

Chapter Five:

*Serving
With
Gentleness*

Day 1

Gentleness From God's Spirit

(Galatians 5:22-23)

Who do you know that has what would be described as a “gentle spirit”? What makes them that way? Is gentleness a natural trait, a learned characteristic, or a gifted attribute . . . or some combination of each of these in those who exhibit gentleness? Explain. Do you normally eat fruit the moment it first appears on a tree? Why? How is the fruit of God's Spirit in your life something you both receive and something you work at? How will cultivating the fruit of gentleness help you serve more effectively?

While there are people that do seem to have a natural gentleness about them, as a part of the fruit of God's Spirit we all ought to be cultivating and producing it in our lives. For gentleness to grow and impact the way we serve, we must allow all aspects of the fruit of God's Spirit to influence the way we treat people.

As you pray, ask God to help you to know the gentleness that has been planted in you by His Spirit. Pray that you would cultivate that gentleness as you serve. Pray that those you serve would know you as one whose “gentleness is known to all”.

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Day 2

Gentleness of God's Presence

(1 Kings 19:12)

What first comes to mind when you think of God's presence? Is it comforting, convicting, concerning, some combination of those, or something else entirely? Does your view of God's presence depend more on you or God? Why? Which are you more likely to seek time with, a God who is gentle or a God who is harsh? Which view of God do the people you serve have based on the way you represent Him? How does God's presence help you respond with gentleness to those you serve?

God is described in many different ways throughout scripture and while there are times when He has, and will, respond with a righteous judgment and wrath, when it comes to serving mankind it is most often in gentleness. Since we have been shown God's mercy, we experience His gentleness. When our daily walk is with the Lord, His presence should instill within us a gentleness that is expressed in the way we serve others.

As you pray, ask God to help you remember just how gentle He is with you. Pray that His presence would fill you with gentleness as you serve people who may test your patience — just as you have tested His.

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Day 3

Gentleness With Words

(Proverbs 15:1)

How gentle are you with the words you use to communicate with others? Would the “others” agree? Are there times when you have had to be “talked down” from responding to someone in an inappropriate way? Why? What worked? Is gentleness with words completely dependent on the words themselves, or is something else involved? What? Is it possible for two people to give the same answer and one to do so with gentleness and one without? How?

Whether in written, spoken, or any other form, our words have great power to either build up or tear down. Even when we are careful with the words themselves, how we deliver them changes the effectiveness of our service. It can be far too easy to allow others to dictate our own tone rather than turn to God for a spirit of gentleness in our words. God’s desire is that we humble ourselves and serve others with a gentleness of our words.

As you pray, ask God to help you examine the tone you use in the words you share as you serve. Pray that the gentleness of your words would diminish the hurt and anger in the lives of those you serve.

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Day 4

Gentleness From Jesus

(Matthew 11:29)

What characteristics about Jesus stand out the most to you? Why? How well do you reflect those qualities of Jesus in your life? How has Jesus changed your life? What changes are still ongoing? What can you learn from the life of Jesus about being gentle? How does the gentleness of Jesus help you to be more willing to take His “yoke upon you” as you serve in His name? How can you serve today in a way that others see a gentleness in you that comes from Jesus?

There are many things about Jesus that drew people to Him as He walked this earth. One of those things was the gentleness with which He interacted with the people He came to serve. The yoke was often used on animals that were being put to work in order to harness their power. With Jesus, we are being called to work are yoked together with Him so that His gentleness lifts the burden from our shoulders as He carries it. When you serve with a gentleness from Jesus, you ought to be involved in lifting burdens from those you serve.

As you pray, thank God for the gentleness shown by Jesus. Pray that you would live with this same gentleness as you serve the people around you.

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Day 5
Gentleness With Others
(Ephesians 4:2)

Who are you most likely to be gentle with? Who is it most difficult to be gentle with? Why? Who should you be gentle with? Why? What does it take in your life to be gentle with everyone you ought to be serving? Is that easy? Does gentleness work without humility? Explain. Why would patience be connected with a command to be gentle? How will a deliberate effort to be humble and patient make you more gentle with those you serve?

When God commands us to be gentle, He doesn't give criteria for those we should be gentle with and those we shouldn't. In fact, He expects us to be gentle with all the "one anothers" in our life. It is through the humility of viewing ourselves, and others, accurately according to God's view that we can have the patience to serve everyone with gentleness.

As you pray, ask God to help you accurately see your level of gentleness with different people. Pray that you would live with a humility that keeps you from thinking more highly of yourself than you ought. Pray that this humility would work together with patience to help you serve others with gentleness.

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Day 6

Gentleness That Shows

(Philippians 4:5)

What does gentleness look like? How evident is your gentleness? Would those closest to you agree? How about those you serve? How about those you disagree with? What would it take for you to have a gentleness that is evident to everyone? Can you do it on your own? Why? How does an awareness of God's presence help you to be gentle to all? How does your gentleness help those you serve to know the nearness of the Lord?

Sometimes it is easier to be gentle than it is at other times. There are even people that seem to bring out our gentleness and those that tend to bring out something else entirely. God's desire is that we would live in such a way that our gentleness is obvious to everyone but He doesn't leave us to accomplish that on our own. It is His presence with us, and an awareness of that presence, that enables us to be gentle as we serve, even if we don't feel like it.

As you pray, ask God to make you more aware of His nearness each day. Pray that you would rely on God's presence to help you serve with gentleness that is noticeable. Pray that your gentleness would help others know that God is near.

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Day 7

Gentleness In Sharing Hope

(1 Peter 3:15)

Are you one that always has an answer for everything, and everyone? Do you share that answer or keep it to yourself? Do people tend to want to hear your answers or do they find your answers offensive? Why? How about when you share about the hope you have in Jesus — or do you share that? Does the manner in which you share your answers make a difference in how they're received? In what way? How does your gentleness in giving an answer show respect to those you serve?

We all have times when we desperately need an answer that someone else already has. Yet many times the way the answer is given determines whether we accept it or not. This is true not only in the answers we need to receive, but also in the answers we give regarding the hope we have in Jesus. God not only wants us to be ready to share about the hope we have, He wants us to do so in a manner that is filled with gentleness and respect.

As you pray, ask God to help you be confident in the hope He has given you. Pray that you would always be ready to share about that hope in a way that is both gentle and respectful.

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