

Pleasant Valley
Church of Christ

3317 Amidon
Wichita KS 67204
(316) 838-4195
www.letjesusleadus.org

Schedule of Services

Sunday

Classes 9:30 am
Worship 10:30 am
Evening 6:00 pm

Wednesday

Classes 7:30 pm

The Pleasant Valley Church of Christ is a non-denominational group of believers who are committed to following Jesus in our attitudes, our relationships, and our worship. If you want the same thing in your life, please contact us. We'd like to help.

Unless otherwise noted, all scripture quotations are from the New King James Version Bible, Thomas Nelson Publishers.

Wings



*"But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles" (Isaiah 40:31)*

February 3, 2008

A spirit of gentleness

by David King

"What do you want? Shall I come to you with a rod, or in love and **a spirit of gentleness?**" (1 Cor. 4:21).

"Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in **a spirit of gentleness**, considering yourself lest you also be tempted" (Gal. 6:1).

The Greek word translated "gentleness" in these verses is used numerous times in the New Testament. The older King James Version uniformly translates the word "meekness," which has a slightly different connotation than gentleness. Some have suggested "mildness." As these variations imply, the full meaning of the word is not easily captured in the English language.

Kittel explains that this word "is often used for the quiet and friendly composure which does not become embittered or angry at what is unpleasant, whether in the form of people or fate. This is an active attitude and deliberate acceptance, not just a passive submission" (*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*). Vine prefers "meekness," and defines it as "the opposite to self-assertiveness and self-interest; it is equanimity of spirit that is neither elated nor cast down, simply because it is not occupied with self at all" (*Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*).

In other words, the spirit of gentleness is not a timid shrinking in the face of threat, nor a shallow sweetness that smiles at everything. Rather, it is **an inner conviction of quiet strength**, a confidence that all my affairs are in the capable hands of God, so there is simply

no need for displays of passion. That's why this word is often used in the same context with words like "self-control," "patience," "longsuffering," and "humility" (Gal. 5:22-23; Eph. 4:2; Col. 4:12-13; 1 Tim. 6:11; Tit. 3:2). The gentle person is one who truly has his act together. He knows exactly where he stands, both in relation to God (submissive, respectful, willing to learn), and in relation to other men (compassionate, thoughtful, willing to help).

The spirit of gentleness expresses itself in many ways, but the most obvious is when confronting people with their mistakes. Look again at the two verses that open this article: In both contexts, Paul is emphasizing the role of gentleness in dealing with those who are struggling with sin. That's why this spirit is required of those who preach the word: "A servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be **gentle** to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth" (2 Tim. 2:24-25). Correcting sin in others requires firmness, to be sure; but that firmness must be tempered with a gentle spirit, or else we lose forever any chance of reaching the lost.

Like every other virtue, this spirit of gentleness cannot be faked. It is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23), a quality that is developed through years of patient study, practice, prayer, and growth. But the hard work of developing this quality has a great reward, for it is this gentle person ("meek") that will inherit the earth (Matt. 5:5).