

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT: GENTLENESS (KINDNESS)

"But the fruit of the Spirit- is love, joy, peace, long-suffering. GENTLENESS, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance....". (Galatians 5:22, 23)

GENTLENESS is an attribute of God. It denotes moderation, tenderness, sweet reasonableness, calmness and graciousness. It mellows all that is harsh and austere. It calms troubled waters, settles turmoil and heals strife.

GENTLENESS can only be produced in us by the Spirit of God. Do not mistake GENTLENESS for weakness. Jesus is referred to as gentle, throughout scripture. His approach to people and situations was a gentle, firm and sometimes tough manner, yet, his action embraced GENTLENESS. He was not harsh, angry or impatient when he taught, healed and counseled. He was gentle with the weak, those who were emotionally, physically or spiritually weak. He was gentle with His words. "A soft answer turneth away wrath" (Proverbs 15:1). Jesus used the power of words in GENTLENESS. He understood that harsh words crushes a spirit, but that gentle words encourage and heal wounded spirits.

GENTLENESS is a motivator - it encourages the believer to share the gospel and to nurture other Christians. It comforts and urges people to live for Christ. GENTLENESS embraces wisdom. It produces a "harvest of righteousness". GENTLENESS is power - not macho, but meek; not timid and weak, but useful and effective; not prideful and self-seeking, but humble and gracious.

HOW DO WE CULTIVATE THE FRUIT OF GENTLENESS? PRAYER!!! Pray to be available to others, give yourself to others unselfishly. Be humble, listen to others, let your light shine where darkness dominates. A gentle person cannot be a loner, GENTLENESS does not grow in isolation, it seeks persons to minister to. Practice kindness, check your thoughts, tame your tongue, control your anger, watch your words, do they comfort or cause pain?

LOOK FOR PERSONS WHO:

- have meek, quiet spirits
- are gracious and humble
- are slow to anger and are forgiving
- uses words of encouragement
- seeks to reconciliation and restoration
- are patient
- shares the gospel and nurture other Christians
- speaks softly

WARNING

Be aware of the enemies of GENTLENESS: **pride, selfishness and manipulation.**

Additional Scriptures:

Isaiah 63:7-8; 2 Timothy 2:24-26; Titus 3:1-4; James 3:17; I Peter 2:18; 2 Samuel 22:36, Ephesians 4:32