

Spiritual Mountain Climbing – Level Four “Meekness”

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Mother’s Day, May 10th, 2009*

Intro:

Matt 28:19 “Go and make disciples of all nations...”

ECC Process of Discipleship: Making an IMPACT...To Love...To Grow...To Serve

We have 3 priorities – To love...which is expressed in our Sunday morning celebration. To grow...which is expressed in our Connection Groups. To serve...which is expressed in our daily lives in the places we live, work and play; as well as through the local church. The vision of E.C.C. is to gather together weekly for corporate worship, loving God and each other; then to come together in small Connection Groups for discipleship and fellowship, and are regularly involved in reaching out to others with the love, acceptance, and forgiveness of Jesus Christ through community outreach. To Love...To Grow...To Serve!

Series Title: SPIRITUAL MOUNTAIN CLIMBING

Premise of Series: EIGHT UPWARD STEPS IN THE LIFE OF A CHRISTIAN, BASED ON THE BEATITUDES, LEADING TO A LIFE OF IMPACT FOR THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

Matt 5:1-12

1 And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him.
2 Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying: 3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 4 Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted. 5 Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth. 6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled. 7 Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy. 8 Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God. 9 Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God. 10 Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. 12 Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

In this passage of Scripture, Jesus preaches a sermon which we know as "The Sermon on the Mount", which is also recorded in Luke 6. Here, Christ taught the people, and in His teaching gave the passage known as the "Beatitudes". In this teaching, there are 8 steps given to us which lead to a spiritual summit. We will consider each of these steps in turn, one at a time, to see what we can learn from this sermon to make an IMPACT in our lives for the Kingdom of God.

The word “**Blessed**” in the Greek means (happy, to be envied, and spiritually prosperous — with life-joy and satisfaction in God's favor and salvation, regardless of their outward conditions)

Level One: Humility – P. John Baird

Level Two: Repentance – P. John Martin

Level Three: Rest and Reflect – Jamal Hashwey

THE FOURTH LEVEL UP THE MOUNTAIN: MEEKNESS – (Which is actually the third beatitude) marking the development of a new spirit in us. Verse 5 Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth.

Let me say right up front:

- **Meekness is not WEAKNESS**

It is sad that our word "meek" sounds so similar to the word "weak," for the two have absolutely nothing in common. The meek Christian is not one who is morally indifferent or passive regarding his values, or who conforms to the world's mold for his life. Meekness is not exemplified in the teenager who relents to peer pressure and talks filth and behaves in an ungodly way; or the businessman who is dishonest and adapts his behavior to any given circumstance.

No, meekness is far more noble than that. Behind meekness there is strength and stability. The word originally referred to an animal that had been tamed, e.g., a horse once wild but now obedient to the bridle and bit and, thus, of service and value to its master. So, too, we have been tamed to the yoke of Christ (Matthew 11:29), not to do away with our energy and spirit, but to channel them into productive service for the Master of our souls.

Illus: Pic of stallion horse

Most people seem to think that meek means weak, a spineless person without any backbone at all. But in the original language, the word "meek" is the same word that is used in bridling a horse, or taming a wild animal. In other words – meekness involves the process the teaching or training the animal. It is not that the animal has become "powerless" – but that the power of the animal has been brought under the control of the trainer. So, in the Christian realm, when we talk about a meek person, we're not talking about a spineless wimp. We are talking about a person whose life has been brought under the influence of the Holy Spirit, and God is in control of his or her life.

- **Meekness = STRENGTH/POWER under CONTROL**

The Bible tells us that Jesus was meek in Matthew chapter eleven: **Matthew 11:29** "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart."

Jesus was meek, and look what he did to the money changers in the Temple. He made a whip out of cords, and drove all of the money changers from the temple. He scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. He yelled and said, "Get these out of here! How dare you turn my Father's house into a shopping mall!" Jesus was in complete control of His actions. He thought about what He was going to do. He took the time to make a whip. He was in control of his actions and his anger. Had He been out of control He would not have taken the time to make a whip.

What this beatitude is telling me is that I am to allow God to lead me – to teach me – to guide me – as I go through life. It's like saying, "Jesus, I'll drive. You just tell me where to go. If you say turn left - I'll turn left. If you say turn right - I'll turn right. If you say turn around - I'll turn around. If you say stop – I'll stop. It's my life but I'm turning my destination over to you. You are my teacher - You are my trainer - You are my Lord."

You see the meek are sensitive to the divine will of God. The meek allow God to be in control. The meek are not easily provoked or irritated. They are humble. They are not proud, self sufficient or stubborn. They are not unmanageable or ill tempered. They allow God to take control. They allow God to train and teach them. They become teachable. In other words:

- **Meekness is self control empowered and directed by the HOLY SPIRIT**

Those who are meek are sensitive to the will of God and the power of the Holy Spirit. They don't cower like a mouse – but roar like a lion – over injustice. They keep their heads about them – and use their intellect and their energy for God's glory – and when God calls them to be bold – they are submissive enough – teachable enough – that they don't hesitate to step up to the plate. They admit that they don't know it all – but they are more than willing to follow the One who does. Meekness is following the leading of the Holy Spirit and the teachings of God.

- **Meekness is the strength to back down from a fight you know you could win.**

Illus: Strong Women in History that represent true Meekness

Mother Teresa
Cathi Campfield
Gail Stathis

Mrs. March from Little Women
Military wives
Grace Gaitano

Abigail from Bible

Today we are going to look at five lessons of meekness...

AS WE CLIMB THE MOUNTAIN

1. Become teachable not UNREACHABLE.

Meekness is about having a teachable spirit. Meek people don't pretend that they know it all. They look for opportunities to continually learn. Faithful Christians constantly look for opportunities to learn more about Jesus. Jesus wants us to learn as much about Him as we possibly can. Jesus wants us to be teachable. Look at what Jesus said in Matthew chapter eleven:

Matthew 11:29

“Take up my yoke upon you, and learn of Me, because I am meek, and humble of heart: And you shall find rest to your souls.”

It's interesting that in this verse Jesus says, “Learn of me.” He wants us to know more of Him. Jesus wants us to be teachable – not unreachable. Every day we need to pray, “Lord, teach me more about You today. Lord, help me to learn something today that will make me more useful in Your kingdom. Help me Lord to learn something about You that I can pass on to others.” Every day we need to search our hearts to see if we have a teachable spirit. Why? So that we can become like Jesus and teach others what we have learned. Look at what it says in Luke chapter six:

Luke 6:40

“A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher.”

Folks I don't know about you – but I want to be like Jesus. I want to be “fully trained”. I want learn as much about Jesus as I possibly can. How about you? Do you have a desire to learn more? Are you teachable? Are you reachable? Remember:

Matthew 5:5

“Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth.”

The second lesson in meekness as we climb the mountain is:

2. Become gentle not JUDGEMENTAL.

Follow along with me as I read Romans chapter fourteen verse one from the Message Bible:

Romans 14:1

“Welcome with open arms fellow believers who don’t see things the way you do. And don’t jump all over them every time they do or say something you don’t agree with — even when it seems that they are strong on opinions but weak in the faith department. Remember, they have their own history to deal with. Treat them gently.”

Happiness comes when you accept people the way they are. They have not reached your standard of perfection – but you welcome them and love them anyway. They should not have to obtain your standards for you to love them. You are to treat them with gentleness. Look at what it says in Galatians chapter six:

Galatians 6:1

“Brothers, if someone is caught in any wrongdoing, you who are spiritual should restore such a person with a gentle spirit, watching out for yourselves so you won’t be tempted also.”

How do you react when someone you know messes up their life? Do you say, “I told you so? I could see that coming. You blew it. How could you be so dumb? How could you be so stupid?” (By the way, we don’t use that word in the Campfield home.) Folks this is not a sign of meekness. Meekness is treating people gentle not judgmental.

The third lesson in meekness is as we climb the mountain:

3. Become an actor not a REACTOR.

This point is about taking the initiative when bad things happen. Look at what Romans twelve says:

Romans 12:17, 21

“Do not repay anyone evil for evil . . . but conquer evil with good.”

In this life you will get HURT. How you respond to your hurts of life matters. What is your normal reaction when people hurt you? Retaliate? Get even? Stab them in the back? Or do you love the person? Forgive them? Treat them with kindness? Meekness is a matter of choice. Do you remember how we defined meekness earlier in the sermon? Let me remind you:

Meekness = power under CONTROL

Folks when you fly off the handle – you have lost control. When you tell someone, “You make me mad.” you’re admitting that they have control of your emotions. All you are doing is reacting to the world around you in a negative way. Be aware – you don’t have to react like that – you can act. You can take control. If you don’t have control of your emotions - who does?

Whatever happens to you - you can respond with patience, kindness and love. Look at what First Corinthians thirteen says:

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

“Love is patient; love is kind. Love does not envy; is not boastful; is not conceited; does not act improperly; is not selfish; is not provoked; does not keep a record of wrongs; finds no joy in unrighteousness, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”

When someone hurts you how do you respond? Do you allow them to take control – or do you maintain control of your emotions? The Bible says:

Romans 12:17, 21

“Do not repay anyone evil for evil . . . but conquer evil with good.”

We can either react to people - or we can take control of our emotions and act in love toward people. The choice is ours. As we climb the mountain...

4. Become understanding not DEMANDING.

Look at what the Message Bible says in Philippians chapter two:

Philippians 2:3-5

“Don’t push your way to the front; don’t sweet-talk your way to the top. Put yourself aside, and help others get ahead. Don’t be obsessed with getting your own advantage. Forget yourselves long enough to lend a helping hand. Think of yourselves the way Christ Jesus thought of himself.”

All of us want to be first. All of us want to be on top. Folks how many of you want to be in the longest - slowest line at the super market? When things don’t go your way – how do you behave? Are you understanding or are you demanding? Do you take out your frustration on those around you or do you look for the opportunity to learn from the situation?

I read something about patience. What the author was saying was that if we ask God for patience – He does not give it. Instead what He gives are opportunities to learn patience. In other words – if we pray for patience – He places us in situations where we can learn patience. Patience is a learned ability – meekness is too.

Look at Philippians again with me:

Philippians 2:3-5

“Don’t push your way to the front; don’t sweet-talk your way to the top. Put yourself aside, and help others get ahead. Don’t be obsessed with getting your own advantage. Forget yourselves long enough to lend a helping hand. Think of yourselves the way Christ Jesus thought of himself.”

Did you notice that in this passage Paul give three things to do and three things NOT to do.

Here are the three don'ts:

- A. Don't push your way to the front.
- B. Don't sweet talk yourself to the top.
- C. Don't be obsessed with getting your own way.

Here are the three does:

- A. Put yourself aside to help others.
- B. Forget yourself and lend a helping hand.
- C. Think of yourself as Christ thought of Himself.

Do you know what the major lesson is that I get from passage of scripture? I have a choice. I can choose to be rude and crude – or I can choose to be patience. I can choose to be helpful or hurtful. I can choose to be a blessing – or I can choose to be a pain in the neck. I can choose to be self centered – or I can choose to look out for others. I can choose to be understanding – or I can choose to be demanding. The choice is mine – the choice is yours.

AS WE CLIMB THE MOUNTAIN...

5. Become tender without SURRENDER.

Here is a fact:

You cannot please EVERYONE. You can be tender without being a wimp!

To some you're a hero – to others you're a zero. I once read about pastors sitting around in a room talking about how you could please 100 percent of your congregation. Someone said, "That's a fact. 50 percent are happy when you come – and 50 percent are happy when you go." Folks no one will please everyone.

A test of maturity is how you handle disagreeable people. Meekness is not compromising your convictions. You can be tender without surrender. Meekness is not weakness – but it is handling conflict with gentleness.

Let me give you a piece of advice. Pick your battles. Don't argue over something that doesn't matter. Don't fight over something that doesn't make any difference. But when something does make a difference – be tender without surrender.

Look at what Proverbs fifteen one says:

Proverbs 15:1

“A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.”

Meekness is learning to disagree – AGREEABLY.

Meekness is learning to get along with people even though you don't see everything eye to eye. You can agree to disagree – and you respect each other because of it. “In the essentials we have unity; in the nonessentials we have liberty; in all things we have charity.” We need to get along with others – even if we see things differently.

I have never seen a marriage where the couple agree 100 percent of the time. I have never seen a church where everybody is in total agreement with one another. But I have seen situations where people love one another and have reached a point of unity. I have seen churches where there is unity with diversity. We each are different. We each have our different likes and dislikes. In fact that is the way God has designed His church. We each have a unique function. We each have a unique gift. We need variety. We need each other.

Look at what Paul says about variety in the church:

1 Corinthians 12:4-7

“Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. There are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons. But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.”

God has brought us together for the common good. He has placed us here to get to know one another - to help one another. He has placed us here to serve Him and to serve one another. We are not all the same – in fact we are not supposed to be. There is supposed to be diversity – but there also supposed to be unity. Paul uses the illustration of the human body to show that we can have unity with diversity in the Church. Look at what Paul says later on in First Corinthians chapter twelve:

1 Corinthians 12:17-18

“If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling? But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased.”

Because Jesus is our Lord - we can be tender without surrender. We can be understanding not demanding. We can be teachable not unreachable. We can be gentle not judgmental. All because Jesus Christ is our Lord and our Savior. He is our teacher - and we learn of Him.

“Blessed are the meek - (the teachable), For they shall inherit the earth.” Matthew 5:5

QUOTE: F.B. Meyer said, "I used to think, that God's gifts were on shelves - one above another, and the taller we grow, the easier we can reach them. Now I find that God's gifts are on shelves - one beneath another, and the lower we stoop, the more we get!"

SUMMARY: This trait which should be found in Christians is often misunderstood, in spite of the dictionary definition above. It has the meaning of the absence of pretension, but also suggests gentleness, and the self control needed to show gentleness. It means to be free from a mean or vengeful spirit. It is basically our attitude toward others, such as when others point our shortcomings out to us. It requires a true view of ourselves that expresses itself in our dealings and attitudes toward other people. It is the opposite of being strong, aggressive, harsh and tyrannical with others. The promise is that there will be an inheritance. We may not inherit land here as a result of this trait, but there is a "new heaven and new earth" coming, where we will certainly inherit if we follow all the commands of Christ. Paul, in 2 Cor 6:10 says that we now possess all things in principal since they belong to Christ; when He returns to rule and reign, and when the new heavens and new earth become reality, our inheritance will also become a reality. In our dealings with all men, including those inside and outside the church, we must show meekness in our response to them. To fail to do this brings reproach on the cause of Christ; we are not being Christ-like when we respond as our natural, human tendencies would lead us to do. We must show a nature that has been transformed by the power and might of the Holy Spirit.

AS WE CLIMB THE MOUNTAIN

- 1. Become teachable not UNREACHABLE.**
- 2. Become gentle not JUDGEMENTAL.**
- 3. Become an actor not a REACTOR.**
- 4. Become understanding not DEMANDING.**
- 5. Become tender without SURRENDER.**

EXTRA NOTES TO STUDY

1. Meekness is commanded by God as a spirit to be sought. (Zep 2:3)
 - (1). By ALL, saints and sinners. (same ref.)
 - (2). Of Christians in particular. (same ref.; Eph 4:2)
 2. Meekness was practiced by Jesus. (Isa 53:7; Mt 11:29; 1 Pet 2:23)
 3. Meekness brings God's promises into effect.
 - (1). Material blessings (Ps 22:26)
 - (2). An inheritance and peace (Ps 37:11)
 - (3). God's help in trouble (Ps 147:6)
 - (4). God's delight in them results in salvation (Ps 149:4)
 - (5). Judgement based on the righteousness of God (Is 11:4)
 - (6). His dealings with them will result in their rejoicing (Is 29:19)
 4. Meekness is shown to us by examples in the Bible.
 - (1). Moses (Nu 12:3)
 - (2). David (2 Sa 16:11)
 - (3). Jeremiah (Je 26:14)
 - (4). Stephen (Ac 7:60)
 - (5). Paul (2 Ti 4:16)
- The contrast between meekness as shown in the examples above, and the lack of meekness is shown in an incident recorded of the disciples, prior to Christ's death.
- (6). The disciples (Lk 9:51-55)

There are only eleven places in the NT where the word, meekness is used...each one of them gives us an area of life in which we should "yield our rights for the benefit of others."

1. Meekness in discipline

1 Cor.4:21 "What do you want? Shall I come to you with a rod, or in love and a spirit of gentleness?"

Even when we are admonishing one another, we can do it without a "holier-than-thou" attitude.

2. Meekness in restoration

Gal. 6:1-4 "Brothers, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. Bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ. For if anyone thinks himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. But let each one examine his own work, then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another."

3. Meekness in forbearance

Eph. 4:2

"Walk worthy of your calling with all lowliness and meekness, forbearing one another in love."

4. Meekness in forgiveness

Col. 3:12+13 "Put on meekness, forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any."

5. Meekness in ministry

1 Tim. 6:11 "But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness."

6. Meekness in teaching

2 Tim. 2:25 "In meekness, instructing those who are in opposition; if God may give them repentance so that they may know the truth."

7. Meekness in speaking

Titus 3:2 "Remind them...to speak evil of no man, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men."

8. Meekness in receiving instruction

James 1:21b "receive with meekness, the implanted Word which is able to save your souls."

9. Meekness in behavior

James 3:13 "Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom."

10. Meekness in marriage

1 Pt. 3:4 "...let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God."

11. Meekness in witness 1 Pt. 3:15 "Be ready always to give an answer to everyone who asks you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and respect."