” There was a significant pause until all of the sudden, Jones the Texan’s old hired hand jumped in and began swimming for his life... He made it. Texan ask, “Well, Jones, you were the last I expected to jump in a try this. What do you want...?” “No sir, I just want the guy who pushed me in!”
  - a. when is the right time to get angry? It is never the right time when we get angry at someone for cutting us off in traffic, or insulting us or being thoughtless... That anger is always about vengeance – getting even or getting back.
  - b. Romans 12:19 “*Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,’ says the Lord.*” Note: selfish anger is always sin = but selfless anger is *holy anger!*
3. Blessed is the man who knows how, when and why to become angry

## II SELF CONTROL in the Presence of God

- Greeks used this word to describe animals who had been domesticated/trained to obey commands.
  - i.e. meekness is a word used for animals who have learned to accept *control* – the same word is used in the same sense by Jesus in our text:
- A. Desires Must be God Controlled
1. Desires of the world are in stark contrast to the desires of Christ’s servants...
  2. The world’s desires can be described in one word – ME...
  3. The desires of God – holiness/righteousness... that which is best for His highest creation!
- B. Passions Must be God Controlled
1. Again, the passions of the world focus on SELF...
  2. The passion of our Lord = lost man...
  3. What is our passion?... God help us to have a passion for souls... the lost and each other!
- C. Habits Must be God Controlled
1. Fact is we do what we want to do...
  2. What about habits – we control them or they control us...
    - a. Illus. – for father’s day I received honey roasted nuts and cashews... same day ate ½!
    - b. Illus. – Adam as a little boy asked about being an adult at age 21... “When I’m 21 will I be able to yell at kids?”
  3. Romans 6:16 “*Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness.*”
    - a. to whom or what are we yielding ourselves?
    - b. food... tobacco... anger... swearing...
    - c. picture Jesus doing what you and I do – would Jesus yield Himself to our habits?
  4. It’s a fact of history, individuals with self-control are the ones who made history not repeated it!
    - a. lack self-control and it leads to destruction:
      - Illus. – Alexander the Great in a fit of uncontrolled temper took a spear and threw it at his best friend, killing him.
    - b. no person can lead others until they have mastered themselves
    - c. no person can serve until he has learned to serve the Lord...

The man/woman/young person gives themselves to being under God’s control is no sissy!

## III HUMILITY in the Presence of God

- Greeks also used this word in contrast to a word that meant *lofty heartedness* or *know-it-all*
  - James 4:10 “*Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.*”
- A. Humility Leads to Learning
1. Without humility man cannot learn = e.g. first step to learning realization of one’s ignorance.
  2. Illus. – Quintilian (ancient teacher) concerning certain students of his, “They would no doubt be excellent students if they were not already convinced of their own knowledge.”
  3. No one can teach the person who “knows it all already.”
    - meek individual stand before God as TEACHABLE...
- B. Humility Leads to Love
1. The beginning of genuine love is having a sense of unworthiness in being loved.
  2. A sense of need and realization of our own sin draws us to the very source of Love – God!
- C. Humility Leads to Forgiveness
1. True manhood/womanhood comes only when we’re conscious we are creatures and God Creator
  2. Realizing sin and our inability to deal with it alone, humility leads us to seek *forgiveness*.

3. It is the meek man/woman/young person who can stand before God FORGIVEN!

**Conclusion:** In summary, is meekness weakness? We have learned that a meek person acts with emotions proper for the times... We have learned that a meek person exercises self-control (desires, passions, habits)... We have learned that a meek person has the strength to be humble... All of which is done in the presence of the Lord Himself.

Jesus referred to Himself as *gentle and humble in heart* (Matthew 11:29). Picture Him with me in the temple with whips in His hands driving the money changers and tradesmen off... Picture Him with me in the Garden of Gethsemane agonizing in prayer and replying "I am He" when the soldiers came to arrest Him. Picture with me Jesus standing before Pilate, receiving slaps on the face, spittle running down His cheeks, being disrobed (naked) and the mockery that was assaulting His character. All of this was done to Jesus without His uttering a word or making a move in His defense. Now, see Him on the cross breathing His last words *It is finished!* See Him in the tomb, but, three days later He is risen victorious over the grave never again to see death. Do you see Jesus? Look at Him with me! There is no other conclusion to which we can honestly come other than MEEKNESS IS NOT WEAKNESS!