

Spiritual Considerations...

Selected articles designed to assist in our Bible study and Christian walk.



Dave Phillips, editor

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The Importance of Gentleness

Dave Phillips, Germantown

Mark Twain said, "It takes your enemy and your friend, working together, to hurt you to the heart; the one to slander you and the other to get the news to you."

Friends and enemies may have it in for you. It is often difficult to tell the difference. Seems to me that we could be more beneficial if we learned to be gentle.

It may not surprise you to be reading of the importance of gentleness in a religious article. It is well known that those who are religious are generally more patient, because patience is listed among the ingredients of the nine-fold fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:23). But isn't it interesting that it is much easier to talk about gentleness than it is to be gentle?

Here are some examples of gentleness from the Bible. When harshly treated by a brother in Christ, why not rather suffer the wrong instead of attempting to get even? The church at Corinth was admonished not to sue their brethren, but rather allow others to persist (1 Cor. 6).

When workers are harshly treated by their superiors, the instruction is clear. The Christian is instructed to be submissive and respectful, rather than retaliate (1 Peter 2:18-20). The reason is that Jesus was one who was mistreated, but responded to unjust sorrows with endurance.

When a brother hasn't grown to the point of understanding the legitimacy of certain practices of Christians (that are correct in themselves), the Christian is told to be considerate of the "weaker" brother and not just seek to please himself (Rom. 15:1,2).

Perhaps there are two reasons why gentleness is emphasized. First, gentleness is characteristic of God (Ex. 34:6,7), a characteristic that gives us a target for our prayer, devotion, and effort. Second, gentleness is one of the more difficult attributes of Christ we have to emulate. The natural condition of man provides for frequent episodes of selfishness, recurrent distractions that tempt us, and little tolerance for error.

It is no wonder that James, the half-brother of Jesus, asserts, "Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom... the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace" (James 3:13,17). Thankfully, James also provides the means by which we can gain wisdom...we ask God for it...then expectantly wait (James 1:5-7).

Gentler in our speech...we could use kinder tones. Gentler in our thoughts...we could avoid jumping to conclusions. Gentler in our motives...we could be more gracious in assessing the reason why people act in certain ways. Unfortunately, gentleness usually is not a natural gift. It is cultivated. If meekness is defined as strength under control, gentleness is not far behind.

Psalm 15 - 'The Gentleman's Psalm'

"O Lord, who may abide in Your tent? Who may dwell on Your holy hill? He who walks with integrity, and works righteousness, and speaks truth in his heart. He does not slander with his tongue, nor does evil to his neighbor, nor takes up a reproach against his friend; in whose eyes a reprobate is despised, but who honors those who fear the Lord; he swears to his own hurt and does not change; he does not put out his money at interest, nor does he take a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things will never be shaken.

The following are articles that have been given to me from various members at Germantown. Sometimes humorous, always thought-provoking, they are helpful for our own 'consideration.'

All I Need to Know...

Submitted by Bill Nance, Germantown

Everything I need to know about life, I learned from Noah's Ark...

One : Don't miss the boat.

Two: Remember that we are all in the same boat.

Three: Plan ahead. It wasn't raining when Noah built the Ark.

Four: Stay fit. When you're 600 years old, someone may ask you to do something really big.

Five: Don't listen to critics; just get on with the job that needs to be done.

Six: Build your future on high ground.

Seven: For safety sake, travel in pairs.

Eight: Speed isn't always an advantage. The snails were on board with the cheetahs.

Nine: When you're stressed, float a while.

Ten: Remember, the Ark was built by amateurs; the Titanic by professionals.

Eleven: No matter the storm, when you are with God, there's always a rainbow waiting.

NOW, wasn't that nice? Pass it along and make someone else smile, too.

Straightforward Prayer

Submitted by Addie Nobles, Germantown

When Joe Wright was asked to open the new session of the Kansas Senate, everyone was expecting the usual generalities, but this is what they heard:

"Heavenly Father, we come before you today to ask your forgiveness and to seek your direction and guidance. We know Your Word says, 'Woe to those who call evil good,' but that is exactly what we have done. We have lost our spiritual equilibrium and reversed our values.

"We confess that we have ridiculed the absolute truth of Your Word and call it pluralism. We have exploited the poor and called it the lottery. We have rewarded laziness and called it welfare. We have killed our unborn and called it choice. We have shot abortionists and called it justifiable. We have neglected to discipline our children and called it building self-esteem. We have abused power and called it politics. We have coveted our neighbor's possessions and called it ambition. We have polluted the air with profanity and pornography and called it freedom of expression. We have ridiculed the time-honored values of our forefathers and called it enlightenment. Search us, oh God, and know our hearts today; cleanse us from every sin and set us free. Guide and bless these men and women who have been sent to direct us to the center of Your will and to openly ask these things in the name of Your Son, the living Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen."

The response was immediate. A number of legislators walked out during the prayer in protest... In six short weeks, the church where Joe Wright serves, logged more than 5000 phone calls with only 47 of those calls responding negatively. The church is now receiving international requests for copies of this prayer from India, Africa, and Korea.

Commentator Paul Harvey aired this prayer on his radio program, "The Rest of the Story," and received a larger response to this program than any other he has ever aired.