

THE GENTLE SPIRIT OF THE CHRISTIAN

Introduction

- 1) **Philippians 4:5** – “Let your gentleness be known to all men”
- 2) **2 Timothy 2:24** – “A servant of the Lord must...be gentle to all”
- 3) The Christian is to possess a gentle spirit – what does this mean?

I) “Gentleness” Defined

- A) **Epieikes** (Phil. 4:5) – graciousness, forbearance, moderation, fair, reasonable (Titus 3:2)
- B) **Epios** (2 Tim. 2:24) – mildness, agreeable, easy to speak to, approachable (1 Thess. 2:7)
 - 1) Opposite of *machomai* – quarrel, dispute, wrangle, harsh, irritable, strive, fight

II) Source of the Gentle Spirit

- A) **James 3:13-18 – the meekness of wisdom**
 - 1) Bitter envy and self-seeking that causes disputing and wrangling is earthly, sensual, and demonic – causes confusion and evil; provides Satan many opportunities
 - 2) The characteristics of peace, gentleness, willingness to yield, and mercy are from God, who teaches and demonstrates each one
 - 3) Fruit of righteousness – benevolence, forgiveness, unity, companionship, peace
 - a) Badly needed in today’s families, friendships, marriages, workplaces, churches

III) Cultivating a Gentle Spirit

- A) **Colossians 3:8-13**
 - 1) Put off bad character – anger, wrath, malice, lying (vv. 8-9)
 - 2) New “man” is renewed in knowledge (v. 10; Eph. 4:23; Rom. 12:2)
 - 3) According to image of Christ (v. 10 – we should act like our Master)
 - 4) Renewed man (vv. 12-13 – kindness/meekness = sweet disposition, goodness of heart)
 - 5) No excuse that gentleness “is just not my personality – I’m naturally aggressive, irritable, and pushy” – we are to be transformed by a changed mind!
- B) **1 Peter 3:8-12**
 - 1) One mind, compassion (sympathetic), love, tenderhearted (pity), courteous (humble mind)
 - 2) Not return evil for evil (actions), or reviling for reviling (words) (see 2:23 – Christ)
 - 3) Blessings not come to hot tempers, get-even, hit first and ask questions later – this causes confusion, evil, trouble, destruction of souls
 - 4) Learn to forego rights to be considerate, willing to yield, kind to all - deserving or not
 - 5) Can be gentle and still be passionate and strong in fighting error and exposing sin
 - a) Gentleness is not characterized by a weak spirit of compromise with error
 - b) “Moderation” does not mean a “middle ground” between truth and error
 - c) Meekness (*prautes*) is the patient calmness of godliness (Gal. 5:23; 6:1; 2 Tim. 2:25)
- C) **Romans 12:17-19**
 - 1) Do not seek personal vengeance – give every effort to live peaceably with all men
 - 2) Not forbid protecting self and family from harm, calling authorities, or reporting crimes
 - a) Should be last resort – do everything possible to seek peace and promote good will
- D) **Matthew 5:38-42**
 - 1) Avoid taking personal revenge at insults and mistreatment; control our pride and temper
 - 2) If insulted, we do not return the same; if taken away, give away; if go one mile, go two
 - 3) Bewilder and overcome evil by refusing to wrangle, fight, take personal revenge

Conclusion

Our lives should always reflect the gentle spirit of God and Christ. Let us put away evil strife, irritable attitudes, and harsh behavior. Be transformed into His image by obeying His word!