

Jesus and the Fruit of the Spirit (8)

Ponder: Meekness

Scripture: “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light” (Matthew 11:28-30).

“That poor fellow is as meek as a mouse!” Perhaps you’ve heard such a remark about a henpecked husband or a timid employee. Not to be argumentative, but there’s nothing meek about a mouse. He is rightly afraid of the cat, of you, and of anything else that appears to threaten him. But meekness is not weakness or timidity.

When Paul wrote to the Galatians regarding the fruit of the Spirit, the next-to-last item he mentioned is meekness (Galatians 5:23). If meekness isn’t timidity and weakness, then what is it?

The New Testament word for meekness is often translated gentleness. It includes the idea of being considerate and unassuming. W.E. Vine says, “Described negatively, meekness is the opposite of self-assertiveness and self-interest; it is equanimity [calmness, composure, js] of spirit that is neither elated nor cast down, simply because it is not occupied with self at all” (Expository Dictionary, p. 56). Meekness is the opposite of such “works of the flesh” as selfish ambition, contentions, jealousy, and envy.

Far from weakness, meekness is accurately described as strength under control – especially under God’s control, but also self-control, which is the final item of fruit of the Spirit. An out-of-control river wreaks terrible destruction; but that same strength can be harnessed through the turbines of a hydro-electric plant to provide power for numerous homes and businesses. The strength is the same; the difference is whether it is controlled.

Jesus was no weakling! But His infinite strength was under the Father’s control. “Not as I will, but as You will” (Matthew 26:39, 42, 43). He was not self-assertive, but rode into Jerusalem as the prophet said He would, “lowly, and sitting on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey” (Matthew 21:5; quoting Zechariah 9:9). Moses, the meekest man on the earth, was a type of the meek, gentle Jesus (Numbers 12:3).

Through His gospel, Jesus calls us to be meek. Paul exhorts us to “walk worthily of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love” (Ephesians 4:1, 2).

Let us be meek like Jesus!

Song: “Oh Heart Bowed Down With Sorrow”