

## *Meeting at an Even Place*

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*All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.*

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## INTRODUCTION

In time, on earth, our true hearts are revealed moment-by-moment and day-by-day through how we treat one another. That is what it is all about. Our relationship to God is revealed in our obedience to His Word and in how we treat others. Unfortunately, many people do not learn how to relate with godly friendships or with consistent responses to spiritual authority, at work or in any other area.

I wish I could convey how serious this is. How we relate to the Cross is crucial to how we relate and respond to sacrificial love. How we relate to categorical doctrine is crucial to how we respond to thinking with God in positive faith and obedience. Our consistency in faith obedience reveals our consistency in taking up our Cross.

This booklet will show how our hearts are always revealed by our mental attitudes, by our emotions, by our confession, and, ultimately, in

our relationships. My prayer is that these pages will teach us how to relate to others from the even place of the Cross, where Christ died for the sins of the world.

*Chapter One*

THINGS TO PUT OFF,  
THINGS TO PUT ON

“When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

“Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:

“For which things’ sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience:

“In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them.

“But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.

“Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;

“And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him” (Colossians 3:4-10).

Notice what God instructs us to put off. “Anger” is the first thing, because anger springs from a man whose flesh is running wild from depression and insecurity—a person with a poor self-image reacting against past relationships.

“Wrath” refers to a person’s emotions exploding because of anger in circumstances and situations. “Malice” speaks of cruelty that would cause one who is insecure, who has a poor relationship with God, to malign others. Malice is the result of our moods and the way we think about how we are being treated by God and by others.

“Blasphemy” comes from being constantly distracted from the Cross, from the Word of God, and from the fruit of the Spirit. “Filthy communication” is from Satan’s world. It does not minister grace to the hearers and it does not edify. God calls certain communication “filthy,” not because it is lewd or suggestive, but because it originates from the devil’s kingdom and because of all the harm it can do.

Romans 13:14 says to “put on the Lord Jesus Christ.” That means that I purpose to make no provision for my flesh. If I am walking in the Spirit, I do not fulfill the lusts of the flesh (Galatians 5:16). If I walk in love as a dear child of



God, then I will be humble before Him and broken toward others.

*Elect, Holy, Merciful, and Gracious*

“Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;

“Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye” (Colossians 3:12-13).

We are referred to as “the elect of God” because He chose us. God in His all knowledge understood that we would choose Him with our volition. Therefore, we are counted as “holy and beloved.” *Hagios* is the Greek word for “holy.” It means to be separated unto God’s total program and His total purpose. “Beloved” refers to the deep love that God expresses to me personally.

After these declarations, this passage mentions first my relationship to God and His relationship to me. From there, it progresses to include my relationship to my wife, my family, my church, and so on.

“Bowels of mercy” refers to our emotions. The bowels receive and react to whatever we eat and drink, therefore God draws that parallel for

us. He desires that our emotions would receive and respond to mercy—that we would receive from Him what we really do not deserve.

“I want your emotions filled with mercy,” God is saying. “Fill your emotions with mercy—not with yourself, not with your circumstances, not with what people are doing to you.”

His mercy comes to us because we are His. We are separated unto all that God is, His total provision and His personal Cross. If we let our emotions receive mercy consistently, then we will not have emotional problems in our relationships or in our thinking.

*Chapter Two*

## RESPONSES OF MEEKNESS

“Kindness” and “humbleness of mind” speak of having a Spirit-filled disposition and temperateness and an attitude of grace, respectively. Grace is receiving from God all the things I really don’t deserve. Mercy is God not giving me what I truly deserve, which is judgment and punishment. Grace means I get all of His blessings—none of which I deserve at all.

In our relationships, God wants us to reflect His kindness and humbleness of mind. In other words, we obey Him when we share His mercy. That means we do not treat others the way we think they deserve to be treated. With an attitude of grace, we can give them what they don’t deserve through a mental attitude of prayer and love.

All of this relates to how we treat each other. There are a great many reasons why God ordained marriage. It establishes a boundary line

for sex and a sacred way for God to replenish the earth. But one of the great purposes of marriage is to test hearts in a relationship.

I know of so many people who are just surviving in their marriages. They are simply not happy. They express no bowels of mercy, no spiritual disposition, no attitude of grace in giving to the other party what he or she does not deserve.

Why is this? It is because “meekness” is missing in the relationship.

### *Seeing Others as God Sees Us*

“My foot standeth in an even place: in the congregations will I bless the LORD” (Psalm 26:12).

Psalm 26:12 describes the essence of meekness: relating to each other from an “even place.” Paul said he purposed to know nothing of anyone except as it related to the crucified Christ.

Every believer is crucified, buried, and risen with the Lord Jesus Christ. In Christ, you are just as good as I am, and I am just as good as you are. The person sleeping in the homeless shelter tonight has just as much value to God as I do.

This is meekness.

It means that I bow down in the presence of God. If He is crucifying my flesh through cir-

cumstances and people, I do not resist anything in God's plan. I refuse to fight against circumstances and I refuse to struggle with people. Crucified, I am not passive, but rather I choose to accept every thing and every situation as the perfect will of God for me.

In 2 Samuel 16, Shimei cursed King David who was fleeing the forces of Absalom, his son, who had usurped the throne of Israel. Not only that, Shimei began to throw stones and dirt at David. Some of David's men stood ready to kill Shimei, but David told them not to interfere, for "God has sent him."

That was a response of meekness.

Abraham, in Genesis 13, submitted himself to God and gave Lot first choice of the territory where their families would live. That was an act of meekness.

Christ on the Cross at Calvary prayed for those around Him. There He was, suffering for our sins and allowing Himself to be numbered with transgressors. The nails had been driven through His hands and His feet, yet He prayed, "Father, forgive them..." (Luke 23:34).

"...O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matthew 26:39).

This was the even place. This was where God was going to meet every sinner who called upon His name to be saved. In meekness, Jesus Christ preferred the plan of the Father. He made a way for us by not letting the cup of the Cross pass Him by.

### *Chapter Three*

## THE POWER OF PATIENCE, THE LONGSUFFERING OF LOVE

“My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation: I will pay my vows before them that fear him.

“The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the LORD that seek him: your heart shall live for ever” (Psalm 22:26).

“The LORD lifteth up the meek: he casteth the wicked down to the ground” (Psalm 147:6).

“For the LORD taketh pleasure in his people: he will beautify the meek with salvation” (Psalm 149:4).

The meek are nourished by the Word of God. They are quiet. When they go to restore someone, they are not proud—they are broken. Those who are spiritual restore those who are weak, considering that they themselves could be tempted, too (see Galatians 6:1).

The meek person's exchange with someone

who has fallen is like this:

“I want to pray with you and help you get back to God. You have taken some false steps, but I could do this same thing tomorrow. Let me help you bear your burden.”

Any defense of the Word of God should be done in meekness. “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth,” (Matthew 5:5). “The meek will He guide in judgment; and the meek will He teach in His way,” (Psalm 25:9).

Our relationships are at their best when we meet at the even place, at the place where meekness reigns. The fruit of meekness brings no suspicion, no presumption, no negative reactions.

When you find yourself in a disagreement with someone, treat him in meekness. Don’t fight back. Don’t retaliate. Treat him in meekness and watch what happens over a period of time.

How you treat this person reflects your relationship with God. It reveals whether or not you have bowels of mercy, kindness, and humbleness of mind.

There is no reason to struggle in God’s plan. We cannot fight Him and fight others. He desires that we have a spirit of meekness, which is first manifested only in the sight of God.

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are



heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

“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 11:28-30).

### *Waiting for God's Move*

“Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness” (Colossians 1:11).

“Patience” and “longsuffering” are two different things. “Patience” is when I wait for someone or some circumstance to move. “Longsuffering” is when I wait before I make a move.

Patience is such a powerful thing. When pioneering a work of God, a man of God will wait upon the Lord as he reveals the fruit of the Spirit. He does the best that he can and refuses to get nervous about how things will turn out.

Suppose you are in a marriage that is not good. There is no need to react or to get negative and retaliate. Simply wait for something or someone to change. There is no need to struggle or fight when your emotions are full of mercy and your mind is filled with grace toward your spouse, even if there is no evidence of a change.

Noah preached while he built the ark over a period of one hundred years. God waited and did not move to destroy the earth until He had given everyone an opportunity to be saved from the flood. Thousands of years later, the people of Israel were taken captive in Egypt, where they were held for 490 years. God just waited and waited until the fullness of time. That is long-suffering.

### *The Timetable of Eternity*

“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9).

God is so longsuffering with backsliders, and not because He condones what they are doing, but because He is waiting for them to get right. He waits because He does not want to hurt them. One day He will do something, but it will be on the timetable of His longsuffering.

In our Christian school, our teachers are longsuffering. Yes, we have rules and standards of discipline, but it is so important to be longsuffering. The next Billy Sunday could be in one of these classes. Someone may be teaching the

next president.

With patience, we wait for people to change. We do not grow angry. We do not exhibit wrath. We deal with them from the even place of meekness. There is no malice. We are not distracted from God's presence. Our confession is of the kingdom of God. There is no blasphemy. We minister grace to the hearers, edifying with every word that comes from our mouths.

It is quite a thing to be strengthened with all might in God's glorious power. It is so great to serve in patience with longsuffering and joyfulness. And it all comes because we stand in an even place—at the foot of the Cross.

## CONCLUSION

Recently, we received a beautiful letter from a couple who had visited our church. "Everyone just loved us so much," it read. "Your church is so full of loving people. I have never seen anything like it."

Our secret? We meet people at the even place. With patience and longsuffering, we love each other on the basis of the Cross of Calvary. This is where we were all made one by the Blood of Jesus Christ.

How we relate to each other is the test of the fruit in our lives. Our relationship to God, our relationships with each other, and our relationship to the Word of God will be tested on earth.

When troubles come, instead of withdrawing in the flesh, run to the loving God. This enables us to forbear and to forgive one another as we put on charity in the bond of peace.