

Blessed are the meek for they will inherit the earth (Matt.5:5)

What does "meekness" mean?

1. It does not mean weakness.

Jesus was meek but he was certainly a strong *man* - the perfect human being in fact. *Meekness is not weakness but controlled strength.*

2. It is the opposite of "me-ness".

By "me-ness" I mean having "me" on the throne of my life; letting my feelings, desires, well-being be the controlling factors in my behaviour and reactions to other people.

3. It means listening carefully to what other people are saying.

Often we react negatively to people because we have misunderstood what they are saying.

4. It means -understanding why a person is apparently attacking us or is a difficult person.

It is true that human wilfulness and sin, and the influence of Satan can be part of the cause, But we regularly forget that often the cause lies elsewhere. We may see in other people self pity, anger, harshness, defensiveness, judging, grumbling, resentment, rebellion, slander, jealousy and pride. And we can so easily react negatively to such things. But so often the real causes of these attitudes are not sin and wilfulness but such inner needs as insecurity, suspicion; hurts, persecution feelings; inferiority and anxiety. For example, many people are aggressive because they are insecure and anxious. The aggression is actually a defence mechanism. Many people show pride because they feel inferior. The pride is a compensation for an inferiority complex. To remember all this helps us to relate meekly to a "difficult" person. Perhaps we can then bring them inner healing from the Lord. But remember you may be showing negative attitudes for the same reasons and need such inner healing! "Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love" (Eph.4:2). "Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgives you." (Col.3:13).

5. It means rejecting our pride, rights and position and recognizing our own sinfulness.

We cannot follow Christ who "made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant" without rejecting pride, rights and position. Also we must recognize that a person's criticism of us may be correct. And in any case as sinners who are we to condemn or reject other sinners?

6. It means not retaliating in words, emotions or actions

"Make sure nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else" (1 Thess. 5 : 15). "Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult but with blessing." In order to achieve this one needs the constant release and flow of the Holy Spirit through prayer and faith, i.e. "God has poured out His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit whom he has given us." (Rom.5:5).

7. It means defending oneself only if it will benefit other people.

Most defence of self is selfish. But on occasions it can be for the unselfish reason of helping others, (e.g. Paul defended his apostleship in 2 Corinthians so that the Corinthian Christians would not be led away from Christ. He claimed in court the privilege of Roman citizenship in Acts when it gave him an opportunity to take the Gospel to Rome). But other than in these exceptional cases to be defensive is to be self centred. To be meek means to be no longer worried about self and what people say.

8. It means a gentleness, and lack of striving in Christian teaching and leadership.

“The Lord's servant must not quarrel, instead he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance.” (2 Tim. 2:24-25).

9. It means humbly and readily receiving God's Word

We must "humbly accept the word planted in" us. (James 1:21). A truly meek person will receive any word from the Lord (after checking it is from Him) however difficult it is, or however it came. Above all s/he will receive teaching from the Bible.

10. It means showing godly wisdom.

Unlike human wisdom "the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit impartial and sincere." (James 3:17). We should check our so called "wise" reactions to other people against this standard.

11. It means doing lowly service.

It is true that we should do only what God has called us to, but if that is to leadership we should not avoid humble - even when occasion demands menial - tasks. For example, Jesus washed the disciples' feet. (John 13:5).

12. It means following Jesus, the Lamb of God.

He said "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble of heart and you will find rest for your souls." (Matt.11:29). Paul speaks of "the meekness and gentleness of Christ" (2 Cor.10:1). Jesus was accused of being demon controlled (Matt.9:34; John 8:48, 52; 10:19-20) a glutton and drunkard (Matt. 11:19), he was rejected (John 1:11) and hated (Luke 6:11; John 5:17-18; 7:8; 15:18). Yet he meekly accepted such diabolical accusations.

Ironically it is those who are meek - not pushy, striving, proud and dynamic, who "will inherit the earth". For then the glory will be given to God alone not to human wisdom and effort.

13. Discussion Questions.

- a. Is there someone I find difficult to relate to? What might be the deeper causes of the wrong attitudes I see in Him? What ought I to do about it? (It may not be right to mention names in discussions).
- b. In what sort of circumstances would it be right to defend oneself against criticism?
- c. How can a leaders show meekness without being weak?
- d. How can we show meekness towards God?
- e. Do you have a servant heart?

Jesus did. He said: “The greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves ... I am among you as one who serves. Luke 22:26-27

Here is a Self-Test you can use to discover if you have a servant heart: tick the appropriate box.

	ALWAYS	MOSTLY	SOMETIMES	RARELY
Are you willing to take a humble position?				
Are you willing to do menial tasks?				
Are you willing to volunteer?				

Are you willing to take instructions?				
Are you ready to serve others?				
Are you ready to sacrifice?				
Are you reliable?				
Are you determined only to give of your best?				

Count each tick in the "Always" box as 4
Count each tick in the "Mostly" box as 3
Count each tick in the "Sometimes" box as 2
Count each tick in the "Rarely" box as 1

If you have more than 30 thank God for your servant heart (giving him the glory)
If you have more than 24-30 be encouraged (giving God the glory)
If you have more than 16-24 you need to ask God for a servant heart
If you have under 16 you have a real problem and need to ask for help.

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