

Day 3

# Gentleness

**Silence (2 minutes)** Take some time to be quiet, to calm down, and to listen. What has God been teaching you? What are the next steps He wants you to take? How is your spirit doing?

**Scripture** *"Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander."* 1 Peter 3:14-16

**Discussion** Peter has just given instructions to believers that they should live in harmony with each other and he now turns to address how they should respond if they should suffer for doing good. They are to keep their focus on Christ, explain their hope, and keep a clear conscience, presumably by avoiding sin. They, and we, are to explain our hope with gentleness and respect. What does it look like if we explain our hope in Jesus without gentleness or respect? We could be argumentative, arrogant, condescending, contemptuous, insulting, or not listen. But, this person who asked us why we have hope was created in the image of God, is lost just as we were, and is so dearly loved by Jesus that He died for them also. *"And He has committed to us the ministry of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us"* (2 Cor. 5:19-20). We share our gratitude that Jesus redeemed and adopted us and that we live our lives following His voice, waiting with hope for His return. With gentleness and respect we share with people who are lost; people Jesus loves.

**Application** In today's world, making the case for the Christian faith with gentleness and respect is a real challenge! When we share the Gospel, we might be met with pushback, arguments, or even blasphemous insults. Gentle can seem like the last thing we need to be when someone is attacking our faith, but consider why God gives us gentleness as a fruit of the Spirit at all; it is a testimony in its own way. When we treat those with gentleness who otherwise may revile us, we show the power of the Gospel and ultimately put to shame those false words spoken against us and God. Is there anyone this week that you think you can share the gospel with? Perhaps you haven't in the past because you're afraid of their response? Ask God for the courage, gentleness, and respect to step out and share your faith.

**Prayer** Lord Jesus, you saved me by grace. I did not earn it or deserve it. You pursued me, showed me I was separated from the Father, and gave me the desire to pursue You. Then You let me find You. You were gentle and respectful with me. I commit myself to be prepared to tell others about my hope in You. And when I have those opportunities, please help me to represent You well by speaking to those you love as you speak to me, with gentleness and respect. I praise You, Jesus. You are my Savior, my Shepherd, and my God. Amen.

**Silence (2 minutes)** Talk to God about what you are learning. What are your fears? Where are your hangups? Pray for direction.

**Scripture memory** for the week: *"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."* Matthew 11:28-30

