



Meekness isn't weakness

Words by D.B. Ryen

All people are innately self-centered. It's completely natural, and it helps us survive in the natural world. We need to actively seek food, shelter, clothing, employment, community, etc. or we won't last long. There's nothing wrong with that.

The problem arises when our own self-interest conflicts with another's. Like when there's only one pair of your favourite shoes left on sale at the mall and you're squared off with someone else who wants them.

Trouble ensues.

You see, even from a young age, we set up Self as a little god to be served and respected and defended. Any insult or disrespect towards our Self is nothing short of a declaration of war.

We're always striving to promote Self, to make Self look good, to defend Self against attack, both verbally and physically. It's exhausting! Self is an all-consuming god; it demands constant service. The worship of Self is a life-sucking endeavor.

That's where meekness comes in.

A lot of fluffy, nebulous, and/or lame definitions of meekness exist. Meekness is associated with weakness, spinelessness, and being a pushover. Meekness seems timid, shy, and unassertive. It's tepid, flavorless, unpassionate, indifferent. Like the "meh" emoji.

But that's not what the Bible says. Biblical meekness is awesome:

"Blessed are the meek, because they'll inherit the earth," (Matthew 5:5).

"Come to me, anyone who's exhausted and weighed down! I'll rest you. Take my yoke on yourself and learn from me, because I'm meek and humble in my heart. You'll find rest for your souls. My

yoke is easy and my burden is light," (Matthew 11:28-30).

"Tell Zion's daughter, 'Don't fear! Look, your king is coming to you, meek and mounted on a donkey, even on a colt, the son of an ass,' (John 12:15).

Jesus wasn't meek and mild, he was meek and wild! He cleared the temple courtyard with a whip! He was fierce and passionate! That doesn't sound like the worldly definition of meekness. Thus, meekness cannot be mild or timid.

Jesus wasn't weak. Who else could carry the cross to Calvary and hang from it with the sin of the world on his shoulders? Jesus certainly had the power to defend himself. "I can call my Father to immediately provide over twelve legions of angels," (Matthew 26:53). However, he deliberately and willingly allowed himself to be abused, verbally or physically.

He chose not to defend himself. Meekness isn't weakness. It certainly isn't spinelessness.

The Greek word used in Scripture doesn't help much in defining the meaning of meekness. *Praÿs* (verb, pronounced "prah-ooce") is a root word with a meaning that can only be guessed by its context. "Meek" often occurs in the New Testament alongside "humble" or "humility." They seem to go together, like peanut butter and jam. But they're not the same, also like peanut butter and jam. So, meekness isn't humility.

Praÿtes is the Greek word for meekness (noun), but it's often translated in this passage as "gentleness." Yet *epieikeia* is the typical word for "gentleness" elsewhere in the Bible. Therefore, we

see that meekness is a fruit of the Spirit and it's not the same as gentleness

Here's my guess at what it means to be meek: meekness is disregard for Self. Meekness means putting aside our Self-gods. It doesn't mean hatred of Self; it doesn't mean self-neglect, shame or Gnosticism. Meekness is just lack of focus on Self. It is selflessness in the fullest sense. And this definition seems to fit with how the Bible talks about it.

Jesus asks us to get past ourselves, lay down our lives and follow him. There is no room for the Self-god in the Lord's kingdom.

There are certainly times we want to defend ourselves in order not to appear weak or foolish. But God, in his divine purposes, uses weakness to shame the strong and the wise, (1 Corinthians 1:27). So go ahead, let yourself look like a fool and get trampled on. In the end,

you'll have victory over your oppressors, (Psalm 18:47-48). God will ensure it.

"Be the best you!" cries the world. Countless books, courses, counselling sessions, etc. are sold every year to help us polish the golden Self and raise it up a bit higher. But

it's all a lesson in futility. Self-help resources are no help at all. Only seeking God will truly help you.

Lay down your burden, that heavy load of constantly fighting for and defending your Self. Learn from Jesus, who is meek, and take his yoke upon yourself. His burden—worshipping God—is much easier to bear than worshipping your Self.

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