



Fruit of the Spirit: Gentleness

Galatians 5:22-23

Gentleness is another one of God's amazing characteristics. Even though God possesses unlimited power, He is gentle with the people He created. We must rely on His grace to show that same gentleness to others.



Day #1: Gentle Jesus

Find some things in your home that feel rough. You might find a worn piece of wood, or a nail file. How do they feel to the touch? What is the softest thing you can find in your home? How does it make you feel when you touch it? Which items would you rather be surrounded by?

Did you know that we can be like these objects? We can be harsh and rough, or we can be soft and gentle. We can be this way with our actions and by the words we say. Have you ever been around someone whose actions reminded you of sandpaper? Have you ever been around someone whose actions and words were more like a feather pillow?

Spending time with Jesus is like sinking down into a feather bed. He said:

+ *Come to Me, all of you who are tired and are carrying heavy loads. I will give you rest. Become My servants and learn from Me. I am gentle and free of pride. You will find rest for your souls. Serving Me is easy, and My load is light.* – Matthew 11:28

***** Everyone longs to be with someone who is gentle and caring. Jesus is our perfect example. He is completely gentle. He will carry your cares and problems for you. Come to Him and find a soft place to rest.

Day #2: Soothing Words

We come in contact with many people every day. We live with people, go to school with people, and play with other people. Who are some of the people you see every day?

Day #2 continued:

Here is a simple fact: Every single person has faults. So sometimes the people around us begin to bother us. Maybe they say something unkind or we just get annoyed by something they do. As followers of Jesus, we give up the "right" to have everything our own way. We give up the "right" to make everyone act the way we want them to.

+ *Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love.* – Ephesians 4:2 NLT

A gentle answer turns anger away. But mean words stir up anger. – Proverbs 15:1

Conflict is unavoidable. Problems come into every relationship. However, the way we react to a problem is our choice. When we speak gentle words, other people feel loved and their anger fades away. But when we speak harsh, mean words, it makes every situation worse. This is God's promise to us!

***** When you are frustrated with someone else, take James' advice. *Everyone should be quick to listen. But they should be slow to speak. They should be slow to get angry* (James 1:19b). Be slow to speak so you have time to pray! God's gentleness is within every believer. Ask Him to pour out His gentleness through you.

Day #3: Train the Tongue

What is the most amazing animal trick you have ever seen? Was it at the circus? Maybe the animal trainer made a huge elephant stand up on its back legs, or made a lion roll over for him. Or maybe you have seen a T.V. show where a person has trained an animal to do some crazy tricks. Do you think it is difficult to train a wild animal to do tricks and stunts on command? Sure it is! But listen to what the Bible has to say about this subject:

+ *All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles, and sea creatures can be tamed and have been tamed. But our tongues get out of control. They are restless and evil, and always spreading deadly poison. My dear friends, with our tongues we speak both praises and curses. We praise our Lord and Father, and we curse people who were created to be like*

Day #3 continued:

God, and this isn't right. – James 3:7-10 CEV

Wow! It may be difficult to train a killer whale to jump through a hoop, but it is far more difficult for us to control what we say! We curse people when we speak harshly to them, or call them names. No matter what age we are, it is always a challenge to control our words. This is too difficult for us to do on our own. We have to rely on God's grace to keep us from speaking unkindly to others (Titus 2:11-12).

 If this is a challenge for you, make it your daily prayer. Before your feet hit the ground each morning, ask God to help you control your words that day. Pray this prayer straight from Scripture: *Take control of what I say, O Lord, and guard my lips* (Psalm 141:3 NLT). Then you can greet everyone with a gentle word, beginning with your family - the first people you see each day.

Day #4: In His Image

What are some words that you would use to describe God? Write these down on a scrap of paper. Let's look more closely at the last part of yesterday's verse.

 *We praise our Lord and Father, and we curse people who were created **to be like God**, and this isn't right.* – James 3:10 CEV

This verse points out that at certain times we praise God, and then later we use our same mouth to speak unkind words to people. Clearly this is wrong. It is wrong because God made people in His image, to be like Him.

So God created human beings in His own image. In the image of God He created them; male and female He created them. – Genesis 1:27 NLT

When God created Adam and Eve, they were like God in many ways (though not all ways). They were good, pure, and eternal. Since God created people in His image, we should never, ever be harsh or unkind to them.

Jesus also said that however we treat other people, it is just like we are treating Him that way (Matthew 25:40, 45). If we are unkind to anyone – even our little sister, or the least popular kid in our class – we are being unkind to Jesus. He feels the pain of a punch or the sting of a sarcastic comment. But when we are kind and gentle to anyone, Jesus feels that we are being kind and gentle to Him.

Day #4 continued:

 Who is it that you are the least gentle with? Do you ever hit your brother? Do you call your sister names? Do you speak harshly to your mom or dad? Did God create these people in His own image? Try to picture Jesus when you look at others. Treat everyone the way that you would like to treat Jesus.

Day #5: Gentle Witness

True believers in Jesus want to tell others about Him; in fact, God commands us to do so. Through the years, different people have tried to tell others about Jesus in different ways. Some have told their neighbors; some have gone on trips to faraway lands. Some have started schools, and some have stood on street corners and shouted it at the top of their lungs. No matter **who** we tell, the Bible tells us **how** to tell: with gentleness and respect.

 *But make sure in your hearts that Christ is Lord. Always be ready to give an answer to anyone who asks you about the hope you have. Be ready to give the reason for it. But do it gently and with respect.* – 1 Peter 3:15

The command of God is that we share in a gentle and respectful way. This means we don't shout at anyone. We don't call anyone names. We simply tell them the good news that we believe in: We have all separated ourselves from God by choosing to sin. But God loves us so much that He sent His Son, Jesus, to pay a great price for us. When we believe in Jesus, our sins are removed from us and we enter God's kingdom.

Truly, shouting at someone will never draw that person to our loving God. When we shout, or we are rude, we are not being gentle like our God is gentle. God spoke to His prophet, Elijah, in a gentle whisper (1 Kings 19:12). Zechariah 9:9 tells us that Jesus is gentle.

We should always speak with respect. We should never think that we are better than anyone else. Even Jesus, who was perfect, did not think of Himself as better than others! Who will listen to us if we look down our nose at someone because of his or her sin? We were all sinners at one time. It is only by God's amazing grace that our sin has been taken away.

 Matthew 11:28 tells us that Jesus was gentle and free from pride. When you are gentle and free from pride, you'll be like Jesus, and people will be happy to hear what you have to say.