

RETHINKING MEEK

Posted on November 22, 2022 by Emily Taylor



What do you want to be known for? **What trait takes your breath away when you see it embodied?** In the ESV the word “meek” surfaces 10 times in the Bible. It is used to describe Moses (the greatest law giver,) Jesus, and God’s chosen people or those who will inherit the earth. That’s about it. Pretty elevated status in regards to rapport, right? According to [BibleStudyTools.com](https://www.biblestudytools.com): “The single most frequently attested context in which the meek are mentioned in the Bible is one in which they are vindicated and rewarded for their patient endurance.” And yet, when you hear the word, “meek,” my guess is if you’re like me, it’s not a quality at the top of our list of those we’re dying to develop. But then we see these hints...

“Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.” — Matthew 5:5

We’re about to start hearing some beautiful songs about Jesus being “meek and mild.” So, **what do you think of when you hear “meek?”** Weak? Quiet? A pushover? Boring? To be someone without the strength of will to make stuff happen? Maybe even to submit to the will of another or forego your own influence. Submission is often considered to be admitting our inability to handle something, to be a lesser. And that there’s no way that could be a good thing. And while he was clearly surrendered to God’s authority, I don’t see Moses as lacking in influence. I don’t see Jesus as weak.

And then there's this:

"These connotations were not always predominant in the word, for ancient Near Eastern kings were not reluctant to describe themselves as meek in the same context in which they described themselves as mighty kings." (Baker's Evangelical dictionary of Biblical Theology on Meekness).

So maybe we should examine this adjective. **Maybe we should reconsider it's worth.**

Maybe we are a people who revere the demonstration of a meek person without recognizing it's meekness we see. Perhaps there is a fault in the evolved understanding of the word? Do you find strength in controlled reactions? What about having the ability to respond and even the strength to squash — but choosing not to. Not because of fear or intimidation but just the opposite. To find a determined purpose so gargantuan that our perseverance and long-suffering toward our goal is not pushed off course as a result of some bullying or accusation. There is unfathomable strength in one's ability to live in submission to the only one worthy. Because yes, we are lesser. Only a fool would imagine otherwise.

"Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom." — James 3:13

Jesus knew angry words and a false sense of authority from his accusers did not change who he was. And so before his accusers he was silent. The submission to his purpose and patient endurance despite a tortuous death was not threatened or influenced by the injustice or callous violence poured out on him. He knew who he was, what he was there for, and to whom he would obey. That kind of meekness is not for the faint of heart. Is not for the easily influenced or the one who's identity is at risk. There is a quiet confidence, a gentle strength about one who trusts wholeheartedly. Who's motivations are bathed in love and strength and purpose.

The top Merriam-Webster definition of the word is this: "enduring injury with patience and without resentment."

Oh. Then, God help us, we need meek leaders. Let's choose to put on the virtue of meekness. Let's choose to love magnificently, embrace patience in longsuffering, bearing with one another... **and if in the strength God gives us, we can take on this trait, perhaps we can see meekness for what it is.**