



## Message Discussion Guide Week of November 13, 2022

**Message:** Fruitful, Part 9: Gentleness

**Key Scripture:** [1 Peter 3:13-17](#)

**Preacher:** Tom Parkinson

### Message Highlights:

As evidenced by the recent political elections, our culture is not good at gentleness. Harsh rhetoric, sharp words, and vicious language bombard us as people seek to have a “mic drop,” proving that they are right and pulverizing their opponents.

In the New Testament, the word “gentleness” means “humility, meekness, or considerateness.”

- To be gentle is to consider that others are human beings with feelings, and to respond to them without aggression.
- Gentleness entails responding in a calm non-anxious way, even when you need to confront someone with a hard truth.

In the ancient world, gentleness was not seen as a strength, but as weakness. We too worry that if we are too gentle, we will become a doormat that others will walk on. But Jesus was gentle – and he was anything but weak.

Jesus’ gentleness was on full display when he went to the cross.

- Jesus did not respond to the violence of his enemies with violence. He could have pulverized them, but he calmly stayed on mission.
- Jesus knew when to speak and when to be silent.

Peter wrote to Christians who were being harassed and insulted constantly because of their faith. He implores them to respond with gentleness, and to not allow their enemies to get under their skin and cause them to compromise their integrity.

Gentleness is born of humility. When we are aware of our own weaknesses and our own needs, it enables us to be gracious toward others.

### Discussion Questions:

1. Pastor Tom said that our culture is not very good at being gentle. Do you agree? Where do you see harsh, sharp, and aggressive words and actions? How do they impact society and relationships?
2. What is gentleness? Who is someone you consider to be a gentle person? What makes them gentle?
3. Read [Matthew 11:28-30](#):
  - What does this passage tell us about gentleness?
  - What does it mean to “come” to Jesus?
  - Do you feel like Jesus is teaching you to be gentle? If so, how?
4. Read [1 Peter 3:13-17](#)
  - Have you ever experienced a situation when you felt like you suffered for doing the right thing? What was it like? How did you handle your frustration?
  - Why is Peter so insistent that we respond to the hardships and frustrations of life by doing good, being gentle, and being respectful?
  - What does it mean to “be ready” to give a reason for the hope that you have?
5. How would your life be different if you were gentler? How would it impact your closest relationships? Your work? Your overall approach to daily life?

**Call to Action:** The next time you need to have a difficult conversation with someone, or you are feeling frustrated by someone’s actions, take ten seconds, close your eyes and pray, “Lord, make me gentle” three times. Then make a conscious effort to participate in answering that prayer in the way you respond to the person.