

FRUIT OF THE WEEK: GENTLENESS

Proverbs 15:1 “A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.”

The characteristics we see in Fruit of the Spirit are all interwoven and connected. One characteristic can simply not exist without the others - hence why it is called “fruit” (*singular*) not “fruits” (*plural*). Gentleness is a prime example of how we see the Fruit of the Spirit working in harmony.

Gentleness and patience are very closely related. Remember, patience is more than simply waiting with a good attitude. We described patience as the ability to endure suffering without retaliation as well as the ability to bear with others without irritation or anger. At the root of patience we see deep love and forgiveness. So if patience involves a lack of anger, then gentleness involves a lack of aggression.¹

Like patience, gentleness is the Christ-like response to others that requires kindness and stems from love (more fruit!) Gentleness is choosing not to lash out in aggression and harsh words but rather approaching a situation with humility and a controlled tongue. It is choosing to speak the truth in love. Our memory verse (Proverbs 15:1) informs us of the effects a gentle spirit has - it discourages irritability and invites peace.

Jesus exemplifies perfect gentleness. Throughout his ministry, he never responded to others with aggression or cruel words. He never tried to provoke others nor did he ever reply with a malicious tone.

If there was a time that the gentleness of Christ was most tested, it was surely during the course of his arrest, trial, and crucifixion. “When he was arrested, he could have called on twelve legions of angels to protect him, but he didn’t (Mt 26:53-54). When he was facing trials, before the Jewish court then the Roman one, he could have answered every charge with an angry rebuttal, but he remained mostly silent (Mt 26:63). When they were nailing him to the cross, he could have called down curses on his enemies, but he didn’t; he prayed to his Father to forgive them (Lk 23:24).”²

The same gentle spirit within Jesus lives within each of us. The way to let Christ’s character shine through us is to genuinely humble ourselves before him and *abide*. Fix your eyes solely on Jesus today and allow him to take root in your heart.

¹ Christopher J.H. Wright, *Cultivating the Fruit of the Spirit: Growing in Christlikeness*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2017) 128.

² *Ibid.*, 136.