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**Presentation Transcript**  
**Fruits of the Spirit – Part 6 – Gentleness**  
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As we continue through the nine fruits of the Spirit mentioned by the apostle Paul in Galatians 5, we now come to *gentleness*. Up until now, we've looked at qualities that most of us understand by the use of a single word, such as love, peace, etcetera. But this one, gentleness, needs a bit of explanation before we dig into the application of it. The reason I say that is, in some of the newer translations, the word that was translated *gentleness* in the *King James* is translated *kindness*. So, a lot of these terms can overlap maybe. But we're going to go with the *King James* definition.

Speaking of definitions, let's dig into it. The *Louw and Nida Domain-Oriented Lexicon* says that the word *chrestotes*: gentleness of attitude and behavior in contrast with harshness in one's dealing with others; gentleness, meekness, mildness.

So, the best examples of gentleness in the Bible, I think, are Jesus' examples – His mild approach in the face of gross misunderstanding, as in the case of James and John. Let's read that incident in Luke 9, starting in verse 51.

**Luke 9:51-56** – *Now it came to pass when the time had come for Him to be received up that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem. He sent messengers before His face, and as they went they entered a village of the Samaritans to prepare for Him. But they did not receive Him because His face was set for the journey to Jerusalem. And when His disciples, James and John, saw this, they said, "Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?" But He turned and rebuked them, and said, "You do not know what manner of spirit you are of, for the Son of man did not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to another village.*

So, no anger, just an explanation – a logical explanation. Later we learn – I believe it's from Mark – that Jesus called James and John the Sons of Thunder. They were always wanting him to...they came to Him one time because they saw somebody casting out demons – or trying to – and they told them to stop. And Jesus said, "If they're not against us, they're for us." So they

were wrapped pretty tight – pretty rigid in their approach – small-minded – and Jesus never really got on them. He just corrected them and maybe teased them a little about it.

Then there's the example of Jesus with John's mother – James and John's mother – in Matthew 20, verse 20.

**Matthew 20:20** – *Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came up to Him with her sons – so, this was something they were all in on – and kneeling before Him, she asked Him for something. And He said to her, “What do you want?” And she said, “Say that these two sons of mine are to sit one on your right hand and one on your left in Your Kingdom.” And Jesus answered, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink?” And they said to Him, “We are able.” And He said to them, “You will drink My cup, but to sit at My right hand and at My left is not mine to grant, but is for those for whom it has been prepared by My Father.” And when the ten heard this, they were indignant at the two brothers. But Jesus called them to Him and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, but it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant. And whoever would be first among you must be your slave. Even as the Son of man came not to be served, but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many.*

Think how disappointing it must have been for Jesus, toward the end of His ministry, to witness this completely gross misunderstanding of His message. They were still vying for power among themselves. But no anger on His part – just a redirect. Another example I can think of in the last two years was Supreme Court Justice, Neil Gorsuch, when he was being interrogated, you might say, by the Senate. He had to be confirmed. And, like Jesus, he used logic to silence his critics – no counter-attack, no rebuttal, just a logical view of his position. He was also interviewed by CNN – you should watch his interview with CNN. A reporter was trying her best to convince him that the Constitution was outdated, or at least to show the viewers that it was. Watch how he handles it – no anger, no rebuttal, just calm, polite, friendly explanation of his position. He was interrupted numerous times, but he just kept saying to her, “Well, you asked what I thought about this, and I'm not nearly done yet, so I'm going to continue answering your question.” And he was smiling at her when he said it. So, how could she possibly show upset on the camera?

And I know Neil Gorsuch is a present-day thing. There are lots of other ones in the Bible too. But think about the opportunities we would have to be gentle with people in present-day applications. When we have differences of opinion, we sometimes tend to get defensive and counter-attack, if we feel somebody else's opinion is contrary to ours.

I think that's what Paul was confronting in Galatians 5 when he talked about the fruits of the Spirit. So, he was saying that gentleness is one of the things that we need, if we're going to be at peace with each other in church. We have to be willing to listen. I think the brethren were arguing with each other. And you know how it gets when that happens. Nobody feels like anybody's listening to them. They were getting angry, and choosing up sides, and arguing. And

he tells them to be patient with each other, and to be kind, and respectful of the opinions of others. Just because someone has an opinion, doesn't mean that we have to agree with it, but we have to respect them and their right to have an opinion.

So, in these cases, where does gentleness come from? Well, it comes from the long view, knowing that one day, God is going to explain it all to us. And at that time, when He does, we'll all have the same opinion about everything, because we will know that He's our King of kings and Lord of lords, and right out of His mouth, He's going to tell us how to think about these things. So, they're really, in the present day, not worth arguing over. Just let people be. Live and let live. And, if people want to leave because of differences, then we wish them well as they go.

How about attacks on the person? Sometimes, people do attack us, even when we're not trying to fight with them. So how should we handle that? Let's look at a scripture. It's in Numbers 12:2 – it's Moses.

**Numbers 12:2** – *Now the man, Moses – God tells us – was very meek, more than all people who were on the face of the earth.*

So, how could this be? Wasn't he the one who threw down the tablets of law in a rage? And didn't he strike the rock in anger twice when the people wanted water? Wasn't the Promised Land withheld from him because of these kinds of responses? Well, yes. So, why did God call him meek? We're going to get into that in a minute. He was a meek person and we'll see more why. But in the meantime, I want to go back to Neil Gorsuch for a minute.

When asked in the Senate confirmations if he hoped to leave a lasting mark on the Supreme Court by his appointment, I think the reason that question was asked was because they were suspicious that he was going to be a political judge because he was selected by Trump. His answer was, that he had known a number of Supreme Court justices and none of them had left any lasting mark on the Court. So, what he hoped to do instead, while he was serving, was to be a good husband and good father, and then he added, "mild at home." Gentle, easy with his children and his wife – to be respectful of them. And then he said, "And to be fair to all who come to him at court, both rich and poor." So, that kind of stopped them right there. They didn't know what to do with that.

Now, there are specific warnings to fathers about this in the Bible. Paul tells us – and he's speaking to fathers – not to provoke our children to wrath. We do this by being angry and overly restrictive and unfair with them – not having respect for their freedom as a human being. Even children are allowed to have opinions. Instead of those things – being angry and restrictive and unfair – we are to hold boundaries, yes, but without anger. Instead, using logic and consequences and equity and love to direct them away from the trouble and toward God.

I think, too, of employees. In my private practice, I have heard a steady stream of complaints about unfair, angry, self-centered bosses. I know that goes both ways, and that, just because somebody tells me their boss is unfair or dictatorial or self-centered, that doesn't necessarily mean I would think that. Nonetheless, a lot of people believe today that they don't find equity in the workplace. It does seem to me, though, after hearing this – and maybe I am biased – that no one knows how to be a boss anymore – or, at least, a lot don't. And no one knows how to deal fairly with employees. And employees don't know how to deal with that kind of boss. So, actually, gentleness is a way of dealing with a hard-headed, self-centered boss. If you attack him, it's only going to make him more vindictive and angry.

Let's look now at some of the benefits of gentleness. The first one I want to mention is compliance. The people who have developed the *Parenting with Love and Logic* program came up with a great example. Have you ever gotten a ticket from a surly policeman? How about a polite policeman? What's the difference? Well, where does your mind go when you're stopped and confronted by an angry or disrespectful police officer? Well, it goes away from you and your fault to how arrogant and mean the policeman is. If the policeman is polite to you and respectful, your mind goes to what you did, which is where we want the mind of someone to go when we're trying to get them to change their mind or behavior. A mild approach lessens defensiveness and makes life easier for us when we are mild.

Another thing that happens is, when we're mild with people, we also gain favor. "Moses was the meekest man ever," God said. Okay, so what was his problem? Let's go back to the scripture we looked at earlier and read that – Numbers 12:1 through 15.

**Numbers 12:1-15** – *Then Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because – was it because he was doing a bad job of leading? Well, they probably did that too, but they were griping because – he married an Ethiopian woman. And it says: For he had married an Ethiopian woman. Like, they were right about it. And I guess, maybe, they were racially prejudiced? So, they said, "Has the LORD indeed spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us also? And the LORD heard it. Uh-oh. Now the man, Moses, was very humble – more than all men who were on the face of the earth. Meek is the exact word. Suddenly, the LORD said to Moses and to Aaron and Miriam, "Come out, you three, to the tabernacle of meeting." So, they're being called on the carpet, so to speak. So the three came out. And then the LORD came down in the pillar of cloud and stood in the door of the tabernacle and called Aaron and Miriam, and they both went forward. And then He said, "Hear now my words. If there is a prophet among you, I the LORD make Myself known to him in a vision. I speak to him in a dream. Not so with My servant, Moses. He is faithful in all My house – that means above everybody – and I speak with Him face to face, even plainly, and not in dark sayings, and he sees the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid to speak against My servant, Moses?" So the anger of the LORD was aroused against them. And He departed. And when the cloud departed from above the tabernacle, Miriam suddenly became leprous, as white as snow. And then Aaron turned toward Miriam, and there she was, a leper. And Aaron said to Moses, "Oh, my lord, please do not lay this sin on us, in*

*which we have done foolishly and in which we have sinned. Please do not let her be as one dead, whose flesh is half consumed when he comes out of his mother's womb." So, Moses cried out to the LORD, saying, "Please heal her, O God, I pray." These people were running him down, talking about him behind his back to the people, and now he's praying for his sister. And then the LORD said to Moses, "If her father had but spit in her face, would she not be shamed seven days? Let her be shut out of the camp seven days, and afterward she may be received again." So, Miriam was shut out of the camp seven days, and the people did not journey until Miriam was brought in again. So, He did heal her, but I'm sure word got around that the reason they weren't moving was because Miriam had displeased God.*

So, let's understand this situation. Moses, according to God, did not need to defend himself. God took care of his problem – in a big way! Way better than Moses could have done in defending himself. So, because Moses was gentle and meek, God stood up for him. Wouldn't you like to have it that way in your life – that God stands up for you, and blesses you, and takes care of you? No need for us to be defensive about these things. We just need to let people live, and let them live, and hope they let us live, and just go about our business, and trust God. So, it's always a good thing to remember.

Here's something else to notice: while Moses was a lion when someone attacked God, as when the people complained that God brought them out of Egypt to kill them – no water, no food, etc. – but he was very meek and gentle when it came to people attacking him. He never got defensive or put up any kind of a fight. He let God fight his battles for him. And God did. And He says the same to us today. He says He will fight our battles for us. So, instead of saying in Maribah, "You pack of rebels, shall we, instead of God, bring water out of this rock for you" – which is what he said – because he said that – people were attacking God, so he went on the warpath to defend God. And because he did that, he was prevented from entering the Promised Land, because God didn't want him to defend God. He was prevented from entering the Promised Land, because God didn't need him to defend Him. God is perfectly capable of defending Himself, just as we saw. And He doesn't want us to defend Him. He wanted Moses to represent Him as Jesus did when He walked the earth – in mildness and gentleness. Leprosy and earthquakes are the things that God uses and we don't have that our disposal. So, we let God take care of Himself while we're meek and humble with other people, and humble in God's presence.

When people are attacking God – think about it – most of the time, He just ignores it, because He knows He has something for them later – something that's going to change their minds. So, we just need to let that stuff go. F

Another thing to think about – that we can get from this story – and another benefit of being gentle is God's protection. Being a mild, gentle loving person qualifies us for God's protection. So, Moses again is the example here. He didn't have to do anything. God saw what was happening and took care of it.

I've told this story several times in my career, but I want to tell it again. This is a story about a friend of mine who worked at a big electronics company in the United States. Many people today have their products in their homes. He was a project manager for this company. He worked in a lab, filled with project managers working on projects, probably all related. There was a person who was over all the projects in that lab – a lab manager. As time passed in his job, his manager became more and more difficult to deal with. The people that worked with my friend were very upset, and so was my friend also, because this man would call people out in public. He was rude to people, short-tempered – was very unpleasant to work for. You couldn't please him. He didn't seem to care about anyone but himself. My friend said he was losing weight, and his blood pressure was going up, and he couldn't sleep at night because the situation was so bad in that lab. He was listening and talking to other people about it, and he finally just decided that he was going to stop doing all that, and he was going to work as hard as he could on his project, and work to help his manager as best he could. So, he did that. And as he did that, and he stopped hanging out with the people that were all upset like he had been, his blood pressure started going down, and he started enjoying his job once again. Things started getting better for him, although everybody around him was still very upset. One day, my friend told me that his manager called him into his office. And he said, "I know that everyone here is very upset with me. And I know that you're the only one who still is working at my side to help us be successful. And I've noticed that." So, he gave him a raise. He also told him that his wife was dying of cancer, and that he'd been beside himself, and he had allowed himself to become out of sorts, and his mind wasn't focused on his work any longer. It was on his wife.

It wasn't lost on me, some years later, that my friend became the manager of that lab. Now, in this company, they have a good company because they pay their employees well, so they have the best people. I'm sure that my friend made a lot of money in that position. He did well while he was a project manager, but when he became the manager over an entire lab, I'm sure that his salary was extremely high. He didn't have to fight. He didn't have to defend. All he had to do was just mind his own business and do his work, and God fought his battles for him, and blessed him for it, too. I think that's one of the best present-day stories I've heard about how to handle difficult situations like that.

So, gentleness: one of the qualities of Jesus Christ and God the Father. When we're told about fruits of the Spirit, what we're really being told is, this is how Jesus lived when He was on the earth. He was gentle, and He was patient, and He was kind, and He was a loving person. That's a quality that comes to us from the Holy Spirit from God, as He and Jesus Christ live in us. As we grow to love God and to love others, we just naturally become more gentle in our approach to them. Paul tells us to put it on, like a coat. And that we should do.

Don't forget to check out our Website. This is the sixth in a series. There are five others that we've already put up, and the next three will come along. So, if you want more about fruits of the Spirit.... We also have many other presentations on various Christian living things.

I also want to thank all of you for your donations. People sometimes ask me, “Do we receive donations?” Well, we very certainly do. We couldn’t do this work if we didn’t have them. So, thank you all for donating and considering it, if you haven’t yet. We’re very happy to able to do this series on the *Fruits of the Spirit* – something very important for all of us.

So, until next time, this is Bill Jacobs for LifeResource Ministries, serving children, families and the Church of God.