

The Meek Shall Inherit The Earth

by J. Edwin Pope (1936-2006)

Forerunner, December 1992

None of us seems to be anxious to develop meekness in our characters. Why should we have any great desire to grow in meekness? Looking around at the competitive world we live in, how can we survive with meek attitudes?

God, however, makes tremendous promises of blessing and reward to those who develop this trait in their lives. David writes, "The meek will He guide in judgment: and the meek will He teach His way" (Psalm 25:9, King James Version unless otherwise noted). Another psalmist says, "The LORD lifteth up the meek: He casteth the wicked down to the ground" (Psalm 147:6).

Consider this word "meekness." It is not a false humility, nor is it a simple form of pride. God hates pride in any form, yet He requires meekness. Meekness is "enduring injury with patience and without resentment" (*Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*). That is a feat very few can accomplish.

According to *Unger's Bible Dictionary* (article "Meekness"), ". . . the exercises of it are first and chiefly toward God. . . . The Greek term [*praotes*] 'expresses that temper or spirit in which we accept His dealings with us without disputing and resisting; and it is closely linked with humility and follows close upon it, . . . because it is only the humble heart which is also the meek, and which, as such, does not fight against God. . . .'"

Meekness is reflected in our dealings with our fellow man. God often chastens us as this trait is developed through our relationships with one another. Meekness is lowliness of mind, putting self after others (Philippians 2:3).

The Scripture gives many examples of how "men of God" viewed themselves, once God began to work with them. Of himself Abraham said, "I . . . am but dust and ashes" (Genesis 18:27). His grandson, Jacob, had a similar attitude: "I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which You have shown Your servant" (Genesis 32:10, NKJV). Later, Moses asked, "Who am I . . .?" (Exodus 3:11). Job cried out in repentance, "I abhor myself . . ." (Job 42:6). And John the Baptist knew his place when he said, "He [Jesus] must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30).

The prophet Samuel, speaking to Saul, the king of Israel, said, "When you were little in your own eyes, were you not head of the tribes of Israel?" (I Samuel 15:17, NKJV). Once Saul lost his meekness, God could no longer use him in that responsible position.

Obviously, none of us is born meek. It comes by God's Spirit and is learned as God works with us through His Spirit. What, then, is our individual responsibility in the development of this character trait, as God deals with us?

First, we must stop seeking self-recognition as we set our minds on serving God. Christ spoke of this in Matthew 23:5-12. "But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant" (verse 11, NKJV). We must no longer strive with one another for position, but rather ask ourselves, "What is my motive? Is it to serve? Or is it to gain for myself?" This self-examination should be a part of our normal routine as we proceed toward the Kingdom.

Second, we should look at self as "less than others." Paul demonstrates a good example of this in Ephesians 3:7-8, where he stated he was "less than the least of all the saints." God used that attitude to do a mighty work among the Gentiles.

Third, and most importantly, we must ask God for more of this fruit of His Spirit. God will give, if we ask (Luke 11:9)!

As we have noted, tremendous blessings accrue to those who develop this quality of meekness in their lives. David tells us that the meek "shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace" (Psalm 37:11). This is true for the present age and the world to come!

God promises a place of safety to those who are diligent in developing this trait. "Seek the LORD, all you meek of the earth, who have upheld His justice. Seek righteousness, seek humility. It may be that you will be hidden in the day of the LORD's anger" (Zephaniah 2:3, NKJV).

Peace during this lifetime, a place of safety, and even more important, as Christ declared in Matthew 5:5, "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." What a wonderful reward to those who draw close to their God, and take on this godly characteristic.