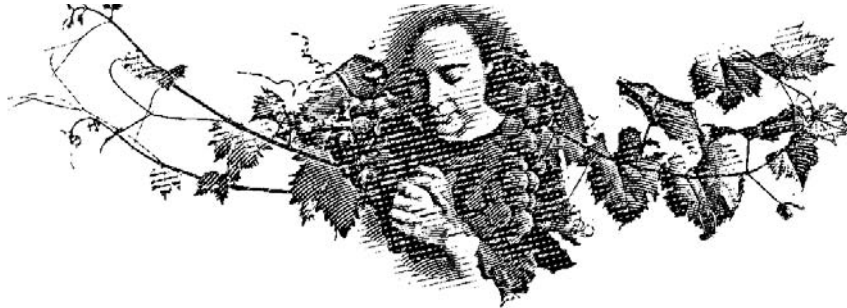


The Fruit of the Spirit Is Meekness (Being Humble)



SABBATH—FEBRUARY 20

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Genesis 50:20; Matthew 5:5; Matthew 11:29; Romans 12:3; Galatians 6:1; Philippians 2:2, 3; 1 Peter 3:4.

MEMORY VERSE: “ ‘Blessed are those who are free of pride [who are humble]. They will be given the earth’ ” (Matthew 5:5, NIV).

MEEKNESS IS A FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT THAT SEEMS TO BE FORGOTTEN in our sinful culture.¹ People often think that meek (humble) people are weak. For this reason, most do not admire others for being meek. But this is what God asks us to be.

What is meekness? It is an attitude (feeling) of humility (being humble) toward God and gentleness toward people. To be meek means we know God is in control. We also know we can trust God, even when things do not go the way we would like. This often happens to us. To be meek, one needs confidence (having faith), not in oneself but in the Lord.

Weakness and meekness may seem almost the same. But they are not the same. Weakness is due to negative things such as lack of strength or lack of courage. These things are not the words to describe Jesus, who said, “ ‘Become my servants and learn from me. I am gentle and free of pride. You will find rest for your souls’ ” (Matthew 11:29, NIV). Meekness is the result of a person's choice to trust in God and depend totally on Him. Having this trust means he or she does not push to have his or her own way. So meekness comes from strength, not weakness.

1. culture—the way that people live, dress, think, eat, and get along with one another.

SUNDAY—FEBRUARY 21

**MEEK AND LOWLY IN HEART
(Matthew 11:29)**

What is Jesus teaching us in Matthew 11:29? How can being meek and lowly in heart bring rest (peace) to our souls?

Meekness means not fighting for the things we want to have. It also means believing God will fight for us. Meekness is the opposite of ambition and self-interest. It comes from trust in God's goodness and in His control over the situation. The meek person is not interested in self (read Luke 22:42). This is an attitude (feeling) that is important for the promise of finding rest for our souls. Are not our planning and fighting so often due to trying to get the things we want for ourselves? A meek person is one who has learned to die to self.² That takes faith, courage, and patience. These are not the traits³ the world would think a meek person would have.

How does Romans 12:3 show the idea of meekness? In what ways is this important for a meek person?

Ephesians 4:2 is another verse that helps us understand what meekness means. Notice how it is connected with Romans 12:3. Both verses show why Christians should not be boastful



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or selfish in their daily lives. Why should any Christian be boastful about anything? We are all sinners. We would be destroyed forever if Jesus had not died for us. We all are dependent on God for every breath, every heartbeat. All our gifts and talents have come from God. So, what do we have to be proud about? Nothing! We should think about what Jesus did to save us. Then we Christians should be the meekest and humblest people on earth.

Think about how fully dependent you are upon God for everything. So, where do the pride and boastfulness in your heart come from? How can you get rid of them?

MONDAY—FEBRUARY 22

**MODELS (EXAMPLES) OF
MEEKNESS (Numbers 12:3)**

Remember the time where Abraham decided with his nephew Lot how to divide up the land? (Read

2. die to self—willing to make a full surrender to God's will.

3. traits—habits or actions that reveal (show) a person's character (who someone is).

Lesson 9 THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IS MEEKNESS (BEING HUMBLE)

Genesis 13:8, 9.) Remember that God had promised to make a great nation for Abraham's future children. Then Abraham should have had a good reason for taking the best for himself. But Abraham let Lot choose first. Abraham said he would take what was left over. How was this action an example of meekness?

Most everyone knows the story of Joseph being sold as a slave into Egypt by his brothers. Read again the story of Joseph's brothers coming to him. Joseph was now second in command in all Egypt. The brothers were begging to be able to purchase food (Genesis 45). How did Joseph's meekness influence⁴ him in how he treated his brothers? Suppose Joseph had not been meek. Then what would he probably have done? How is Genesis 50:20 an example of the world's opinion of those who are meek?

As a young man, David had been chosen by God to be the next king of Israel. King Saul became very jealous of David. For many years, the king chased David and his men with plans to kill David. Two times David had an opportunity (chance) to kill Saul (1 Samuel 24:3–7; 1 Samuel 26:7–12). If David had not been meek, what might have been his excuse for killing Saul? Why is it so easy for us to use a spiritual excuse for doing something that is in our own interest?

In Numbers 12:3, Moses is described as the meekest man of his time. But Moses' strong actions do not seem to show that he was a meek man. Moses'

demand to Pharaoh to let Israel go was forceful and followed up with action. When Israel worshiped the golden calf, Moses' "anger burned." Before it was over, Moses had taken the calf they had made, burned it with fire, ground it to powder, and made the children of Israel drink it (Exodus 32:19, 20). How are we to understand the meekness of Moses?

Jesus Himself is the greatest example of meekness of all (Matthew 11:29). What are some of the examples of Jesus' meekness? For example, how was Jesus' meekness shown in John 18:21–23? Or how about Matthew 26:39? At the same time, we find examples of Jesus doing things that do not appear to be meek. For example, Jesus drove the money changers out of the temple. And how about all the times He dealt with the Pharisees and others about their hypocrisy.⁵ How do these examples help us understand that meekness can be shown in some very bold ways?



Jesus' driving the money changers out of the temple helps us understand that meekness can be shown in some very bold ways.

4. influence—to have power, or an effect, over persons or things.

5. hypocrisy—telling one thing while doing another. Two-facedness.

Lesson 9 THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IS MEEKNESS (BEING HUMBLE)

From these examples of meekness, what can you find that you usually do yourself? What can you learn from them that could help you understand what meekness is and is not?

TUESDAY—FEBRUARY 23

THE IMPORTANCE OF MEEKNESS (Zephaniah 2:3)

Meekness is the opposite of pride. Today there is much talk about feeling self-important. But when does feeling self-important go too far and become pride?

Meekness is necessary for receiving God's Word (James 1:21).

Meekness is necessary for good witnessing (1 Peter 3:15).

"Our influence upon others does not depend much on what we say. Showing what we are is more important. Men may fight and refuse to accept reasons for our beliefs. But a life of unselfish love cannot be argued against. A faithful and meek life in Christ is a power in the world."—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 142.

Meekness gives glory to God (1 Peter 3:4). "It is right to love beauty and to want it. But God desires us to search for and love first the highest beauty that cannot ever become spoiled. No outside decoration can compare in value or loveliness with that 'meek and quiet spirit,' the 'fine linen, white and clean' (Revelation 19:14). These are what all the holy

ones of earth will wear. This clothing will make them beautiful and beloved here and will be their ticket into the palace of the King of heaven. His promise is, 'They shall walk with Me in white: for they are worthy.' Revelation 3:4."—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*,⁶ pages 523, 524.

How may trying to put beauty on the outside of a person not agree with trying to develop the fruit of the Spirit inside a Christian believer? As the fruit of meekness grows in you, how should your life be different from what it was before? In the area of meekness, what changes have you seen in your life since you have accepted Christ? What attitudes might you be having that make it difficult for you to be meek?



A meek and quiet spirit is the fine linen, white and clean, that all those who walk with Jesus will wear in the new earth.

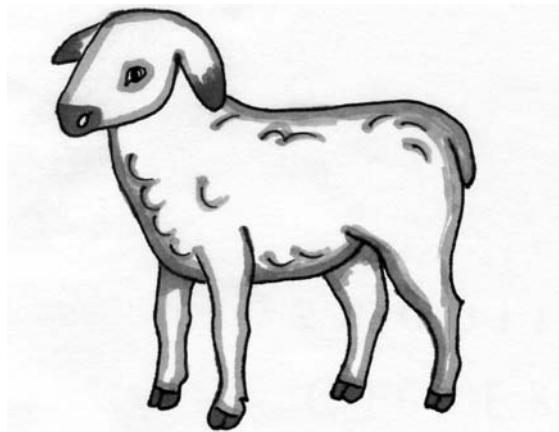
6. *Apostles*—the disciples (followers) of Jesus who preached and taught the gospel (the good news about Jesus) after Jesus rose from the dead and returned to heaven.

WEDNESDAY—FEBRUARY 24

PRACTICING THE FRUIT OF MEEKNESS (Matthew 5:39)

Meekness will be shown in how we deal with people. It is something that is active, something that will show itself in our words, attitudes, and actions. You might think that you are meek. But that does not really mean that you are. To be meek is to show it.

How do Matthew 5:39; Matthew 18:21, 22; Galatians 6:1; 2 Timothy 2:24, 25; Titus 3:2; and Philippians 2:2, 3 show us how meekness is to be shown in our lives? Why is meekness so important in these situations?



To be meek is to show it.

As we have been saying all along, people like to think that meekness means weakness. This is not true. In fact, go back over the verses we have

read today. Do you not notice how it takes strength, spiritual strength, to show meekness in most of these situations?

Of course, meekness is a fruit of the Spirit. Meekness comes to us from God and not from ourselves. But we still need to surrender⁷ to the Lord daily. We need to be willing daily to obey in faith. This is the only way meekness can be shown in our lives.

THURSDAY—FEBRUARY 25

THE REWARD OF THE MEEK (Psalm 25:9)

E. D. Hulse said, “Humility [being humble] is a strange thing. The minute you think you have got it, you have lost it.”

A small town wanted to recognize and reward its meekest citizen. A survey was taken of their small community,⁸ which led to the choice of a certain person. In a ceremony⁹ attended by all the important people, the meekest citizen was presented with a ribbon. On the ribbon were the words saying, “The Meekest Man in Town.” But, the next day they had to take the ribbon away from him, because he was wearing it!

How do you understand the promises and rewards listed in Psalm 22:26; Psalm 25:9; Psalm 37:11; Psalm 147:6; Isaiah 29:19; and Matthew 5:5?

7. surrender—giving one’s self completely.

8. community—a group of people living, working, or worshipping together.

9. ceremony—service.

Lesson 9 THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IS MEEKNESS (BEING HUMBLE)

These verses are comforting because people often take advantage of¹⁰ the meek. But we have learned in this study that a meek person does not worry about being lifted up before men. Instead, he rather lifts up God. As a result, God promises to honor the one who is meek. The rewards can be experienced both now and in the new heaven and new earth of eternity.¹¹

FRIDAY—FEBRUARY 26

ADDITIONAL STUDY: “Christ is not to be hid away as a locked treasure in the heart. He is not to be held in secret by someone who knows Him. We are to share Christ with others as a well of everlasting water that refreshes all who learn of Him from us. We must confess Christ openly and bravely. We must show in our characters¹² His meekness, humility, and love, so much that people are won by His beauty of holiness. It is not the best way to keep our religion as though it were a bottle of perfume. We must not stopper it or keep the bottle closed so that the sweet savor [smell] of His love cannot spread.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Health*, page 400.

“Money cannot buy the peace of Christ. Brilliant talent cannot command it, knowledge cannot gain it. It is the gift of God. How shall I make all people understand their great loss of the religion of Christ if they fail to carry its holy principles [rules] into the daily life? *The meekness and*

lowliness of Christ is the Christian’s power. It is more valuable [important] than all things that minds can invent or money can buy. There is nothing so valuable in the sight of God than a pure heart filled with thankfulness and peace.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Health*, page 403, emphasis supplied.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- 1 God promises to increase joy in the lives of those who are meek. Why do you think meek people can be joyful? Give several reasons. How will making meekness a part of your life improve your everyday life?
- 2 What are ways in which meekness can be misunderstood as weakness?
- 3 All this talk about meekness raises an important question: are Christians never to stand up for their own rights? Do we let ourselves be doormats without defending ourselves? Is there a balance somewhere? If so, how do we find it?
- 4 Nietzsche, a famous German thinker (1844–1900), argued that Christianity was a religion born from those who were weak and who did not have power. So they accepted traits such as humility and meekness to make themselves seem good and to have a goal to work for. How would you answer such an argument?

10. take advantage of—to make use of someone or something for one’s own gain.

11. eternity—forever; for all time; life without end.

12. characters—who people are; all that people do, feel, and think are what people are made of.