

## I. THE PREPARER OF OUR HEARTS

### A. The Relationship Between Meekness and Anger

1. Meekness is power under control. It is the restraint of power for the accomplishment of a higher cause. This is not to be confused with weakness. Weakness is the absence of strength and power. Meekness is the possession of power, yet restraining it for redemptive purposes.

This is also not to be confused with personality traits. A laid back personality is not to be equated with meekness. Meekness is the cultivation of a spirit of Servanthood in which Jesus is the ultimate example.

*Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth. (Mt. 5:5)*

2. Anger is the great hindrance to meekness.

*Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. 32 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you. (Eph. 4:31-32)*

- B. As believers we must cultivate a tender and responsive heart to God. We must be vigilant in the possession of our souls. The Bible warns of a time coming when the love of many will grow cold and unbelievable pressure on the earth will bring forth the greatest levels of suffering and mistreatment (Mt. 24:9-13; Mk. 13:12-13; Dan. 7:25, 12:1-2; Rev. 13:5-8).

We must prepare for this season and the smaller seasons of tribulation that precede it by casting off every sin that ensnares us and by fixing our eyes on Jesus who for the joy set before Him endured the Cross. We must resist the vice of anger and pursue the virtue of meekness.

*Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God; 2 for you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus. 3 For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; 4 that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, 5 not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God; 6 that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified. 7 For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness. (1 Thess. 4:1-7)*

*You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death. 17 And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. 18 But not a hair of your head shall be lost. 19 By your patience possess your souls. (Lk. 21:16-19)*

## II. UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF MISTREATMENT IN OUR LIVES

*My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. 4 But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. (James 1:2-4)*

A. The Bible does not offer us an idealistic triumphalism. Rather, God invites us to walk as Jesus walked, to embrace the journey of meekness and the pleasure of Christ being formed in the inward parts. This not only allows mistreatment into our lives; it requires it. God is committed to conforming us to the image of His Son that Jesus might be the firstborn among many brethren. The power of the resurrection life is given that we might endure suffering and trials in this age. The good news is that the “sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Rom. 8:18).

B. Mistreatment and opposition are both the context and fruit of a fallen world. Everyone suffers. Everyone is hurt, betrayed, abused, taken advantage of, oppressed. Yet, only for the redeemed can suffering mistreatment count. For the redeemed even suffering can be used of God for the production of fruitfulness and wholeheartedness.

*Then Peter came to Him and said, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" 22 Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven. (Matt. 18:21-22)*

C. Why Mistreatment? It exposes the great enemy of our soul – pride manifesting in anger. It places pressures on the human heart that expose the fault lines underneath the surface. Mistreatment and opposition touches places of pride otherwise unnoticed in our controlled environments. This is why marriage can be if cooperated with a great sanctifier of the human heart. Opposition and mistreatment are part of the unspoken vows. “In sickness and in health, in opposition and mistreatment til death do us part or til will kill each other.”

D. **Receive Mistreatment and Suffering as from the Hand of a Loving Father Bringing forth a Greater Work of Sanctification.** Redemptive Suffering Counts! You see mistreatment is not only the test of meekness. The test contains within itself the avenues for reform and transformation. The pressures expose and if responded to rightly can produce meekness in the heart. Understanding how to grow in meekness in the midst of mistreatment produces the opportunity for dependence, faith, and trust. If you knew the divine exchange rate and what awaits those who embrace meekness in the midst of trial in the next age, you would not dare to waste a good opportunity to receive correction from the Lord’s hand or to throw away the eternal currency of forgiving and doing good to those who have wronged you.

E. **We usually respond to mistreatment on the basis of the percentage of truth.** This person is 100% wrong or 40% right and 60% wrong. So my response is in direct proportion to how much truth I assess the person was operating in when he or she offended me. However, there is something better than being right in this life. It is being free!