

## Equipped to be meek, not weak

Our American friend, Vicky, uses the same words as we do but we don't always mean the same thing. For us in Britain, "jumper" means a sweater, but for her, "jumper" means a pinafore dress. Identical words can have different meanings, not just across cultures, but through time. One of these time-warped words is "meekness", with some people thinking it describes a "wimp" or a person with "no backbone". However, the Lord Jesus Christ says that the meek are blessed, or highly favoured.<sup>1</sup> If we want to grasp what He really meant when He said this, then we need to abandon distorted interpretations of meekness that have occurred with the passage of time.

So, what does it mean to be meek? The ancient Greeks used the word that is translated "meek" to describe horses that had been tamed. The tamed horse didn't lose its strength or become timid, but the strength was harnessed by being brought under the control of its owner, so that the horse no longer exercised its own will, but was obedient to the will of its rider. In the same way, we can be considered meek when we give up our lives to God's control and are prepared to submit our will to His.

Only two people in the Bible are described as being meek - Moses and Jesus.<sup>2</sup> They both exercised this characteristic by submitting to God's will and purpose for their lives, even when this cut across their own personal preferences. In Moses' case, he didn't want to go to Egypt and confront Pharaoh about letting the Israelites have their freedom but, after protesting about it to God several times, he decided to go God's way. Moses wasn't being weak - he was being meek. In Jesus' case, contemplating the cross filled Him with such horror that His natural inclination was to recoil from it but, accepting that this was the only way He could purchase salvation, we find Him saying to His Father, "*Yet I want your will, not mine*".<sup>3</sup> Jesus wasn't being weak - he was being meek.

It seems, then, that meekness has a lot to do with our relationship to God, especially as far as obedience to His will is concerned. Forget ideas of equating meekness with weakness. Rather, view it as voluntarily giving up the controls of your life to God. However, it's much easier to write this than to actually do it. The mere thought of giving up control immediately sends some of us into a panic because, let's face it, we want to be in charge of our lives and do things our way, right? We're not comfortable with the possibility that God might have something in mind for us that doesn't fit neatly with our view of how we'd like the rest of our lives to shape up. What then? Can we risk giving Him control - totally? Can His purposes be trusted - always? When thoughts like this come to us, will we have the courage to be meek and go with what He wants, even if this might mean putting our own preferences on hold or even discarding them altogether? Allow yourself to be challenged by the following questions:

- Like the meek horse, have I abandoned my rebelliousness and allowed God to tame me?
- Do I find myself joyfully surrendering to His will and purposes, or only when these are in line with my own desires?
- Am I regularly coming to the point where I say to God regarding all areas of my life, "*I want your will, not mine*"?

Submission to God's will is probably hard for all of us - we love ourselves and our own independence too much to surrender to His purposes without difficulty. But it must be worth it because God considers such people, the meek, to be blessed.

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew 5:5

<sup>2</sup> Numbers 12:3; Matthew 11:29 (KJV)

<sup>3</sup> Luke 22:42 (NLT)