

The Fruit of the Spirit: Gentleness
(Galatians 5:22-23)

Introduction:

1. The fruit of the Spirit consists of the 9 special characteristics listed in Galatians 5:22-23.
2. In our lesson we are concentrating on the 5th characteristic: "gentleness."

Discussion:

- I. LET US FIRST DEFINE "GENTLENESS"
 - A. The word translated "gentleness" is also translated "kindness."
 - B. Since these words are used interchangeably, we must understand what both words mean.
 1. Gentleness: possessing a mild disposition
 2. Kindness: possessing a sympathetic nature; possessing a forbearing nature.
 3. Putting these words together, we are talking about having a mild disposition that is sympathetic and forbearing toward others.
- II. THE BIBLE TEACHES CHRISTIANS TO BE GENTLE AND KIND
 - A. (1 Corinthians 13:4) Charity [love] "*is kind.*"
 - B. Ephesians 4:29-32
 - C. Colossians 3:8-13
 - D. Titus 3:1-2
- III. LET US MAKE SEVERAL OBSERVATIONS FROM THESE PASSAGES
 - A. (Titus 3:1-2) Being gentle:
 1. is associated with meekness
 2. is contrasted with speaking evil of others and brawling.
 - B. (Colossians 3:8-13) Kindness:
 1. is associated with mercy, humility, meekness, longsuffering, forbearance, and forgiveness
 2. is contrasted with anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication, and lying.
 - C. (Ephesians 4:29-32) Being kind:
 1. is associated with being tenderhearted and forgiving
 2. is contrasted with corrupt communication, bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, evil speaking, and malice.
 - D. Gentleness and kindness can be demonstrated without words; however, gentleness and kindness are often mentioned in connection with our words.
- IV. LET US CONSIDER SEVERAL PASSAGES THAT DEAL WITH OUR SPEECH
 - A. Speaking, as we are instructed in Colossians 4:6, reflects gentleness and kindness.
 - B. A lengthy discussion of the tongue is found in James 3:2-18.
 1. (vs.2) A perfect man bridles his tongue and does not use offensive speech.
 2. (vs.3-8) Even though it is very small, the tongue is very powerful.
 - a. It may be used for good purposes.
 - b. It may also be used for evil purposes.
 3. (vs.9-12) Blessing God and cursing men with the tongue is inconsistent.
 4. (vs.13-18) Earthly wisdom and heavenly wisdom are contrasted [gentleness is associated with heavenly wisdom].

Conclusion:

1. Let us be reminded of the principles revealed in Galatians 6:7-8.
2. God knows how we are sowing, and we will reap accordingly.
3. To reap eternal life we must sow to the Spirit.
4. The degree to which we bear the fruit of the Spirit is a good indication of whether we are sowing to the flesh or the Spirit.
5. Let us strive to be like Jesus who was gentle and kind.