

The Worthy Walk (Part II)

November 8, 2002

Ephesians 4:1-6

1 Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, 3 being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4 [There is] one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.

REVIEW:

The Call to a Worthy Walk (4:1)

Remember that Paul makes a transition here in Ephesians 4:1 from positional to practical truth, from doctrine to duty, from principle to practice, from creed to conduct, from exposition to exhortation, from the theological to the practical.

Remember that Paul begins to focus on the consequent obligations, requirements or practices of the believer as a result of the doctrinal truth taught in Ephesians 1-3.

Remember that Paul is making an urgent plea here to the Ephesians. He is begging them to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which they had been called.

The Characteristics of the Worthy Walk (4:2-3)

Remember that after appealing to the Ephesian believers to walk in a manner worthy of their high calling, Paul moves on to identify the characteristics of the worthy walk.

- *What are the five essential characteristics of a worthy walk that Paul identifies here in verses 2 & 3?*

1. Humility:

Last week we examined the first of these characteristics, humility.

- *How did we define humility?*

Remember that the term for humility literally means "*to think or judge with lowliness and to have a lowliness of mind.*"

Remember that humility is elusive, because if we focus on it too much, it will turn to pride. We must strive to be humble, but never claim to be humble because when we know that we have it we have lost it.

- *Who was the ultimate example of humility and what was the ultimate act of humility?*

Remember that humility involves a **proper self-awareness** that recognizes from where we came; our sinful nature etc...

Remember also that humility also involves a **proper God-awareness** that recognizes He is perfect, holy and deserving of all praise, honor and glory!

2. Gentleness:

The second characteristic that Paul emphasizes in verse 2 as part of the worthy walk is gentleness.

Gentleness Defined

- **What is gentleness? What does it mean to be gentle?**

It is interesting that the term translated "*gentleness*" is also translated "*meekness*" in the Scripture. Some define gentleness or meekness as being timid or deficient in courage or spirit. But the biblical term truly refers to that which is mild spirited and self-controlled. It is accurately defined as power or strength under control, specifically under the control of God.

Gentleness Explained

The term used here for gentleness is very closely related to the term previously used for *humility*. Humility is an attitude and gentleness is the action derived from that attitude. John MacArthur says in his commentary, "Humility always produces gentleness, or meekness. Meekness is one of the surest signs of true humility. You cannot possess meekness without humility, and you cannot possess meekness with pride."

The Greeks and Romans saw no virtue in being gentle/meek, because they associated it with weakness and cowardice. However, it is important to emphasize that the meaning of gentleness/meekness has nothing to do with weakness, timidity, indifference or cowardice. The term was often used of wild animals (i.e. lions) or horses that were trained and tamed. Such animals have not lost their strength, but they are simply under their master's control. Gentleness/meekness is simply power or strength under control.

Martyn Lloyd Jones has observed, "to be meek means that you have finished with yourself altogether." You have no one to turn to except God and you submit your will to the Master's control.

Gentleness Illustrated

We have many examples of gentleness/meekness in the Scripture.

1. First there is **Moses** who is described as, "very humble, more than any man who was on the face of the earth." (Numbers 12:3) Yet it was Moses who fearlessly confronted Pharaoh to let the Hebrew people go (Exodus 5-12). It was Moses who angrily confronted Israel with her rebelliousness and idolatry (Exodus 32:19-29). It was Moses who boldly confronted the Lord to forgive the people's sin (Exodus 32:11-13; 30-32). Moses didn't place confidence in himself. He boldly submitted his will to that of the Lord's. He had great strength and power, but it was under the control of God.
2. Second there is **David** who displayed great meekness on several occasions. He displayed meekness when he refused to kill King Saul in the cave near Engedi, although he had an easy opportunity (1 Samuel 24:1-7). He showed meekness again as he refused to retaliate against the malicious taunts, of Shimei recorded in 2 Samuel 16:5-14.
3. Third and most important there is the example of **Jesus**, Himself. Jesus used this term to describe Himself in Matthew 11:29, "*For I am gentle and humble in heart.*" This is also

demonstrated when the soldiers came to arrest Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. Peter drew his sword to defend his Lord, but Jesus stopped him. Jesus refused to enlist divine resources for anything, but obeying His Father's will. Jesus may have been gentle/meek, but He was capable of righteous anger as he drove the money changers from the temple (Matthew 21:13). Yet even this is a demonstration of power under control. Christ also serves as our supreme example because He did not revile in return when He was reviled. Peter says in 1 Peter 2:23, "*and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously.*" What a picture of power under control! What a picture of gentleness/meekness!

Gentleness Practiced

- **So how do we put gentleness/meekness into practice in our own lives?**
- ***How do the following passages help us to put gentleness/meekness into practice in our lives?***

Proverbs 16:32;

Galatians 5:23;

Galatians 6:1;

James 1:21;

1 Peter 2:23;

1 Peter 3:4;

1 Peter 3:15;

Therefore the meek person is normally quiet, soothing, and mild mannered. He is never avenging, vindictive, or self-defensive. He does not attempt to grab for positions of importance or assert authority over others. He accepts God's dealings without arguing or resisting and he is considerate of others.

SMALL GROUPS

- ***Are you considered to be a gentle/meek person? Does this describe you? If not what changes can you make in your life so that it does?***