

Kingdom Living Today

Illustrating the WAY of God's Kingdom for a Modern World

33. Blessed Are The Meek, For They Will Inherit The Earth

"I OPPOSE EVERY PROUD PERSON, BUT I BESTOW GRACE ON THE HUMBLE. BE LIKE ME AND LEARN FROM MY WORD, FOR I AM GENTLE AND HUMBLE IN HEART."

The afternoon sun was streaming into Jack's living room as youthful chatter filled the air.

"Can I ask you something?" inquired Nick, who was sitting on floor in front of Jack with eight other young teens around him. "What would you like us to call you?"

As Jack began to answer, Josh broke in. "Grandpa, do you mind if we all call you that—just 'Grandpa'? I think these guys are going to feel the way I do toward you, and that's the best name of all for you."

Jack's face brightened with a broad grin that always seemed to bless everyone who saw it. "I think 'Grandpa' would be fine. In fact, that's exactly how I feel toward you boys—like a grandfather who wants each of you to grow up to be like Jesus."
(1Corinthians 4:15)

One of the newer boys to join the group was puzzled. "Grandpa, whaddya mean be like Jesus? Are all of us going to hang on a cross too?"

Jack chuckled inside but kept a straight face. He didn't want to embarrass anyone for asking questions. In fact, he was proud to be asked by Josh to disciple this group of boys. It had all begun with Josh meeting with Nick, Dan and Adam, the three boys who'd beaten him up and broken his arm when Josh caught them selling drugs to children in the neighborhood. The aftermath of Josh's forgiving heart and loving courage had been these boys wanting to encounter the God Josh loved and served.^(Romans 2:4) In a matter of three weeks other boys wanted to join them and learn the Bible. A little overwhelmed, that's when Josh asked Jack to teach them all how to live by God's Word.

"When I say 'to be like Jesus,'" Jack responded kindly, "I mean that there are many character qualities Jesus has, such as love, compassion, kindness, and meekness. These are all qualities we each need in our own lives. They not only enable us to serve our Lord, but also to be respected by others."

"So do each of us need an older man like you to teach us these things?" Adam asked.

Jack answered, "This responsibility first falls on your parents, especially your fathers."^(Deuteronomy 6:5-9; Ephesians 6:4)

Dan shifted uncomfortably as he looked around at his friends sitting next to him. "Grandpa, only four of the guys here have a Mom and Dad at home. Including me, the rest of us are being raised by our mothers."

For a moment an arrow of sadness stabbed Jack in the heart. Then the Spirit helped him realize how much he was really needed by these young men. "Well, in that case it's all the more important that I become a GRANDfather for each of you."

The boys laughed as Jack emphasized “GRAND.” In his heart Jack had dedicated himself to be everything these boys needed from him and through him. He wasn’t going to fail them or his heavenly Father. Leaning forward, he set on the coffee table some items he had next to him.

“Whatcha doing?” someone asked.

“I want to show you something today that I hope you’ll remember the rest of your lives,” Jack answered as he set a board about a foot long on the table with the word ‘meekness’ written on it.

“What’s meekness?” Nick wondered.

“Meekness is a core character quality of Jesus—and one we must keep in balance throughout our lives.” Jack then placed on the board’s ends two weights on which he’d written ‘God’ and ‘me’.

Josh’s face lit up. “I remember reading in my Bible that *‘Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.’*”(Matthew 5:5)

“Boy, if I can get the whole world,” piped another boy, “I want all the meekness I can get!”

Now Jack chuckled out loud. “Meekness is the balance of knowing how sovereign God is in ALL things. Nothing happens to you that He doesn’t know about in advance and permit it to happen. That’s why He’s always deserving of ALL our trust.” Jack stopped to make sure the boys understood.

Nick was the first to speak up. “So it’s not like God causes everything that’s bad in our life. But He let’s it happen.”

“That’s a good answer, Nick,” Jack affirmed. “Always remember: Whatever happens, God our Father wants to use it to help you become more like His Son, Jesus. And having meekness is the key to this.”

“I’m almost getting it,” one of the younger boys interjected.

As Jack continued to talk, he placed the balls at different distances from the center, showing how the ends of the board went up and down accordingly.

Then one of the older boys spoke up. “I’m starting to see what you mean by balance. When I used to seesaw with my kid brother, Denny, I always put him up in the air because I’m bigger. I have to move toward him before we can finally balance the board.” All the boys now understood balance from his illustration.

Grabbing the bigger weight, Jack went on, “On one side is our Father Who wants you to always trust Him. On the other side is your attitude about yourself and about the things that happen to you in life. It’s really important that you don’t think too much of yourself, like you’re the most important person around.”(Romans 12:3)

“That’s how I use to think,” Nick commented guiltily, “until I became Josh’s friend and wanted to become like him.” Josh slapped Nick on the back in gratitude.

The youngest boy, Jeremy, declared with a frown, “Grandpa, you’re talking about my older sister. She’s always talking about herself, and bossing me around.” The other boys howled.

Jack was delighted in the way the boys were participating, and how they were connecting what he was sharing with real-life situations. “Not only do you *not* want to think too much of yourself, you also don’t want to think that you deserve better



in life either. If you think things should be easier for you, you'll always get upset when things don't go the way you want." (Psalms 37:8)

"That happens to me a lot," Adam confessed sheepishly.

"We all get tempted by this attitude from time to time," Jack agreed, nodding at the teen.

Having placed the weights so the board was perfectly in balance, Jack summed up his point. "Trusting your heavenly Father in all matters must be balanced by not thinking too much of yourself nor by foolishly believing you deserve better. This balance is what describes meekness."

"I see this in Jesus," Josh observed, "but I also see Him as the most loving and courageous person Who ever lived. So much so that He died for us!"

"Praise God!" Jack exclaimed. "Only our Father could have shown you that!" (Matthew 16:17) That's what meekness is. It doesn't mean you're some kind of pansy everyone steps on—not by any means. Rather, meekness gives you the courage to love no matter what your circumstances. It's a character quality that makes you sacrifice your pride and live to bless others."

"That sounds a lot like Frodo and Sam in *Lord of the Rings!*" a boy named Jason called out.

"Yes, it is," Jack attested. "They showed humility by giving up their own peaceful lives in the Shire to save Middle Earth, even if it meant dying. They persevered through each situation together, which made them even stronger friends."

Dan's shoulder-length hair swirled around his shoulders as he looked at everyone, and even before he spoke the other boys sensed what was coming. "Grandpa, I think we'd all like to have friendships like that." He stopped for a moment to look at the other boys again, then turned to Jack. "Would you help us be those kind of friends, and to be more like Jesus?" All the other boys joined with Dan to pledge themselves to this goal. Tears filled Jack's eyes...

He then pressed home the issue. "Meekness is being assured within yourself because you know that your Father is in control of everything around you. It's also a humble attitude about yourself, with no false expectation about the circumstances in your life. You learn to view everything that goes on in your life in light of how it helps you develop the character of Jesus." (Hebrews 2:18; 5:8)

"I'm glad you described meekness, Grandpa," Josh remarked. "I always thought meek people were shy and timid, the mousy types everyone stepped on."

The other boys nodded with Josh.

"That's far from the truth as far as God is concerned," Jack noted strongly. "Knowing what *meek* is helps us respond in an appropriately assertive way. In other words, we willingly and courageously take our stand on the commands of God we find in the Bible." (Ephesians 6:11)

"What's *assertive* mean, Grandpa?" Dan asked.

Jack responded with determination in his voice. "To be assertive is a confident attitude because you know where you stand with your Father and His Word, (2Corinthians 1:21,22) and you treat others as you'd want to be treated." (Matthew 7:12)

"I don't know if I have the guts to take a stand on anything," one boy revealed a bit shyly. "I always take off if I feel nervous."

“Jesus will help you change,” Jack replied confidently. “If you’re willing, the Spirit of Jesus in you can transform an under-assertive follower who refuses to speak up because of fear of embarrassment or fear that others will get mad.(Romans 8:15) The problem with under-assertive people is that they speak up *afterward* with begrudging bitterness about the person they should have spoken to!(Proverbs 29:25) From the moment they failed to speak when they should have, the under-assertive person has stifled the love of Jesus.”(1John 4:18)

“I’ve been more of a bully than under-assertive,” Nick said with shame. “How about me?”

Jack replied, “Again, Jesus can change you to be more like Him. The over-assertive person goes through life leaving a trail of emotionally wounded people who are apprehensive they may have to go through another encounter with that individual.(Proverbs 29:22) But with the help of Jesus, the over-assertive person begins to feel the emotional pain they cause others, and they want to change.”

“That’s what’s happened to me!” Nick exclaimed. “I ain’t the same person Josh met a month ago.”

“I can see that in you,” Josh grinned. “You, Dan and Adam have become some of my best friends.” All four smiled at each other.

Jack broke in with a sincere, firm tone. “The assertive follower of Jesus has appropriated His meekness and takes seriously this command: *‘Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.’*”(Philippians 2:30)

Dan spoke up enthusiastically, “That goes along with what Josh had us all memorize: *‘I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me.’*”(Galatians 2:20)

Capitalizing on what Dan shared, Jack added, “An assertive follower of Jesus is never *against* anyone. Instead, the biblically assertive person puts into action the command of their Lord, *‘No one lights a lamp and hides it in a jar or puts it under a bed. Instead, he puts it on a stand, so that those who come in can see the light.’*(Luke 8:16) Living for Jesus IS assertive!”

Josh stepped in. “In the months you’ve been my Grandpa, I can see how you’ve instilled assertiveness in me.”

“Describe it for the other boys,” Jack encouraged.

“Well, biblical assertiveness is a sign that we’re truly aware of the Spirit of Jesus indwelling us. It’s kind of a holy boldness. If we’re willing to become like Him and do His will, He gives us courage no matter what the circumstances. The choice is ours: to live in fear and be *under-assertive*; to live in arrogance as *over-assertive*; or to live in love, which is *assertive*. I’ve chosen love!!!”

Nick spoke on behalf of Dan and Adam. “You sure proved this when we were beating on you...” Josh laughed with pleasure as he looked around the room and saw what his meekness that day had produced. His eyes then locked with his spiritual grandfather’s, love and joy beaming from each.

(For a real-life testimony of an older man investing in young boys, we encourage you to see the movie, *The Secrets of Jonathan Sperry*).

Restoration Ministries International (restorationministries.org)