

3 Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth



Sheryl Sandberg is a tremendously successful business woman. She worked for the U.S. Treasury, then for Google as Chief Operating Officer, and at this writing is COO of Facebook. She is a billionaire. Her Jewish grandparents were expelled from Russia, so she works earnestly for Jewish causes. She's the mother of two children.

Her husband retired from leadership in his own computer company to stay home with their children, so that his wife could do what she does so beautifully. He died suddenly recently while they were on vacation in Mexico, and even in her terrible grief, she has responded graciously. I know nothing of her relationship with God, but she does give us insight into this paradox of meekness and leadership.

She wrote the book, *Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead*. It's sold a million copies. Basically she encourages women to step up, to take ownership and responsibility for tasks they ought to accomplish. It isn't a "male bashing" kind of book; she's not a feminist trying to conquer the world. Her message is more of a "don't waste this one life you have to live by doing less than you can and should."

1. So first of all, let's define what meekness is *not*. Meekness is not weakness; it is not giving others the right to bully you.

What does Numbers 12:3 tell us about the character of Moses?

So when Miriam and Aaron challenged Moses' leadership, what did God remind them? (Numbers 12:6-9)

Yet this is the man who shattered the tables of the ten commandments, coming down from Mount Sinai, because he was so angry at the sin of the Israelites! He was a forceful leader. He met criticism with force. He punished wrongdoers. He withstood forty years of the complaints of the Israelites while they wandered in the wilderness. **But** he was "very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth."

Meekness is not a "poor me, please mistreat me" attitude.

Jesus gives us an even better example of what meekness really is. He Himself tells us, in Matthew 11:29,30:

Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me;
for I am meek and lowly in heart:
and ye shall find rest unto your souls.
For My yoke is easy,
and My burden is light.

Matthew 11:29,30

As you look at this, notice that the context of this command about meekness seems to concern especially our work, what we do. We are to take His yoke of serving; we are to share His work with Him.

Secondly, we must learn from Him. We are to emulate Him. How? He is "meek and lowly in heart." This is Jesus, the One who created the worlds, who is God Himself, but He is "meek and lowly in heart"! How will we accomplish the great work God intends for us to do for Him while we are here? Learning from Jesus a meek and lowly attitude. Meekness is intrinsic to successful work for God.

2. How does this change our idea of meekness? Somehow, meekness is integral to our purpose in life: it is self-control in doing whatever life tasks God has chosen for us.

What does James 1:20 say about anger?

One of the Greek words for "anger" is the word "without meekness." So meekness is the opposite of anger. It is strength under control.

We could also define meekness by the reward promised in this beatitude: the meek will inherit the earth. Some wonderful day the blessed meek will control this earth, manage it, accomplish what God had in mind when He created it! So meekness is defined by its reward: thoughtful, legitimate strength in relationships under control of the Spirit of God.

3. How might this attitude of meekness work out in your own life?

The experience of a dear friend of mine comes to mind. Her father was a mobster. When she fell in love, her father told her he'd kill the man if he came near her. So she eloped with her sweetheart. On their honeymoon in New

York City, she found a Gideon Bible. How it spoke to her heart! She'd been raised in a church that taught her guilt, but nothing to help her find salvation through God's grace. She drank deep drafts of the Gospel, and when it was time to leave, she packed the Gideon Bible in her suitcase.

Her new husband said, "Hotel towels, that figures. But steal a *Bible*—?"

"I have to have it," she said stubbornly.

As she read the "stolen" Bible she came to First Timothy 2:5: "For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus." Jesus, not a church, not a priest, not a creed, not a ritual, but Jesus was the One who would put His nail-scarred hand in hers, and draw her, forgiven, to the Father!

I met her when she moved to Greenville with her boys to put them in Southside Christian School when I was the principal. She'd left her husband, she said, because she wanted more for her boys: she wanted them to grow up in a Christian home.

How quickly she saw the error of this when I showed her First Peter 3:1-4:

“Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear.

“Do not let your adornment be merely outward; arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel;

“Rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a meek and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.”

Perhaps the heart of this passage is in the words, “a

meek and quiet spirit.” Meekness conveys a heart attitude that can touch the heart of a husband, more certainly than criticism or complaint.

When I showed my friend this Scripture, she answered, "But, Libby, if I obey him, he'll want me to go to R-rated movies with him."

"Then go with him. He wants your companionship. The Lord can guard your heart against the filth."

So she went. Five minutes into the film, a dirty joke was told. "You didn't laugh at that," he said.

"I didn't think it was very funny."

"Neither did I," he said. "Let's get out of here."

So that problem of R-rated movies was satisfactorily settled. But then she said, "Now he wants me to go to a dance with him."

"Then go, but ask him if it's all right if you can just dance with him, that you don't want other men pawing you."

So she went with him to the dance. He didn't know they were supposed to bring their own liquor, so that wasn't a problem. After thirty minutes of waiting for the band to show up, he said to her, "Let's go home. It looks like God is on your side!"

She told me this, then wailed, "But now I'm afraid he'll ask me to wear hot pants." (That tells you how many years ago this happened!)

You are already anticipating the end of this story, aren't you?

A few years ago, when we were all in our eighties, and Walt and I were on vacation, we met them for lunch. That godly man looked at me with tears in his eyes, and said, "Thank you, Libby, for giving me this wonderful woman who has blessed me all my life."

Rather let it be the hidden person of the heart,
with the incorruptible beauty
of a meek and quiet spirit,
which is very precious in the sight of God
1 Peter 3:1-4

You will be blessed when you meet life with a meek and quiet spirit. You will, one day, inherit the kingdom. And meanwhile, God willing, you will bless every life with whom you come in contact.

4. How will you recognize whether or not you have this meek and quiet spirit, which is so precious to God? (James 3:13,14)

Proverbs 16:32 says, "He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city."

5. How can we learn meekness when it is so counter-intuitive to our culture? It is a fruit of the Holy Spirit in our lives, Galatians 5:22,23 tells us. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, meekness." (The NKJV translates meekness as *self-control*.)

How can we be sure that God is guiding us? (Psalm 25:9)

So we are to “receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls” (James 1:21).

We will be able to know what God wants us to do, if we are willing to listen: “I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye. Do not be like the horse or like the mule, which have no understanding, which must be harnessed with bit and bridle, else they will not come near” (Psalm 32:8,9).

6. The opposition of others cannot not keep you from doing what God wants you to do. God takes upon Himself the responsibility to protect you when you are wronged.

“But Jesus called them to Himself and said, 'You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many'” (Matthew 20:25-28).

So what should we do when people mistreat us, wrong us, try to keep us from doing God's work? (Romans 12:19-21).

7. But meekness also means waiting patiently for God to intervene in situations where we are being taken advantage of. This beatitude echoes Psalm 37:1-9:

Do not fret because of evildoers . . .

Trust in the LORD, and do good;

Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness.

Delight yourself also in the LORD, and

He shall give you the desires of your heart.

Commit your way to the LORD,

Trust also in Him, And He shall bring it to pass.

He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light,

And your justice as the noonday.

Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him;

Do not fret because of him who prospers in

his way, because of the man

who brings wicked schemes to pass . . .

But those who wait on the LORD,

They shall inherit the earth.

In the Scripture above, please first underline the verbs of action, the ways we are to respond, when we are being mistreated. Then circle the promises God has made to us when we do respond as He has asked. Now look them over. What more could a child of God need from her Father?

The LORD
will fulfill
His purpose
for me.
Psalm 138:8

8. You are blessed when you are meek, because you will inherit the earth and have future joy serving Jesus and His Father God for all eternity

What does Matthew 24:45-47 promise to the faithful and wise servant who does his master's will?"

Not only are you a child of God, as wonderful as that is, but you will serve Him for the rest of eternity. What greater reward could we want?

**I will keep my spirit under control because
God will be my protector and defender.**