

TOUGH AND TENDER STUDY GUIDE

Meekness is all about knowing when to be tough and to be tender.

Aristotle defined *praios*—meekness — as the person who knows when to be angry at the right time, and is never angry at the wrong time.

This word is related in root to the adjective *praus*, which is used to describe an animal who had been tamed and properly trained to submit to a master.

**"I am meek," Jesus says. Most other translations say, "I am gentle." Jesus was meek, he was gentle, but he was never weak or passive.
Ref: Matthew 11:28-29 KJV**

Three phrases that challenge us to model this tough-and-tender quality of meekness.

1. A Quiet Approach.

Jesus wasn't about self-promotion, and he wasn't about fanfare.

In ancient days, when a king intent on war entered a city, he entered on horseback. When a king entered intent on peace, he rode in on a donkey. Ref: Matthew 21:5

In 1 Thessalonians 4 Paul gives us a perfect description of meekness, though he never uses the word. Ref: 1st Thess. 4:10-11

This is the first step in modeling the quality of meekness: We seek to live a life without fanfare, without calling unnecessary attention to ourselves. We take a quiet approach to life.

2. A Teachable Spirit.

Now it's all but impossible to avoid the opinions of others.

More than ever, we live today with an "us and them" mentality. In other words: We're the good guys and they're the bad guys. If you're not one of us, you're evil in every sense of the word. That mentality exists today, and it is the opposite of Biblical meekness.

It's the fine balance — the middle ground — between being able to say, "I stand by my convictions" while saying, "I don't know everything there is to know." Ref: James 1:21

3. A Considerate Attitude.

Being a leader is never synonymous with being a bully. Ref: 1st Thessalonians 2:7; Matthew 11:30 KJV

We model Biblical meekness when we treat others — especially those whom we are called to lead — with tender consideration. This is why Paul said...Let your gentleness be evident to all. (Philippians 4:5)

An effective leader knows when to be tough, and when to be tender ... and prefers to be tender. Ref: Philippians 2:3-4

You know when to be tough, when to be tender ... and you really prefer to be tender.

