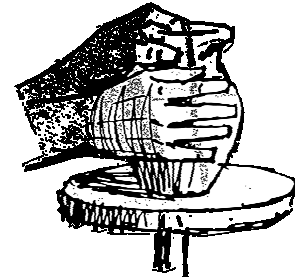


His Workmanship Westside

"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works."
—Ephesians 2:10



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Isaiah 64:8

Blessings of the Meek, Beatitudes Part 4, by John Piper

Last week we began a portrait of the meek. Christ's beatitude is a quotation or allusion to Psalm 37:11: "The meek shall possess the land, and delight themselves in abundant prosperity," and Ps 37:9, "Those who wait for the Lord shall possess the land." We concluded first that the meek are people who wait for the Lord. But what does it mean to wait for the Lord? We get a picture of those who wait for the Lord, the meek, in Ps 37:5-8: "Commit your way to the LORD, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass. He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your justice as the noonday. Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him. Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, because of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass. Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; do not fret—it only causes harm." What are meek people like? 1) They trust God to act for them, 37:5. 2) They commit their way to Him in confidence that He will use His power and mercy to do good for them. 3) They are quiet or still before the Lord and wait patiently for the outcome. 4) They refrain from anger and forsake wrath, 37:8. They do not fret over evildoers or others who prosper, 37:7; they don't give way to anger or worry when faced with opposition. 5) Like Moses, they refrain from defensive-

ness and revenge. They give place to wrath and leave vindication (justification) to God. "If you had responded to my rebuke surely I would have poured out my heart to you and made my thoughts known to you," Pr 1:23. When we defend ourselves to God, that is reaction. But to say, "You are right about me, Lord, help me change," is response. 6) They are teachable. They are "swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath, ... receiving with meekness the implanted word," Jas 1:19-21. They hear and think.

How we shy away from the word meek. We think of meek as weak or soft, and thus we have a totally wrong concept of what Jesus meant. The Amplified Bible translates it: "Blessed are the meek (the mild, patient, long-suffering), for they shall inherit the earth." The dictionary defines meek as "humble, compliant, obedient, and submissive." Does this mean that Jesus expects the children of the kingdom to be like cowering dogs who crawl into their master's presence? Or to become doormats who lack inner fortitude and gumption, who can be easily pushed around and manipulated? No, the truly meek person—in the Biblical sense of the word—is not timid, shy, hesitant, or unassuming, but trusting, confident, and secure,

having his selfish spirit *tamed* and under the control of God. The root meaning of meekness is of yieldedness or surrender—a characteristic without which no true progress can be made as a Christian. Meek has five basic meanings: (1) GENTLE. The world says, "Might makes right." A Christian acts gently and kindly even when he has the power to act with severity. (2) SUBMISSIVE. The world says, "Be the boss, be assertive, wear power clothes." In contrast, the righteous stand in total dependence and self-surrender before God. (3) TAME, from breaking the will of a wild animal so it can be used efficiently in service. The world says, "Live it up, party hearty, born to be wild." A disciple allows God to break his sinful, rebellious, selfish will and remake him with Christ's spirit living in him. (4) PATIENT. The world says, "Now" with its quick-fix, fast-food, instant-copies, minute-lube, while-you-wait attitude. (5) HUMBLE. The world says, "I've earned my right, what's mine is mine, I deserve more." The kingdom citizen understands that everything is a gift from God, based on His grace.

An acronym for MEEK could be M—mighty, mild, modest, moderate

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Blessed are the Meek, from p. 1 (temperate); E—emotionally stable, even-tempered, easily entreated; E—educable; K—kept under God's control; kind. Without *kindness*, we have only M-E-E, for without kindness we are self-centered. Kind people are gentle and sensitive to the feelings of others. Real *might* lies in control and discipline; *emotional stability* means avoiding distractions and temptations, and taming negative emotions by holding them in check and using them for positive action; the meek are *educable*—teachable, are ready to learn, open to new ideas, correctable. What happens, for example, to the scientist who approaches the mysteries of the universe in a manner that is aggressive and belligerent? He discovers nothing. But what happens to a scientist who approaches the universe in a spirit of meekness? He finds its richest secrets unfolding themselves to him, and he is able to harness the mighty forces around him to advantage. The "earth" will not respond to the militants who approach it in a demanding spirit. It is the meek—those who are yielded, self-controlled, submissive—who inherit the earth. Thomas Huxley said: "Science says to sit down before the facts like a little child, be prepared to give up every preconceived notion, be willing to be led to whatever end nature will lead you, or you will know nothing." The Christian who approaches life in the same spirit, the spirit of meekness and submission, discovers the true meaning of his existence and the purpose of God in all his affairs. "...By his good life let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom," Jas 3:13. Meekness, as Jesus used the word, refers to an attitude of heart and mind that is entirely free from a spirit of demandingness and accepts the will of God in its entirety. J.B. Phillips translates: "Happy are those who claim nothing, for the whole earth will belong to them." Let us stress once again that the thought here is not of passivity,

but of active compliance and obedience to the will of God. "Put on then, as God's chosen ones, ...meekness," Col 3:12. "Congratulations to those who do not feel the need to be over-assertive..." The meek are so sure of their resources and their goals that they can afford to be meek. Others have to become aggressive simply because they are unsure of themselves and their goals—hence the universe is closed to them. The meek could be called the assured, for they

M—Mighty
E— Even-tempered
E— Educable
K— Kept under control

are meek enough to rest confidently in the resources of God. Of course, that is directly opposite to the world's view of things. The world thinks of power, strength, ability, self-confidence, and self-assurance as the keys to success. The more you assert yourself and the more you affirm yourself, says the worldly person, the more you will get. But such people do not inherit the earth: they just inherit dirt.

The Meekness of Wisdom. The relationship between meekness and a love for truth becomes clear in Jas 3:13 and 17. "*Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good life let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom,*" v. 13. This phrase, "the meekness of wisdom," is beautiful. The truly wise people are also the truly meek people. Why? "*But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason [willing to yield, easily entreated], full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy,*" v. 17. Notice that the reason the wise person is also the meek person is that true wisdom is peaceable, gentle, and open to reason. These are the marks of meekness! Isn't it remarkable that the mark of Biblical wisdom and Biblical meekness are the same? Wisdom in the Bible is never merely intellectual. It is a disposition

of the heart as well as ideas in the head. Therefore, meekness and wisdom are gentle, peaceable, and open to reason. That ties to Jas 1:19-21. Meekness there means being quick to listen and slow to criticize and condemn. Meekness in 3:17 means open to reason. What a beautiful thing it is to sit in a group of decision-makers where people listen and then deal reasonably with what was said instead of just blurting out something irrelevant or making a quick judgment without thinking through the reasons for it. This is important for the way we do our business together—in the church as well as elsewhere.

Meekness and Reasonableness.

Meek reasonableness is basically the willingness to listen to another person's reasons for his opinion and the willingness to give grounds for yours. If I present my opinion without giving any basis for it except that it is my opinion—I would not be acting in meekness, no matter how soft-spoken I might be. On the contrary, I would be acting in an authoritarian way, because I would be appealing to nothing outside myself. We must be wary of confusing certain temperaments with meekness or lack of meekness. A discussion between two people may become passionate and heated and still be marked by meekness if both of these people are speaking reasonably—that is, if they are defending their opinions by appealing not to themselves but to a standard of truth that is over them and to which they are humble servants. But on the other hand, a very soft-spoken, laid-back conversation might occur between two people where they express their different opinions, but instead of arguing for them with reasoning and submitting themselves together to a higher standard of truth, they give the impression of humility by saying that they just want to give their opinion (or feelings)

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Let your faith be seen in 2014
 "I rejoice to see your good order
 and the steadfastness of your faith
 in Christ."
 —Colossians 2:5

Meekness, from p. 2 and not argue about it. "No one has to accept my opinion and I don't have to accept anyone else's. Live and let live." Too often we mistakenly think this is the spirit of meekness. Two people making no claim on the other person's ideas, refusing to submit their own opinion to an independent standard of truth, unwilling to make themselves vulnerable to the claims of truth and the possible need to admit error—that is not the spirit of meekness, no matter how soft-spoken or meek it looks on the outside. It is not self-effacing. It is truth effacing and self-protecting. What is more prideful than the view that we need not give an account of our opinions before any standard but our own?

Modern Culture's Misplaced Humility. G. K. Chesterton spoke about the dislocation of humility: "What we suffer from today is humility in the wrong place. Modesty has moved from the organ of ambition [to] the organ of conviction, where it was never meant to be. A man was meant to be doubtful about himself, but undoubting about the truth; this has been exactly reversed. Nowadays the part of a man that a man does assert is exactly the part he ought not to assert—himself. The part he doubts is exactly the part he ought not to doubt—the Divine Reason," *Orthodoxy*, p. 31f. Our secular world is populated by people who don't make their choices on the basis of an ultimate standard of truth. Instead, they say all truth has become relative. Robert Bellah, in *Habits of the Heart*, described the basic doctrine of 21st century culture: "It is an understanding of life generally hostile to older ideas of moral order. Its center is the autonomous

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individual, presumed able to choose the roles he will play and the commitments he will make, not on the basis of higher truths but according to the criterion of effectiveness as the individual judges it," p. 47. That is the spirit of this age, the atmosphere we breathe. Unless we are extraordinarily alert, we will breathe it right into the church as so many have already. One of the ways it will make its way into the church is if we are so naïve as to mistake it for meekness.

7) Meekness Cares about the Truth. So to add to the portrait of meekness, the meekness of wisdom is open to logic—it is quick to listen to reasons given by others for their opinions, and it is willing to give arguments for its own opinions. It cares about truth and whether others agree. Thus, it may become passionate and forceful. But it is always a servant. It is always submissive to a higher standard of truth, always willing to change to bring its opinions into line with truth. Meekness knows its own fallibility. For that reason it takes debate and argument seriously. It wants to discern its own errors and forsake them. But the soft-spoken conversation in which two modern people defer to each other's opposite opinions, not feeling the need to submit their own opinion to a standard of truth higher than themselves, and thus not exposing themselves to the possibility of error and repentance—not meekness.

8) Meekness Knows It Is Fallible. Let's look at one other feature in the portrait of meekness. In Gal 6:1-2: "Brethren, if a man is overtaken in a fault, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of meekness, looking to yourself, lest you also be tempted." Not only is meekness slow to speak and slow to anger, when it decides it must speak—even words of correction—it speaks with the deep awareness that it is fallible. When meekness reaches out to restore a person overtaken in sin, it first takes the log out of its own eye and then admits that without grace—free,

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PRAY FOR healing, protection, help, and comfort here and away

Giles Free—in ER last week with seizure; black eye from fall; confined at home, no driving for 3 mos
Pat Wilkes—knee replacement surgery Tues
Brittany Tope's grandmother—in hospital on dialysis; Brittany will deliver cards to her
Ed Fink—prostate cancer; current treatment for brain tumors
Mina Gonzalez's daughter-in-law and granddaughters, **Lauren**—broken foot; **Juliet**—broken collarbone; **Bella**—broken arm
Sue Witherington, Brett's grandmother—breast cancer has returned
Shirley Barrett, Rod Green's mother—home from hospital for respiratory ailments
Rhonda Love, friend of **Judy Strand**—terminal cancer; young mother studying with Jim & Vicki
Gregg Geis's friend **Becky** in CA—terminal cancer; searching for the truth
David Hull, friend of **Randy Reames**—passed away last week of leukemia; leaves wife & 5 kids
Kay Ransom, formerly at Westside—severe back problems

CHRONIC CONDITIONS

Logan Corray; Addison Tope; Christian Harrod; Rocco Jr; Pat Wilkes—asthma
Mark Campbell—cardio and seizure issues
Forrest Corray, Jordan's brother—addiction
Bill Dennis—heart issues
Autumn Hadders—epilepsy; celiac disease
Jonathan Hadders—RA
Danielle Huelsman—vertigo, CV syndrome
Kirk Johnson—worsening MS; needs quick meals to heat up, like soup
Menards—aging; **Lloyd**, diabetes, weak;
Virginia, macular degeneration; high BP
Sandra Perry—neuropathy from diabetes
Cheryl Reames—diverticulitis; fibromyalgia
Nell Free—pacemaker, heart; back pain
Judy Sartin—spinal stenosis; arthritis
Judy and Mike Strand—hepatitis treatment
Lynda Szymanski—COPD, lung weakness

Job concerns Linda Szymanski

Travel The Thompsons are in Pekin, IL, visiting family. **Mina Gonzalez** will fly to a music conference in NV this afternoon. The **Gintchins** are in Bulgaria.

Moving Brett and Kaysha will be moving August 2. Go by their apartment at 9 am to

Meekness Cares About the Truth, from p. 3 undeserved—it would fall to the very sin it is now trying to correct. "Look to yourself lest you too be tempted." "Let him who thinks that he stand take heed lest he fall," 1 Cor 10:12.

The Full Portrait of Biblical Meekness. Meekness begins when we trust God. Because we trust Him, we commit our way to Him. We roll onto Him our anxieties, our frustrations, our plans, our relationships, our jobs, our health. We wait patiently for the Lord. We trust His timing, His power, and His grace to work things out for His glory and our good. The result of trusting God and committing and waiting is that we don't give way to quick and fretful anger. Instead, like Moses, we hand our cause over to God and let him vindicate us. In this quiet confidence we are slow to speak, quick to hear, reasonable, and open to correction. Meekness loves to learn. It counts rebuke as precious. When it must say a critical word to one caught in sin or error, it speaks from the deep conviction of its own fallibility, its own susceptibility to sin, and its utter dependence on the grace of God. Meekness begins ends with God. Thus, whenever we see a meek person, we give God the glory, and Christ's aim in the Sermon is fulfilled.

The Effect Jesus Wants This Promise to Have. "The meek shall inherit the earth." What effect did Jesus want this promise to have on the disciples? Jesus wanted the promise to give them strength to continue in their meekness. This is the way the promise works in Mt 5:12: "Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so men persecuted the prophets who were before you." In other words, the promise of great reward gives the disciples strength to endure persecution with joy. So the Lord intended the promise to give us the strength to endure in meekness when the natural inclination would be to defend ourselves or retaliate or fret.

All Things Are Yours. In 1 Cor 3:18-23, we see how the promise of inheriting the earth gives strength to our meekness. The Corinthians were boasting in different teachers and in their worldly wisdom. So Paul taught them to overcome pride: "Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you thinks that he is wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is folly with God. For it is written, 'He catches the wise in their craftiness,' and again, 'The Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are futile.' So let no one boast of men. For all things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future, all are yours; and you are Christ's; and Christ is God's." Notice the logic in v. 21: "Let no one boast of men, for all things are yours." One of "all things" mentioned is the world. Don't boast, because the world is ours. We have already inherited the earth. We don't need the vain pleasures of one-up-manship because God has already given us the world. Would I need to brag that my house is bigger than yours if I knew my Father owned the city?

Against Our Sinful Nature. The quietness and openness and vulnerability of meekness is beautiful and painful. It goes against all that we are as humans. It requires God's help. If you are a disciple of Jesus Christ, sitting at His feet this morning—if you trust Him and commit your way to Him and wait patiently for Him, He is with you. He has already begun to help you and will help you more. The primary way He will help you is to assure your heart that you are a fellow heir of Jesus Christ and that the world and everything in it is yours. "He Who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, will he not freely give us all things with him?" Rm 8:32. All things! "No good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly," Ps 84:11. So truly, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."



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DeWayne Howell (303) 973-7283

Preacher

Jim Reingrover (303) 973-5102

info@thechurchingolden.com

Assembly Schedule

Sunday

Bible classes	9:00 am
Morning assembly	10:00 am
Afternoon assembly	1:30 pm

Wednesday

Bible classes	7:30 pm
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Sunday morning

• **adult Bible class**, Lessons from Deuteronomy, Larry Campbell

• **Sermon**, "Unequally Yoked," Jim Reingrover

Sunday afternoon

• **Sermon**, "The Fruit of the Spirit," Jim Reingrover

Wednesday night adult Bible class, Pearls from Proverbs, Jim Reingrover