

MEEKNESS

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Meekness is not a word often used in conversation. But if it is, it is generally not used in a positive way. So why would we want it as a virtue? I looked up the definition in *Webster's Dictionary* and found why.

Webster has 3 listings to define the word:

- 1) patient and mild; not inclined to anger or resentment
- 2) too submissive; easily imposed upon; spineless; spiritless
- 3) gentle or kind

I find it very interesting that the definition we as a culture seem to embrace is sandwiched in the middle of two other definitions, which are more to what the word means as a virtue. In our society if someone were to call you meek, it would make the hairs on the back of your head stand up followed by “I am NOT!” No one wants to be thought of as TOO submissive or spineless. No one wants to be walked on, the meaning of the second definition, which is why I think we shy away from this virtue so much.

But when you look at the other two definitions, I think these are the definitions that Jesus was talking about in His Sermon on the Mount when He said in Matthew 5:5, “*Blessed are the meek for they will inherit the earth.*” *NIV*. Other translations use the words “humble”, “gentle” and “lowly” in place of the word meek.

Jesus used this same word to describe himself in Matthew 11:29 when He said “*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.*” *KJV* Was He telling us we will find rest for our soul if we are meek? Barnes tells us “*Meekness is patience in the reception of injuries. It is neither meanness, nor a surrender of our rights, nor cowardice; but it is the opposite of sudden anger, of malice, of long-harbored vengeance.*”—*Barnes' Notes on the New Testament*

How would we each be if we were patient in the receptions of injuries? This certainly makes me stop and take note. If I am honest, my first reaction when “injured” or someone does something offensive to me is anger and wanting retaliation. If I continue to be honest with myself, does that really solve anything? It may make me feel good for the moment, but in reality it just escalates a situation and drives relationships further apart. In those situations, I definitely do NOT have rest in my soul! Further soul searching reveals *why* I react in those ways – my pride. *I* was offended; *I* don't deserve to be treated that way; *my* rights were violated; and on it goes. Definitely not humility coming out there!

As I look back at Jesus' words, I think I may not inherit the earth in terms of monetary gain or power but I certainly will inherit a lot of good relationships if I act meek or gentle. And isn't that what the earth is made of? Lots of good people? I think I'll sit at the Master's feet for a while and learn from Him – join me?