

Meekness

The Fruits of the Spirit · Fruits of the Spirit

Meekness, the eighth fruit of the Spirit rendered from the Greek πραΰτης (prautēs), represents one of the most misunderstood Christian virtues. Far from denoting weakness, timidity, or spinelessness, biblical meekness signifies strength under divine control—power deliberately harnessed and directed by humility rather than pride. This fruit manifests as gentleness of spirit combined with submission to God's will, freedom from self-assertive arrogance coupled with quiet confidence in divine providence, and controlled strength that expresses itself through patient endurance rather than aggressive self-promotion. Moses, whom Scripture calls 'very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth' (Numbers 12:3), demonstrated this quality perfectly—possessing tremendous leadership ability and prophetic authority yet walking in profound humility and dependence upon God.

Note: The Greek πραΰτης (prautēs) describes controlled strength, humble gentleness, and freedom from self-assertive arrogance. Ancient Greeks used this term for a wild horse that had been tamed—retaining all its strength and spirit but now bridled and submissive to its master's direction. Christ perfectly exemplified meekness, being 'meek and lowly in heart' (Matthew 11:29) yet displaying righteous authority when cleansing the temple and rebuking hypocrites. Meekness represents power submitted to divine direction, not absence of strength.

Christ Himself provides the supreme exemplar of meekness. He declared, 'I am meek and lowly in heart' (Matthew 11:29), inviting weary souls to find rest in His gentle yoke. Yet this same meek Savior drove money-changers from the temple with a whip of cords, pronounced withering denunciations upon hypocritical scribes and Pharisees, and will return to tread the

winepress of God's wrath. His meekness consisted not in weakness but in perfect submission to the Father's will, choosing not to use His divine power for self-defense or self-promotion. Though reviled, He reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously (1 Peter 2:23). He possessed all authority in heaven and earth yet washed His disciples' feet. This paradoxical combination of supreme power and profound humility defines true meekness.

Scripture consistently blesses and exalts the meek. Christ pronounced, 'Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth' (Matthew 5:5)—a promise repeated from Psalm 37:11. While the proud grasp for earthly dominion through violence and cunning, the meek will ultimately inherit all things through God's sovereign disposition. The Lord declares, 'To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word' (Isaiah 66:2). God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble. He guides the meek in judgment and teaches them His way (Psalm 25:9). The meek He will beautify with salvation (Psalm 149:4). Throughout Scripture, pride precedes destruction while humility and meekness precede honor.

The cultivation of meekness requires deliberate mortification of pride and self-assertion. Believers must 'put on' meekness as part of their new identity in Christ (Colossians 3:12), actively choosing humility over self-promotion, gentleness over aggression, and submission over rebellion. This fruit governs how Christians receive God's Word—"receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls" (James 1:21)—approaching Scripture with teachable hearts rather than critical spirits. It determines how believers defend their faith—"be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Peter 3:15)—witnessing with conviction yet without arrogance or condescension. It shapes how ministers restore fallen brethren—"ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness" (Galatians 6:1)—

correcting with gentleness rather than harshness.

Meekness also determines believers' response to personal injury and opposition. The meek do not insist upon their rights, demand recognition for their service, or retaliate when wronged. They entrust vengeance to God, knowing He judges righteously. They bear reproach patiently, suffer injustice without bitterness, and respond to persecution with blessing. This supernatural response confounds worldly wisdom, which counsels asserting one's rights and retaliating against enemies. Yet meekness demonstrates confidence in God's justice and sovereignty—the meek need not defend themselves because they trust God to vindicate them. This fruit liberates believers from the exhausting burden of self-promotion and the consuming passion for personal vindication, freeing them to serve God's purposes with humble devotion.

Key Verses

Matthew 5:5

Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

Numbers 12:3

Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.

Matthew 11:29

Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

James 1:21

Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.

1 Peter 3:15

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.

Colossians 3:12

Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering.

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