

We come this morning to the eighth fruit, called meekness (or gentleness), and I want to consider it under three headings—Meekness Defined, Illustrated, and Promoted.

- I. Meekness Defined
- II. Meekness Displayed
- III. Meekness Promoted

I. Meekness Defined

1. Like several other fruit, meekness isn't easy to define—as I've said before, it's closely related to kindness, and as we shall see, self-control.
2. Let me begin with a working definition, and then we will briefly examine the three primary parts to this definition.
3. Simply stated, meekness entails a humble restraint of oneself, that results in treating others with gentleness.
4. Thus, there are fundamentally three ingredients to Biblical meekness—humility, gentleness, and constraint.
5. Now, let me briefly clarify, while meekness entails these three concepts, its not to be equated with either one.
6. Thus, it's my own personal conviction, and I am far from the only one, that meekness is the best translation.
7. But then why have the newer translations rendered the word "gentleness"—well because meekness is an older word that takes time to explain.
8. Or else perhaps, we live in a culture and context, where people don't like the concept of meekness because it sounds like weakness.
9. But brethren, there are terms that we need to fight to retain, and merely, take the time to explain them (I suggest meekness is one such term).
10. (1) Humility—the Greek word rendered meek is *prautes*, from which we get our English word *prostrate* (lay flat).
11. Meekness entails a humble view of oneself that enables us to respond and interact with others in gentleness.
12. Thus, Scripture often weds together meekness and humility, Matt.11:29—"Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and lowly in heart."
13. Notice "meek and lowly in heart" are joined together—to be "lowly in heart" is to have a low or humble view of yourself.
14. It is the opposite of prideful or haughty—it thinks little of oneself—it has a modest or low self-estimation.
15. Zeph.3:12—"I will leave in your midst a meek and humble people, and they shall trust in the name of the LORD."
16. The Lord was to bring judgement upon the nation of Israel for their sin—yet, in mercy He will leave a remnant.
17. This remnant is described by their character (a meek and humble people) and activity (they shall trust in the name of the LORD.)
18. Notice—meekness and humility are wed together—they will have a humble and low view of themselves.
19. Such meekness and humility, always lead to the same activity—"trusting in the name of the LORD."

20. Eph.4:1-2—"I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love."
21. "Lowliness" refers to "lowliness of mind or heart"—it refers a person with a low or humble view of himself.
22. Again, notice lowliness (humility) and gentleness (meekness) are wed together—they are inseparable.
23. (2) Gentleness—this Greek word is often rendered "gentle" or "gentleness" as it has reference to others.
24. As we've seen the NT often renders the same Greek word as "meek" "gentle" "meekness" or "gentleness."
25. Gentle means "a mild and tender spirit"—a meek person is a gentle person as they interact with others.
26. Fundamentally, gentleness is meekness expressed toward others, it's how a meek person treats others.
27. Martyn Lloyd-Jones—"Meekness is essentially a true view of oneself, expressing itself in attitude and conduct with respect to others. It is therefore two things. It is my attitude towards myself; and it is an expression of that in my relationship to others."
28. 2Cor.10:1—"Now, I, Paul, myself am pleading with you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ—who in presence am lowly among you, but being absent am bold toward you."
29. Here Paul couples together our word "meekness" with another rare word "gentleness" (or 'mildness').
30. To plead "by the meekness and gentleness of Christ"—means, he pleads with the character of Christ.
31. These two "meekness and gentleness" beautifully describe our Savior—He was full of meekness and gentleness.
32. Now—it's also possible that this phrase means—"the meekness and gentleness" that comes from Christ.
33. But these two go together—because Christ was meek and gentle, those who belong to Him, are meek and gentle.
34. 2Tim.2:24-25—"And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth (1Pet.3:15)."
35. Here we find the same word rendered "meek" elsewhere is rendered "gentle"—and for very good reasons.
36. If you remember, meekness shown to others is gentleness, thus "a servant of the Lord must...be gentle to all."
37. (3) Constraint—here I mean to point out, that meekness is not weakness—meekness is strength controlled.
38. Now—if you were to read through the many commentaries old and new, most make this a major point.
39. The reason being, the Greek word for meekness, brings with it the idea of humility by way of restraint.
40. John MacArthur—"Meekness does not connote weakness. The word was used in much extra biblical literature to refer to the breaking of an animal. Meekness means power put under control."
41. William Perkins—"Meekness is a gift of God's Spirit, whereby a man does moderate his affections of anger, and bridle in himself impatience, hatred, and desire of revenge."
42. William Hendriksen—"Meekness is the very opposite of vehemence, violence, and outbursts of anger."

43. Thus, understood in this sense, there's a very close connection between meekness and self-control (as we'll see next week).
44. Now, this point can be beautifully illustrated in Moses—a man of strong character and God-given authority.
45. And yet, again and again we find Moses restraining himself, and refusing to defend himself from all sorts of mistreatment.
46. Num.12:1-3—"Then Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married; for he had married an Ethiopian woman. So they said, Has the LORD indeed spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us also? And the LORD heard *it*. Now the man Moses *was* very humble (meek), more than all men who *were* on the face of the earth."
47. And so, most often, meekness implies some sort of opposition, which is dealt with in a controlled way.
48. Tit.3:1-2—"Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men."
49. Here "meekness" (or gentleness) is evidenced in the context of mistreatment—a controlled or constrained spirit.
50. Jas.3:13-14—"Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth."
51. Notice, whatever is meant by "the meekness of wisdom" it's in contrast to—"bitter envy and self-seeking."
52. In other words, at the heart of meekness, is a refusal to advance one's own self-promotion and advancement.
53. By "the meekness of wisdom" I think is meant—that meekness or gentleness that comes from wisdom.
54. Thus—meekness is not opposed to strength and authority—it simply refuses to mandate one's rights.
55. Perhaps another way of saying this would be, meekness is not the same thing as a timid and shy spirit.
56. I fear oftentimes, meekness is confused for timidity and shyness, but these brethren are not meekness.
57. MLJ—"Meekness is compatible with great strength. Meekness is compatible with great authority and power."

II. Meekness Displayed

1. I think it may be helpful to consider, how meekness displays itself in the life of a believer toward others.
2. Now in considering the ways in which meekness manifests itself, I want to limit our focus to three commands of our Savior.
3. In other words, our beloved Savior not only exemplified meekness, but He also commanded meekness (meekness displays itself in bearing injuries, forgiving offenses, and repaying evil with good).
4. (1) In bearing injuries—meekness shows itself in bearing mistreatment without responding in sinful ways.
5. As I've said earlier, meekness enables a person to restrain themselves from responding revengefully.
6. Matt.5:38-39—"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also."

7. Now, while I admit our Savior doesn't use the term meek or meekness, this command demands meekness.
8. Let me briefly say in passing, our Savior is here referring to injuries against our pride which are not life-threatening.
9. Our Savior does not mean—if someone robs and begins to beat you, you have to allow him to kill you.
10. No—the sixth commandment says, "you shall not murder," and this includes keepings other from murdering you.
11. But our Savior is referring to offenses to our pride, which may include a physical offense against us.
12. For example, let's say you're out passing our gospel tracts, and someone knocks them from your hand and yells in your face.
13. How are we to respond? Are we to push them back and yell at them? Are we to repay evil with evil?
14. No, we are not to resist an evil person, but leave them to their folly, and to the future just judgment of God.
15. (2) In forgiving offenses—a meek spirit is a forgiving spirit—it understands how often it sins against God and others.
16. Mk.11:25—"And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that you Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses."
17. This largely has refence to other Christians (the brethren), who may have offended you in some way.
18. Let's say you're at church worshipping, or else at home praying in private, and this brother comes to mind.
19. What do you do? Well, according to Jesus, you must forgive him, prior to continuing in your prayers.
20. Now, there's always been some confusion about the nature of forgiveness (whether or not it's conditional or unconditional).
21. Are we to withhold forgiveness, until those who've sinned against us, repent and ask for forgiveness?
22. It's true, our Savior said in Lk.17:3—"If your brother sin against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him."
23. How do we harmonize these two seemingly contrary texts? Is forgiveness conditional or unconditional?
24. Well, the answer is both! We are to forgive anyone who has offended us, in the sense that we refuse to harbor bitterness against them.
25. This is what our Savior means in Mark 11:25—as we remember someone who's sinned against us, we are to forgive them (regardless if they've repented or not – in that, we are to remove the offense from us as a source of resentment and bitterness).
26. And when a brother sins against us, and repents, we are to forgive them, in that, we no longer allow the offense to create any division between us.
27. But here's my point—a meek person is willing and quick to forgive those who've sinned against us in both senses.
28. (3) It repaying evil with good—meekness not only refrains from repaying evil with evil, but repays evil with good.
29. Matt.5:44—"But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you."
30. This is really the highest expression of meekness—not only do you not repay evil with evil, but with kindness.

31. A humble and gentle person, a meek person, is able to repay those who mistreat them with love and prayer.
32. Thomas Watson—"Meekness shows us the badge of a true saint. He is of a meek, candid spirit. 'He is not easily provoked.' He takes everything in the best sense and conquers malice with mildness. I would to God all who profess themselves saints were bespangled with this grace. We are known to belong to Christ when we wear His livery. He is a saint whose spirit is made so meek that he can smother prejudices and bury unkindnesses. A passion of tears better becomes a Christian than a passion of anger. Every saint is Christ's spouse. It becomes Christ's spouse to be meek. If any injury be offered to the spouse, she leaves it to her husband to revenge. It is unseemly for Christ's spouse to strike."

III. Meekness Promoted

1. Here I want to suggest five simple helps to assist you in pursuing, maintaining, and increasing meekness.
2. (1) Be convinced meekness must be pursued—fewer graces run more contrary to native man than meekness.
3. Furthermore, fewer graces are despised in our present culture than meekness (humility and gentleness).
4. And thus, we have to constant pursue meekness, as it runs contrary to all that's around us, and in part within us.
5. Zeph.2:3—"Seek the LORD, all you meek of the earth, who have upheld His justice. Seek righteousness, seek meekness."
6. Col.3:12—"Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness humility, meekness, longsuffering."
7. 1Tim.6:11—"But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness (gentleness)."
8. (2) Be convinced meekness fits you for duty—that is, both our duty to God (first table) and man (second table).
9. Ps.25:9—"The meek (humble) He guides in justice, and the meek (humble) He teaches His way" (Ps.22:26)" Jas.1:21—"Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls."
10. 1Pet.3:3-4—"Do not let your adornment be merely outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel—rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God" 1Pet.3:15—"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defence to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear."
11. Gal.6:1—"Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of meekness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted."
12. Robert Harris—"No acceptable service can be done either to God or man without meekness; not to God, for we must pray in meekness, hear in meekness, and come to the Sacrament in meekness. Briefly, all our carriage toward God must be in meekness. And so to God, so to men: we all owe meekness to all men. The magistrate must execute justice in meekness; the minister must reprove with meekness; a man cannot keep house without meekness; he cannot rule his wife without meekness, correct his child without meekness, order his servants, entertain his friends, win his foes, or govern himself in the influence of his calling without meekness."
13. (3) Be convinced meekness is rewarded by God—that is, meekness is a grace highly favored by God Himself.
14. Now, I trust it goes without saying, that meekness isn't something highly esteemed within this world.

15. The world mocks and ridicules meek people, and advocates that we stick up for ourselves and defend ourselves.
16. But brethren, let me simply remind you—what is usually highly esteemed by men, is despised by God (Lk.16:15 – 'For what is highly esteemed among men, is an abomination in the sight of God').
17. And this is nowhere more evident then in regards to meekness—the Lord loves and protects His meek people.
18. Ps.149:4—"For the LORD takes pleasure in His people; He will beautify the meek with salvation (Ps.22:26; 147:6)."
19. Notice, God equates "His people" with "the meek"—this means, meekness beautifully describes God's people.
20. Furthermore, notice He takes pleasure in His beloved meek people, and commits to beatify them with salvation.
21. This means, because He takes pleasure in them, He promises to protect and preserve them to the end.
22. Ps.37:11—"But the meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace" Matt.5:5—"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."
23. Ps.10:17—"LORD, You have heard the desire of the meek" Ps.147:6—"The LORD lifts up the meek" Isa.29:19—"The meek shall increase their joy in the LORD."
24. (4) Be convinced meekness renders you like Christ—that is, Christ is not only the pattern, but teacher of meekness.
25. Now, as I have said before, since Christ had the Spirit without measure, He had the Spirit's fruit without measure.
26. Thus—Christ was the meekest man that ever lived—in Christ we behold meekness in obsolete perfection.
27. Matt.11:29—"Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."
28. Ps.45:4—"And in Your majesty ride prosperously because of truth, meekness (humility), and righteousness."
29. Matt.11:29—"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."
30. 2Corinthians 10:1—"Now I, Paul, myself am pleading with you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ."
31. Thomas Watson—"To attain the grace of meekness, often look upon the meekness of Christ. The scholar that would write well has his eye often upon the copy."
32. (a) Humility, Matt.11:29—"Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."
33. (b) Gentleness, Matt.12:20—"A bruised reed He will not break, and smoking flax He will not quench, until He sends forth justice to victory."
34. Jerry Bridges—"The bruised reed and the smoldering wick refer to people who are hurting, spiritually weak, or of little faith. Jesus deals gently with such people. He does not condemn them for their weakness; He does not come down with a 'heavy hand'; rather, He deals with them gently until their true need is exposed and they seek help from Him."
35. (c) Constraint—this aspect of Christ's meekness is illustrated on almost every page of the four gospels.
36. On almost every page we find people speaking against Christ, opposing and rejecting Him and His teaching.
37. And yet, how does He respond—with restraint or constraint—that is, with meekness and/or gentleness.
38. (5) Be convinced meekness renders you morally beautiful—brethren, there are fewer graces that beautify the soul, than meekness.