

Day 5

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 *“As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.” Ephesians 4:1-3*

Discussion Paul writes to the Ephesians about their place in Christ, his ministry to Gentiles, and his prayer for the Ephesians. Paul then turns to address how the Ephesians should live. His first words of application are the above text. Paul charges them to be serious and responsible with their calling to belong to Jesus, rather than to take it for granted or be flippant. That seriousness is expressed in how we treat other believers. We are to be humble, gentle, and patient. Because we have all been separated from the Father, have sinned and been sinned against, we can each be difficult and offensive to be around. The Lord is working in each of us to change us into His likeness, but we have a long ways to go. Some have just come to know Jesus and their learning and changing have just begun. If we were all so easy to be around Paul wouldn't need to advise us to be humble, gentle, and patient. We can ignore each other, be moody, judgmental, biased, have sharp tongues, focused on ourselves, and have damaging habits. There are innumerable ways in which each of us are difficult and offensive to each other. So, Paul tells us to be humble, gentle, and patient. We are to bear with these difficult and offensive people, knowing others may experience us the same way. And how should we bear with one another? We bear with one another with an attitude of love; love for Jesus and for each other. Paul's first application is that we all need to be serious in how we follow Jesus, which is demonstrated by bearing with each other in love.

Application Paul gives us some very practical ways to practice gentleness, and this is for the ultimate goal of preserving unity of the Spirit. Gentleness isn't just a Fruit of the Spirit for the purposes of evangelism, but also of creating a community that has supernatural unity because of our gentleness. Consider: how gentle are we with other believers we may disagree with? Are we seen publicly disagreeing with those we will spend eternity with over trite things? Even if these disagreements are over important doctrinal issues, do we treat each other with the gentleness that is fitting for Christians? Perhaps this means we are more careful in how we speak online, or how we voice our political opinions around those we know we disagree with yet are unified with in Christ. Take time today and consider how you can tangibly put gentleness into practice in a way that helps unify the Body of Christ.

Prayer Lord Jesus, You were serious in becoming human, obeying the Father, and dying so that I could be forgiven and born again. I commit myself to live a life worthy of my calling to belong to You. Please show me how I am difficult and offensive to others so that I may work at being more loving. When my brothers and sisters in Christ irritate me, I commit myself to be more humble, gentle, and patient; to bear with them in love. I praise you Jesus, that this is how You are. 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*