

Day 8

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

Discussion Sometimes we equate gentleness with weakness, but in reality gentleness requires great strength. To be gentle we will need to exercise self-control when people spew hateful words at us. To be gentle we'll need to lower our voice when we feel like screaming. Maybe you want to hit someone; it requires more strength to resist than to follow our natural desires. Gentleness is not for the weak.

When people are mad at us, yelling at us, cursing and cussing at us, they are trying to ruffle our feathers and get under our skin. The expected outcome is that we will respond in kind, yelling back even louder or saying even more hurtful words. In a fight like that, nobody wins. That's what most people might do. Not for us, however. We are called to return good for evil and what an impact it can have to do the unexpected by remaining calm and composed to offer a gentle response! People won't know what to do with it and their anger will automatically start to deflate. Their volume will gradually lower, their tone soften, and they will realize that you aren't interested in picking a fight. The goal of an argument is not to be right, but to be understood. When our emotions take us into the “red zone”, we literally are physically unable to think clearly. Our brains will not reason properly when we are extremely worked up. But if we remain calm and think clearly, we will be able to offer a gentle response.

We need to muscle up and be gentle when faced with a fight! The reality, however, is that this is really really hard. It seems contrary to our natural tendency because it is. Being gentle in the midst of confrontation or an argument is a supernatural act that is empowered when we abide in the Spirit of God. It's not natural, but it is how we turn away anger. It helps to protect us and it helps others to calm down.

What should we say when people are yelling at us? Perhaps you could try, “I can see that you are really angry right now. I would be angry, too if I were you.” Or “I’m sorry, you’re right. I made a mistake.” Or “I can see that I’ve pushed a button to make you very upset. Can you help me to understand what made you angry?” Giving a gentle respond won’t immediately deflate anger, but like a ringing bell it will lose momentum once no one is tugging on the rope. Let go of your anger and let them speak their mind. Be strong and be gentle until their anger has passed.

Application When we respond to anger with anger, it’s like adding fuel to a fire. It only makes matters worse! What is your typical response to someone who is angry with you? Do you yell, swear, or threaten to retaliate? Do you get defensive? Do you bring up the past? Commit to not stirring someone’s wrath by replying with anger. Think about what to say before you have an argument. Reply calmly and with a soft tone and when they reply with more anger, maintain your gentle disposition - don’t give in to your anger! If someone is angry with you right now, reach out to them today with a gentle spirit and let them talk through their frustration.

Prayer God, it is so hard for me to be gentle when people are angry with me. I get defensive and usually reply in anger. I know it’s wrong but it just happens. Please help me to think before I speak and remind me to be gentle even when I don’t think that it is deserved. Thank You for being gentle with me and patient when I am a hot mess! Make me the kind of person that brings peace in the lives of all who are around me. I ask this in the name of Jesus, 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

