

The Meek

In today's culture the personality type that commands the most respect is the Alpha. An Alpha is someone who dominates his peers – by sheer force of personality, or by intimidation, or both. He is the center of attention and is able to bend others to his will to get whatever he wants, when he wants it. Alphas are concerned about their own desires and feel little empathy for others; they are experts at taking advantage of people. Thanks to their personality and their high intimidation factor, they can do terrible things and get away with it. Alphas are aggressive, self-centered, and inspire fear in others. They know how to game the system to make sure that they come out on top, and they don't really care about who they have to crush to get there. Alphas know how to aggressively use strength to get what they want.

These traits are highly prized by the world. People love selfishness and will gladly oppress others in order to enrich themselves. There are a great many people who wish they knew how to push people around and escape the consequences of their behavior. Since Alphas have seemingly mastered both of those abilities they are seen as some sort of hero.

God, however, has a very different opinion. The personality type that He desires is **meekness**. God has promised to guide and teach the meek:

Psalm 25:9: "The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way."

He has promised to take care of the meek:

Psalm 22:26: "The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the Lord that seek him: your heart shall live for ever."

He has promised to protect the meek:

Psalm 147:6: "The Lord lifteth up the meek: he casteth the wicked down to the ground."

He has promised to give the Earth itself to the meek:

Psalm 37:11: "But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace."

Matthew 5:5: "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth."

Last but not least, *God has commanded us to be meek:*

Zephaniah 2:3: "Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger."

Meekness is even one of the fruits of the Spirit:

Galatians 5:22: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering,

gentleness, goodness, faith,
23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."

Just look at the qualities listed in those two verses! They're quite remarkable. The Spirit does *not* produce people who are bullies, but people who are loving. It does not produce people who love confrontations and arguments, but people who seek peace.

The next item on the list is a big one. Today's culture loves people who are harsh and abrasive and who mock others in front of an audience of millions. Cruelty and derision are celebrated – but notice that the Spirit produces people who are longsuffering and gentle. TV shows that abuse their contestants and heap ridicule upon them are rewarded with big ratings because people *love* to see other people be humiliated. God, however, wants people to be longsuffering and gentle. He is seeking an entirely different kind of person! Our culture loves depravity, but God desires people who delight in goodness and righteousness. God wants people who believe in His word, not people who publicly mock it.

Finally, God desires meekness and temperance. Our culture celebrates people who have zero self-control and who go off on shocking rampages, but God hates that. He seeks temperance – the ability for a person to control himself and do what is right. The culture may see out-of-control behavior as a sign of power and bravado, but God sees it as sin.

The contrast is quite stark! On the one hand you have the bully – the one who stirs up trouble, who delights in putting down others, who is cruel and heartless, who oppresses the weak, who enjoys depravity, who has no ability to restrain his actions, and who lives for himself. While the world may celebrate this behavior, God condemns it and is using His Spirit to create a different type of people. God wants His people to be characterized by *love*, to seek peace, to be willing to suffer, to be gentle and kind, to seek goodness, to control themselves, and to be meek. The world loves those who are proud and arrogant, but God values the humble and the lowly:

Ephesians 4:1: "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,
2 With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;
3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

The world *hates* lowliness. Our streets are full of people who say “Look at me! Look at how great I am! Be amazed at my greatness!” There are even Christian leaders who love to trumpet their “brand”, as they call it; they make much of themselves and want everyone to know how great they are and what great things they have done. No one wants to be lowly or unknown or humble. We want to be Big and Important and Known and Respected.

But God seeks men who are lowly and meek. He hates pride and commands all men to be humble. He wants people to think little of themselves but think much of others:

Philippians 2:3: “Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.”

God desires people who seek the welfare of *others*, not the welfare of themselves:

I Corinthians 13:4: "Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,
5 Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked,

thinketh no evil;

6 Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;

7 Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."

God wants people to be kind and not behave in "unseemly" ways. He has no respect for people who trash hotel rooms and destroy people's lives just to show how "Alpha" they are. God does not want His children to be self-centered jerks; instead He commands us to *not seek our own welfare* but instead seek the welfare of others. God takes no joy in those who are easily offended, but instead commands us to not be easily provoked. In today's world there are many people who enjoy depravity and hate the truth, but God seeks people who hate evil and love the truth.

Being meek does not mean that you are spiritless and tame, nor does it mean that you are weak. What it does mean is that you are *humble*. You think much of God and little of yourself. You have fully submitted yourself to God and you seek His will, not your own. It means that you love your neighbor and you seek his welfare – even if it costs you something.

The world will interpret your Christlike behavior as weakness and will despise it; they will see you as an easy target and will take advantage of you. History is full of meek men who were despised and abused by the world. The Bible tells us that Moses was meek:

Numbers 12:3: "(Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.)"

This particular passage records a time when Moses was unfairly criticized by Aaron and Miriam. When this happened Moses did not rail against them or try to avenge himself. An Alpha would have found a clever way to put Aaron and Miriam back in their place and make sure that they never caused trouble again. God, however, said that vengeance belongs to Him and taught that it is not our place to avenge ourselves. Since Moses did nothing, God Himself acted:

Numbers 12:4: "And the Lord spake suddenly unto Moses, and unto Aaron, and unto Miriam, Come out ye three unto the tabernacle of the congregation. And they three came out.

5 And the Lord came down in the pillar of the cloud, and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam: and they both came forth.

6 And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream.

7 My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house.

8 With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?

9 And the anger of the Lord was kindled against them; and he departed.

10 And the cloud departed from off the tabernacle; and, behold, Miriam became leprous, white as snow: and Aaron looked upon Miriam, and, behold, she was leprous."

God saw the unjust criticism that had been leveled against Moses and He acted. The world may believe that refusing to avenge ourselves makes us weak, but they are mistaken. Vengeance belongs to God alone, and there is nothing weak about Him. Any revenge that man could conceive of pales in comparison to what God will do on Judgment Day. God is far more dangerous than any man.

Remember, Jesus described Himself as being meek:

Matthew 11:29: "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

Was Jesus weak? Was He spineless? Absolutely not! Jesus, after all, threw the moneychangers out of the temple:

Matthew 21:12: "And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves,
13 And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves."

He also condemned the Pharisees using rather shocking language:

Matthew 23:27: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.
28 Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity. . .
33 Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?"

How could Jesus be meek and still do these things? The answer is simple: meekness is *not* a synonym of weakness. God wants us to be meek *and* to boldly proclaim the truth. The apostles themselves prayed for a spirit of boldness:

Acts 4:29: "And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word,"

Meekness does not mean that we must sit in a corner and do nothing. Numbers 12:3 says that Moses was the most meek man on the face of the Earth, and yet he defied Pharaoh and led the Israelites out of Egypt. The meekness of Moses did not stop him from leading Israel into battle. Likewise, Jesus was meek but He did not hesitate to proclaim truths that people found greatly offensive.

Nor does meekness equate to powerlessness. Jesus is meek, and yet all power in Heaven and Earth has been given to Him (Matthew 28:18). Our Lord is not powerless, but He is meek. The key is that Jesus uses His power to glorify His Father. He does not seek His own will, but the will of His Father (John 5:30). Jesus is kind and gentle. He is merciful to the weak and to the poor and He lifts up the fallen. He is longsuffering and slow to anger. He sought our welfare and came to die in our place so that we might be forgiven.

What kind of person does God want us to be? The answer is simple:

Titus 3:2: "To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men."

1 Peter 3:4: "But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price."

Having a meek and quiet spirit may not win you many friends and it may not win you the acclaim of the world, but it is highly valued in the sight of God. The Lord wants His children to be quiet and humble, to serve others and to consider others to be better than themselves. He doesn't want us to dominate other people and force them to do our will; instead He wants us to love and serve one another:

Luke 22:24: "And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest.

25 And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors.

26 But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve."

God does not want us to be like the world. He doesn't want us to oppress others or find clever ways to take advantage of other people. Instead He wants us to serve others with love and gentleness. He wants us to pursue meekness and gentleness.

All of this goes against the grain of our culture, and it is a difficult thing to accept – but it is vital. I suspect that there are quite a few Christians who would find Heaven to be a very uncomfortable place. You see, there are many people who call themselves Christians but who spend their entire lives making much of themselves and making very little of God. Heaven, however, isn't like that. Heaven is not filled with billions of people who are all shouting "Look at me! Look at how great I am!" Instead it is filled with countless people who are spending all of their time talking about how great *God* is:

Revelation 4:8: "And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.

9 And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever,

10 The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."

Heaven is a place where *God* is glorified and where people will spend all of eternity honoring and praising *Him*. It is not filled with self-centered narcissists who spend their time talking about their own greatness, or who spend their lives trying to win the praise of others.

I think it is time we stopped thinking like the world and started seeking to be the kind of person that God commands. The world may prize selfishness, but what the world prizes the Lord holds in very low esteem:

Luke 16:15: "And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God."