Introduction: As we look at each of these ways in which we are to be more like Jesus, we see that each of them are counter cultural. What does it mean to be gentle? How can we be gentle? Being a gentleman.

Jesus is Gentle to Us

The gentleness of Jesus is a truth that resonates deeply with our wounded and broken hearts, for we long for a gentleness in the midst of the harshness we see and experience each day. Jesus links gentleness and humility saying of Himself in Matthew 11:28-30, “Come to me all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” I love the Eugene Peterson transliteration of this passage: “Are you tired? Worn out? Burn out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I’ll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me-watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly.”

Our culture is a culture of busyness, exhaustion and overcommitment. Or perhaps commitment to the wrong things. In reality, we are too committed to things that don't really matter, that cause us to not have time or energy for God. Do you believe that Jesus is gentle? Are you willing to walk with Him, to work with Him, to keep company with Him? Are you willing to refocus on a life of prayer, on what really matters. Jesus is gentle. Are we and you enjoying His gentleness?

The Joy of Gentleness

Joy and gentleness go hand in hand. If we want to cultivate gentleness, we must do so by being joyful. In Philippians 4:4-5, Paul tells us, “Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.” Gentleness here refers to being considerate of others, in being being self less, gracious and loving like Jesus is to us. Ultimately, joy is a choice we make as we gratefully and thankfully respond to who God is and what He has done for us. Joy will transform us on every level and will soften our hearts so that we can be gracious and gentle with others. In fact, as we are joyful, we embrace who God is, who He has made us to be, His plan and will for our lives, and with the gift of life in each and every moment. I believe that we fail to be gentle when we fail to be joyful, when we allow anger and resentment to get a foothold, when we fail to trust in God. God's peace and gentleness fill us as we pray, as we trust Him fully with our prayers. As we pray in obedience and submission to God, our hearts are made gentle by His Spirit.
Gentleness in joy is to be a default means of our interaction and treatment of others. We are to be visibly and tangibly gentle as we live our lives. There should be no question or doubt that the gentleness of Christ has taken root in our hearts and lives. The idea of gentleness here encompasses qualities such as moderation, patience, softness, modesty and forbearance, of meeting others half way. Gentleness in joy flows from obedience and submission, which joy allows us to foster in our hearts. This term then refers to a gracious gentleness, to being graceful and gracefilled!

**The Spirit of Gentleness**

We see in Galatians 5 that one of the fruits of the Spirit is gentleness. What is interesting about this is two things: first, that gentleness is not optional or limited to a few believers, but that each believer is expected to be gentle; second, that gentleness is a sign and a fruit of the filling of the Holy Spirit. That is, as we belong to Jesus, as we are filled by His Spirit, we will become increasingly gentle. If we are not gentle, we are not living or loving as Jesus wills us to. We must cultivate and foster the spirit of gentleness in our hearts and lives by fanning the flames of the Holy Spirit in us. Paul tells us in Titus 3:2, "to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and to show true humility to others." Gentleness and humility are linked as we learn to care more about how we treat others than with how we are treated. We are to be kind and considerate, to be careful of what we say and how we act to others. Paul also tells us in Ephesians 4:2, "Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love." Gentleness is linked to patience, from being gracious in our expectations, from realizing that we are all sinners on a journey of being redeemed and being renewed to be more like Jesus. Gentleness should ooze out of our pores, as we learn to become more like Jesus. How gentle are you? How gracious are you? Are you being like Jesus or being harsh like the world?

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