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**DAILY  
BIBLE  
STUDY**



CEDARCREEKCHURCH

# Gentleness - What Our World Needs Now

July 5, 2021

“Gentleness today may be the single most misunderstood Spirit-produced virtue of the nine listed in Galatians 5:22-23. Two millennia later, *gentleness* is often used as a positive spin on *weakness*. But gentleness in the Bible is emphatically not a lack of strength, but rather the godly exercise of power. Gentleness does not signal a *lack of ability* but the *added ability* to steward one’s strength so that it serves good, life-giving ends rather than bad, life-taking ends” ([David Mathis, “The Strongest Men are Gentle”](#)).

Perrysburg Campus Pastor Josh Whitlow and our guest speaker Sam Acho, NFL player, writer, public speaker, and humanitarian, brought us an in-depth look at the meaning of *gentleness* as it appears in Galatians 5:22-25.

## Galatians 5:22-25 NIV

<sup>22</sup> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. <sup>24</sup> Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. <sup>25</sup> Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

No one has ever accused me of being gentle. Born the third of four children, and the only girl, it was mandatory that I develop grit and take no prisoners in encounters with my brothers and their pals. It helped that our dad was a former boxer and shared his skill set with me. As an adult, I have been described as demanding and outspoken. And when I demanded our 16-year-old son be home by 10 p.m. on school nights, I was accused of being downright cruel. My son threw in “heartless” as he watched me rolling on the floor laughing at his dramatic response.

Thankfully, Josh unwrapped the meaning of gentleness by starting with what it is not. It is not violent ... and I would add, nor is it mean-spirited nor being cruel at the expense of another. It is, however, something we should seek to model as it is becoming as rare as hen’s teeth in modern society.

Fortunately for us all, gentleness is a fruit of the Spirit that is graciously gifted to every Christ follower and modeled for us by the Holy Spirit.

Gentleness is listed second to last on that list in Galatians 5:22-25 ... right before self-control. I do not believe this is a coincidence because self-control is mandatory for us to exercise any and all of the first eight fruit named there—*but especially gentleness*—as any parent or younger sister will enthusiastically attest to.

## **Ephesians 4:2 NIV**

*Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.*

## **Matthew 11:28-30 NIV**

<sup>28</sup> *“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.*

<sup>30</sup> *For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”*

If you are a follower of Jesus Christ, you don't have to be violent, mean-spirited, or cruel toward others. You already possess the nine fruit of the Spirit and are equipped to live a life of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, *gentleness*, and self-control.

### **Questions:**

Are you sheathing your strength in kindness, humility, and gentleness, or is your pride loudly and harshly insisting you must be recognized as “right” and demanding compliance in the encounters you have with others?

### **Next Steps:**

First and foremost, become a child of God by acknowledging and accepting there is only ONE God—it's not you and it's not about what you want. Tell God you are sorry for your unbelief and your sins. Thank him for sending Jesus Christ, his only begotten son, to pay the necessary price for our sins (because the wages of sin is death and separation from God for eternity), and then ask him to accept you

as his own child, sending the Holy Spirit and the aforementioned gifts to live within you.

Second, tell your campus pastor about your decision and ask him to guide you as you begin your walk with God through Christ.

### **Prayer:**

*Lord, thank you for your love and for providing the one and only way for me to have fellowship with you from now through eternity. Please help me to live out the fruit of the Spirit all the days of my life and to lean into you through your Word, the Holy Bible, because it promises: “Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded” (James 4:8). Teach me how to live my life for you. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.*

*This post was written by Martha Smith, a regular contributor and editor of the LivingItOut.*

# Unnaturally Gentle - What Our World Needs Now

July 6, 2021

Gentleness. The mere reading of the word brings a hint of conviction to me. This is not something that comes naturally for me. In fact, I've never heard anyone say, "That Kendra, she's so gentle," or "She's so sweet." HA!

I love those people from whom gentleness just oozes, especially alongside the overlapping fruit of patience. BUT—that is OK because it is not the *fruit of Kendra* ... it's the *fruit of the SPIRIT*. As Galatians 5:22 states, "The HOLY SPIRIT produces this kind of fruit in our lives" (emphasis added). And even when gentleness doesn't come naturally, it is something we can attain by the power of and surrender to the Holy Spirit. That gives hope to people like me.

One area in which we can display gentleness is in our speech. (Again, it's ironic that I'm writing this for today because it's definitely an area where I have some room for growth.) I have always revered those parents who respond to their crazy-acting kiddos in a gentle tone. Tone matters. *How we say things matters*. And by extension, *how we type things* (ie. social media, text messages) matters too. Body language can also help to communicate gentleness ... or not.

**Proverbs 15:1** reminds us that "*a gentle answer deflects anger, but harsh words make tempers flare.*" Has anyone else made matters worse because you didn't follow the wisdom in this verse? No, just me? [Didn't think so. :-)] What do we do when a gentle answer doesn't come naturally to us? Is it up to us? On one hand, yes, it is up to us to call on the Lord for his help in those moments. The Holy Spirit, who is the ONE who produces this *fruit of the Spirit*, will give us power in those areas that don't come naturally to us.

In all things, we strive to honor God in our lives, so let's aim to honor him with gentleness. In our homes, in our relationships, in our workplaces, on social media, with friends, and even with strangers—let's walk in the fruit of the Holy Spirit of gentleness. We can be gentle as he has been gentle with us.

## **James 3:17-18**

<sup>17</sup> *But the wisdom from above is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, GENTLE at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and the fruit of good deeds. It shows no favoritism and is always sincere.* <sup>18</sup> *And those who are peacemakers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of righteousness.* (Emphasis added.)

## **Questions:**

Are you like me in that gentleness doesn't come naturally? Or is there another *fruit of the Spirit*

that trips you up a little more than the others? What are some steps you can take to be more gentle?

**Next Steps:**

In moments of chaos or tension, take a breath. Whisper a prayer. Ask for the Holy Spirit to help you respond with gentleness. Seek forgiveness in areas where (or from people with whom) you've blown it recently. God can give us courage and strength for that as well.

**Prayer:**

*God, you know this is an area of weakness for me, but thankfully, it doesn't depend on me. Help me to seek you in those moments of chaos and tension. Remind me to take a deep breath and dig deep from the power that you offer me to walk in your fruit of gentleness. Help me to be a deflector of anger with the gentleness that you work in me. Forgive me when I try to do it on my own and mess things up. Thank you for your grace to try again. And thank you for your faithfulness to not leave me the same as I was yesterday, but fill me with the hope that, tomorrow, I can be more like you because of you. Amen.*

*This post was written by Kendra Grubinski, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut.*

# Do You Remember WWJD? - What Our World Needs Now

July 7, 2021

The phrase, “What would Jesus do?” became popular in the United States in the late 1800s after Charles Sheldon wrote a very popular book titled *In His Steps: What Would Jesus Do?*

Janie Tinklenberg, a minister from Holland, Michigan, read the book in the 1980s and was so taken by the phrase “What would Jesus Do?” that she came up with the acronym “WWJD.” She made friendship bracelets for her youth members to wear as a reminder to make good moral decisions. The bracelets became very popular, and to date, close to 17 million bracelets have been sold. I have pondered this question several times and concluded in **all** situations and circumstances that Jesus would be kind, loving, and gentle.

This week, we are focusing on the fruit of the Spirit *gentleness*. Gentleness is defined in *Baker’s Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology* as: “sensitivity of disposition and kindness of behavior founded on strength and prompted by love.”

Jesus was very gentle with people. Read the definition of gentleness again and focus on “behavior founded on strength and prompted by love.” He was different from the Pharisees who were often harsh, hateful, unkind, and judgmental toward others. One of my favorite Bible stories as a child was of Zacchaeus. It can be found in [Luke 19:1-10](#).

Here is a quick paraphrase: Zacchaeus was a hated tax collector who became rich by cheating people out of their money. One day, Zacchaeus heard Jesus was in town and was desperate to see him. There was a crowd of people, and because he was short, Zacchaeus climbed up a sycamore tree to get a view of Jesus. Jesus stopped at the tree and (basically) said, “Come down from that tree, and let's hang out at your house.” People nearby grumbled, “He is going to spend time with a sinner.” (That sentence always makes me roll my eyes. DUH, you hypocrites, we are all sinners!)

Please note, Jesus stopped what he was doing and spoke to Zacchaeus gently—even though he was a sinner. Jesus went to his house and hung out with him—even though he was a sinner. Jesus saw Zacchaeus through eyes of love. He saw Zacchaeus for exactly who he was: a dearly beloved child of God. Jesus didn’t focus on his sins; he wasn’t harsh or judgmental. And because of it, Zacchaeus was changed.

**Luke 19:8-10**

<sup>8</sup> *Meanwhile, Zacchaeus stood before the Lord and said, "I will give half my wealth to the poor, Lord, and if I have cheated people on their taxes, I will give them back four times as much."* <sup>9</sup> *Jesus responded, "Salvation has come today, for this man has shown himself to be a true son of Abraham."* <sup>10</sup> *For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost.*

Jesus looks at you and me with adoring eyes of love, kindness, and gentleness. He sees us for who we were made to be. Jesus wants to spend time with us and change us. He doesn't see our sins or failures—he sees us as his dearly beloved. I want to automatically think in all circumstances and situations: "What would Jesus do?" and do it! What about you?

**Questions:**

How has your perception of gentleness changed? How has Jesus been gentle with you? How can you be gentle with others?

**Next Steps:**

Spend time with Jesus. Ask him to change you and fill you with the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control.

**Prayer:**

*Jesus, I am overwhelmed and joyful that you love me so much. You choose to see the best in me always. You are so gentle, kind, and loving to me. I praise you for all your blessings. Help me to grow closer to you and become more like you. Help me to behave in all circumstances and situations as you would. Help me to bear much fruit and for my life to bring you glory. Amen.*

*This post was written by Marsha Raymond, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut.*

# God Shows Up - What Our World Needs Now

July 8, 2021

Last weekend, Perrysburg Campus Pastor Josh Whitlow and NFL player Sam Acho discussed *gentleness*—a fruit of the Holy Spirit—as something the world needs now. One of the ways God produces this fruit is through us. If God is producing gentleness in us, it should show up in every place that we show up.

As I reflect on places I show up, I'm burdened to acknowledge my workplace as a place where gentleness has, at times, not shown up with me. Working in the automotive industry, there's definitely a stigma of foulness at times. You may have heard of "shop talk." Recently, I've found myself on the receiving end of music, words, and gestures that I have turned a blind eye and deaf ear to.

Feeling *called* to begin my employment there, I was now questioning a few things. In the midst of the questioning, some bitter tastes began to set in. Having previously worked in a higher level position, I got a bit snippy a few times, feeling like I was being underestimated. In reality, it was heart-hardening pride.

I was looking externally. I was looking for fulfillment from my job, from a title, a position even. That only brought with it more questions, uncertainty, and the fear that comes with it. It finally occurred to me that this confusion was a direct result of not relying on who I am.

*I am a follower of Jesus. A beloved child of God.*

## **2 Timothy 1:7** ESV

*For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.*

God is calling us to heart change. He gives us a spirit of gentleness, and when I allowed that gentleness to shine through, I began to see God working in the lives of my coworkers. I finally took the time to understand and lean into what God had planned for me right where I'm at.

## **1 Peter 3:4**

*You should clothe yourselves instead with the beauty that comes from within, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is so precious to God.*

A few days ago, my supervisor and I were talking about Jesus and the Bible and how he had drifted away from his faith. Through our conversations, he has expressed interest in coming to a CedarCreek service! I believe God used my gentleness to open up these conversations. Praise God!

**Questions:**

Where are you showing up? Are you bringing gentleness with you, or has your heart grown hard toward someone or something?

**Next Steps:**

Ask God to soften your heart. Ask him to open you up to his will and show you where you can lean in to him more.

**Prayer:**

*Heavenly Father, thank you for your loving faithfulness. You guide me to grow my gentleness because you have been gentle with me. You are always good. Help me to lean in to your will for me. Show me where I should be still and wait for your wonderful guidance. Open my heart, Father, that I may show gentleness to those around me and reflect the light of Jesus into their lives. In Jesus' name, amen!*

*This post was written by TJ McCroskey, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut.*

# Bottom Line - What Our World Needs Now

July 9, 2021

*You will only be ...*

... loving to the degree that you know God is loving with you.

... joyful to the degree that you know God finds joy with you.

... find peace to the degree that you know God is the peace within you.

... patient to the degree that you know God is patient with you.

... kind to the degree that you know God is kind to you.

... faithful to the degree that you know God is faithful to you.

... gentle to the degree that you know God is gentle with you.

... self-controlled to the degree that you know God is self-controlled with you.

These are the statements that we have been asked to contemplate over the last few weeks. Take a moment to reflect on them and ask yourself where you think there may be room for improvement. Pray over each statement and ask the Spirit to cultivate the ones you are led to focus on.

If I look at them altogether, I am overwhelmed! That's why I am glad that I was only asked to focus on one. Honestly, I can say that none of the fruit of the Spirit comes naturally to me. I need to practice and refer to, study and pray on them. I want to exhibit them all, always, but I can't do it on my own strength. I need the Holy Spirit who lives in me to overcome my own tendency to be of self. The following passage assures me that the Holy Spirit does indeed live in me.

## **John 14:15-17**

<sup>15</sup> *"If you love me obey my commandments. <sup>16</sup> And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. <sup>17</sup> He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive him, because it isn't looking for him and doesn't recognize him. But you know him, because he lives with you now and later will be in you."*

This passage promises that the Holy Spirit can produce the fruit I desire.

## **Galatians 5:22-23**

<sup>22</sup> *But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!*

### **Questions:**

Between now and Labor Day, which fruit would you love to cultivate?

### **Next Steps:**

Rewatch the weekend messages from this series, and watch or listen to the podcasts in the area where you are led to focus on. You can find all them in one place at [cedarcreek.tv/world](http://cedarcreek.tv/world). Do a Google search and find passages in the Bible that relate to the fruit you are wanting to cultivate.

### **Prayer:**

*Father, I just can't thank you enough for sending the Holy Spirit to help me find the truth of who you are and who I am in you. Before I found you, I was dead, but now I am alive in you! Every day brings new meaning and purpose as I grow in my relationship with you. Show me where I need to have more love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, or self-control. Equip me to cultivate, harvest, and share the fruit of the Holy Spirit. I pray in Jesus' name, amen.*

*This post was written by Julie Estep, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut.*