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The Fruit of the Ruach is Gentleness

5: 23a

The fruit of the Ruach is Gentleness DIG: Why is the word gentleness difficult to define today? Does *prautes* mean meekness? Why? Why not? Does the Bible ever say that YHVH is gentle? Do the Scriptures picture Yeshua as being gentle? In what way? Why does gentleness run counter to our culture today? Can you be gentle, yet assertive? How? What are the two things that we need to remember about gentleness?

REFLECT: How are you doing with memorizing the fruit of the Ruach? The first three have one syllable, the second three have two syllables, and the last three have three syllables. When was the last time you responded like King David, Jeremiah, Stephen or Paul? Do you foster a spirit of gentleness in your household? Do you respond with gentleness at your place of work? Do you want shalom? Where does it start?

When **Paul** spoke of **walking by the Ruach (to see link click [Bv](#) - Walk by the Ruach, and Not the Desires of the Flesh)**, he was not referring to following after mystical visions and revelations. Instead, **he** provided a list of attributes that describe a **Ruach**-led person. Thus, the evidence of **the fruit of the Ruach** is a changed life. **Paul** now presents the proper path according to which those faithful to **God** in **His Messiah** should **walk**. **The fruit** stands in contrast to **the deeds of the flesh**. **The Ruach's fruit** simply shows us the qualities which characterize the Kingdom of **God**. **But, in contrast to the deeds of the flesh, the fruit of the Ruach (singular, like a cluster of grapes) is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (5:22a). All of these elements should be a part of your life as you allow the Ruach ha-Kodesh to flow through you.**



Of all **the fruit of the Ruach**, **gentleness** (Geek: *prautes*) is the most difficult word to translate out of all of **them** because the meaning of it has changed so much over the years. Even in the context of Scripture it often means several things. For example, in **Matthew Chapters 5, 11 and 21** *prautes* is used being submissive to **God's** will in our lives, trusting and following **Him**. Then, there are other times, for example in **James Chapter 1**, *prautes* is used to describe a person who is teachable. But usually, when you read **First Corinthians 4, Ephesians 4, Second Corinthians 10, Philippians 4** and here in **Galatians 5**, it means *considerate, gentle, and compassionate*.

But many people, because of the King James translation, associate this word with *meekness*, or *humility*. The problem with the word *meekness*, is that in the four hundred years since the King James Bible (published in 1611) was written, the meanings of words have changed. For example, Saint Paul's Cathedral was destroyed in the great fire of London in 1666. The king of England commissioned Sir Christopher Wren to rebuild that great structure, and he spent the next thirty-five years of his life doing just that. In 1711 when he finished that work, Queen Ann came to tour the finished facility she said it looked "artificial" and "awful." And Wren breathed a sigh of relief and thanked her for her kind words! Because in 1711 the word "artificial" meant *artistic*, and the word "awful" meant *awe inspiring*. *Meek* is the same way because today *meekness* means *weakness*. *Meek* people get run over. *Meek* people can't make decisions or get anything done. So, it is a negative word today. A better translation of *prautes* today would be **gentleness**.

Of the nine characteristics of **the fruit of the Ruach**, this one and the one following do not apply to **HaShem**. The TaNaKh never refers to **YHVH** as being

prautes, and in the B'rit Chadashah, only **the Son** is spoken of as being **gentle** during **His** incarnation. Although **He** was **God** while **He** lived on earth as **the Son of Man**, **He** was **gentle** [*prautes*] **and humble in heart (Matthew 11:29, 21:5; Second Corinthians 10:1)**. And like our **Lord**, we are to actively pursue **gentleness (First Timothy 6:11)**, and to wear **it** like a garment (**Colossians 3:12**).

So, what does the Bible mean when it says we are to be **gentle**? It is that **humble** and **gentle** attitude that exemplifies *strength under control*. Now that runs against the culture that we live in today. The words **gentle** and *strength* don't seem like they belong in the same sentence. In 1977 Robert Ringer wrote a book entitled *Looking Out for Number One*, and it became the theme of our culture over the past forty years. And the book said that you need to look out for yourself and put yourself first because nobody else will. Therefore, **Gentleness** runs counter-cultural to that thought.

Gentleness doesn't mean that you can't be assertive, successful or a good leader. **Gentleness** is the attitude by which we do those things. It points to a person who is *strong*, but *under control*. That plays itself out in two ways. First, how we treat people around us. The Bible says that we are to treat them with **gentleness**. Then, secondly, in the way we respond to how people treat us. How do you react when someone mistreats you? We are supposed to be **gentle** in the way we treat people, but we are also to be **gentle** in the way we react to people.

We see four examples (although there are dozens of them) of how people in the Bible demonstrated a spirit of **gentleness**: How King **David** reacted to **Shim'i** (see the commentary on [the Life of David Ds - Shim'i Curses David](#)); how **Jeremiah** reacted to **the priests, the false prophets and all the people** who had heard **his** prophecy against **their** evil ways (see the commentary on [Jeremiah Cg - Jeremiah Threatened With Death](#)); how **Stephen** reacted while being stoned to death (see the commentary on [Acts Ax - The Stoning of Stephen](#)); and how **Paul** responded to those who had deserted **him (Second Timothy 4:16)**.

We live in a world that does express **gentleness**. The world says, "I don't get mad. I get even." The Bible says when we are filled with **the Ruach**, we are to have a spirit of **gentleness**. Therefore, we need to remember two things. First, we need to be careful about how we react. We live in a world that is violent. We live in a world that reacts before they think. As followers of **Yeshua Messiah**, we need to be careful about our actions, and our actions need to be **gentle**. Since **the Ruach ha-**

Kodesh lives in you, our actions must reflect that spirit of **gentleness**. But not only that. Secondly, we must be **gentle** in our words. The common saying, “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me” is not true. Cruel words can break our spirit. Thoughtless words can break our heart. Angry words can break a relationship. If we can be **gentle** in our words, then our actions will be **gentle**.

Paul, in writing to the church at **Philippi** said: **Let your gentleness be known to all people . . . Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable - if there is any virtue and if there is anything worthy of praise - dwell on these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me - put these things into practice, and the God of shalom will be with you (Philippians 4:5a and 8-9)**. If you want **shalom** to come to your house, your block, your city, or your country, it starts with you.

*Dear Heavenly **Father**, Praise **You** for who **You** are! **You** the holy, powerful King of the universe, willingly was gentle, laying aside your power and holiness to die in our place bearing our punishment for sins - **for Messiah, our Passover lamb has been sacrificed (First Corinthians 5:7c)**. **He was pierced because of our transgressions, crushed because of our iniquities. The chastisement for our shalom was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed (Isaiah 53:5)**. Help us to follow **Your** example of gentleness. In **Your** holy **Son's** name and power of resurrection. Amen*